

ers, trapped in socially determined constructions, are left to their own devices, but it is not always bad to let mothers speak and decide for their children, argues Mickelson. Who could claim to know their sons better? Who knows what is it like to live in the world of antidepressants, unable to communicate? It is while listening to mothers that Mickelson is able to see the boys as individuals and to define their frustration, despair, and hope. To recognize them, she concludes, is not to summarize, evaluate, or diagnose them but to try and live with them every day. The theme of hope emerges repeatedly throughout the mother's stories.

Little is heard from mothers, Mickelson argues correctly, since they often are stereotyped and humiliated along with their children. Dismissive and inappropriate statements, such as "Find me a BD kid and I'll find you his BD mom," shut too many doors and limit potential treatment. Mickelson repeatedly emphasizes that her letters do not provide clear cut, black-and-white pictures but complex kaleidoscopic realities that should uncover the individual buried under "a load of labels." Her study confirms that behavioural analyses are valuable only as ongoing interpretations.

Self-Esteem – A Family Affair

Jean Illsley Clarke
Center City, MN: Hazelden, 1998

Reviewed by Debbie Dickinson

Self-esteem is a catch all phrase that puts most parents in a quandary. How do we raise responsible and confident children and encourage independence and creativity? How do we best shape our children's emotional well being? These questions are adequately answered in Jean Illsley Clarke's book, *Self-Esteem, A Family Affair*. The title itself places the responsibility for the emotional wellness of children on the entire family. Positive self-esteem can be achieved through advising and supporting children and by acknowledging that both parents and children need reassurance. As a result, the responsibility for children's self-esteem does not fall wholly on one parent. In the past, for example, mothers have been blamed for the problems of low self-esteem, especially in their daughters.

Through examples, exercises, and worksheets, parents are guided in the skillful negotiation of problem solving which clearly set out the expectations for families. With these tools in each chapter, parents have a template that can assist in the process of fostering a positive attitude in our children. Let us not

confuse self-esteem with self-centredness, as the author points out. Many children who seem to have a high level of self-confidence are hiding under negative feelings of self.

This book is valuable for parents, teachers, caregivers, and extended family members who deal with children and have the ability to enforce positive self-esteem on a day to day basis. Most parents may also consider that once their children become teenagers or young adults that it is too late to make changes to encourage positive self-esteem. Jean Illsley Clarke points out that it is never too late to instill positive self-esteem and gives examples of ways to interact with children of all ages. The author suggests that parents can use her book to feel better about their parenting abilities during various stages of family life.

Family Pictures: A Philosopher Explores the Familiar

Laura Duhan Kaplan
Chicago and LaSalle, Illinois: Open Court Press, 1998

Reviewed by Shelley M. Park

In *Family Pictures*, Laura Duhan Kaplan provides snapshots of family life as reflected through the lens of philosophy. The book is written, in part, for a philosophical audience to whom Kaplan commends storytelling as a methodology that blends “outer and inner lives,” effecting a symbiosis of “concrete routines with abstract thought about their larger meanings” (138). Yet, this delightful book is readily accessible to an interdisciplinary audience. Indeed, any person with a family life—in particular, those with parents, children, lovers, in-laws, or pets—will find material here that invites self-reflection, as well as considerable laughter. Whether on a Hawaiian honeymoon, chasing a toddler in an art museum, wearing her deceased mother-in-law’s clothes, suffering from back pain, or killing fleas in her living room, Kaplan sees both the humour in, and the spiritual meaning of, her everyday activities. In taking us on her journey, she provokes us to do the same.

Family Pictures is divided into three sections: Marriage, Adult Daughter, and Mothering. ARM readers will take special interest in the latter two sections. In the second section, Kaplan explores her relationship with her mother, her mother-in-law, and her father. Kaplan reflects honestly and self-critically upon her frustration with her mother-in-law’s superficial emphasis on social etiquette and her mother’s equally adamant resistance to social expectations. While Kaplan seems to identify most closely with her father, Kaplan’s criticisms of her mother-in-law’s spiritual shortcomings and her mother’s