



Grandparents: A New Look at the Supporting Generation

Ursula Adler Falk

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What image comes to mind when we hear the term grandparents? Too often it is the Norman Rockwell view of innocuous, kindly white-haired folk or, conversely, the negative stereotype of doddering dim-witted burdens confined to nursing homes. Unfortunately, such notions shortchange not only older people but younger generations as well, who may never realize how much grandparents have to offer. This informative, well-researched book aims to add some perspective and depth to the stick-figure images of grandparents promulgated by contemporary culture.

Psychotherapist Ursula Falk and sociologist Gerhard Falk provide an illuminating overview of the many facets of being a grandparent in today's society. Among the topics discussed are the history of the grandparent role and its evolution, social forces that have affected the American family including grandparents, the distinctly different roles of grandmother and grandfather, the parental responsibilities that grandparents today are often forced to assume for their grandchildren in the absence of the children's parents, the ways in which other cultures treat grandparents, the usually negative and stereotypical depiction of grandparents in the media and in literature, and finally the supporting role that grandparents play with authentic examples. Also included is an appendix outlining the legal rights of grandparents.

The authors stress that grandparents must be seen as individuals with their own lives to lead and that society needs to reassess the value of the elderly.

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