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Be an Outrageous Older Woman-A RASP* - *Remarkable Aging Smart Person

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dren's grief and its treatment. The second part addresses the task of developing and implementing an intervention program and considers such issues as: advertising and recruitment; facilities; initial interviews with families; grief assessment instruments and therapeutic tools; activities lists for childrens' and parents' groups; progress notes; evaluation of groups and program; and funding and reimbursement. The bibliography includes not only relevant literature on grief and bereavement, but also items pertinent to the use of art therapy for children burdened with loss. An appendix contains examples of the different materials used in the Program.

This manual has the potential to serve its intended audience well. It is, however, burdened by serious flaws. First, it needs careful editing. The far too numerous errors in grammar, spelling, and syntax seriously distract the reader and interfere with the message that the authors wish to convey. One begins to lose faith when a book written by instructors on death and dying misspells the word cemetery—shades of Stephen King. Secondly, the manual is seriously bloated—thirty of its 102 pages are blank, for what purpose the authors do not say. This inflation of the text, the reviewer suspects, would also inflate the cost of its publication, and further detracts from what would otherwise be a useful resource manual.

Space does not permit the discussion of the important questions that a bereavement intervention program raises for the health care practitioner. The reviewer would hope that in the next edition of the manual such issues as the ethics and utility of grief intervention, the importance of a professionally trained staff, or the reliability of different therapeutic tools will be addressed. As the manual now stands it falls short of its laudable goal.

Be an Outrageous Older Woman—A RASP*—*Remarkable Aging Smart Person, By Ruth Harriet Jacobs, Manchester, Connecticut: Knowledge, Ideas, and Trends, Inc. Publisher, 1991. 206 pp., \$14.95, paper.

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Question—What do Ruth Harriet Jacobs and Alan M. Dershowitz have in common? Answer—Both wrote about a group suffering from second-class-citizenitis, and both prescribed the same cure: large doses of “chutzpah.”

In his recent book, *Chutzpah*, Alan Dershowitz suggests that as Jews, “deep down we see ourselves as second-class citizens—as guests in another person's land.” We have therefore tried not to offend our hosts by looking or acting too Jewish. Instead we have flattered them with attempts to disguise our Jewishness

behind a facade of Anglophilia. In many cases, Dershowitz notes, Jews afflicted with Anglophilia looked like they were probably wearing tweed underpants beneath their British-tailored slacks. And they did not merely dress British—they thought British too. Their Anglophilia affected their mannerisms, attitudes, speech, and even their choice of jokes. This aesthetic mimicry is symptomatic of an internalized anti-semitic aesthetic. It is fueled by a longing for acceptance by the “real” Americans.

The good news is that, according to Dershowitz, the time has passed for these feelings of marginality—of being outsiders seeking acceptance. The time has come for a new boldness, assertiveness, willingness to demand what is due, to defy tradition, to challenge authority, to raise eyebrows—to show some chutzpah in the best sense of the word.

In *Be An Outrageous Older Woman*, Ruth Harriet Jacobs tackles a similar problem, albeit with respect to a different population. Her focus is on the internalized negative imagery of older women in the United States today. She too challenges the desperate attempts to pass, this time for a younger woman rather than for a WASP. She too perceives such attempts as complicity in the stereotypical assumptions of the unattractiveness and marginality of the group. And she too challenges her readers to demand what is due them, defy tradition, challenge authority, raise eyebrows—to be a little outrageous and show some chutzpah!

This is a daunting challenge in an ageist culture which consistently bombards women with strategies for passing—Oil of Olay for starters, cosmetic surgery a little later. It is commonplace to overhear someone being told flatteringly, “You look so young for your age.” This is offered as a compliment, and the anticipated response is “Thank you.” In fact, this is not a compliment but an ageist insult. When a well-meaning black friend paid me this “compliment,” I asked her if she would be flattered if I told her admiringly that she was so light she could pass for white.

Ruth Jacobs not only challenges her readers to demand what is due them. She also provides creative ideas for enjoying life as an outrageous older woman who knows who she is, what she wants, and how to get it. Whether the issues relate to political activity, sexuality, identity, friendships, relationships with descendents, housing, money, bereavement, work, creativity, dress, or just having fun, there is a provocative chapter on the issue—with anecdotes demonstrating that chutzpah works!

The author has written a book which addresses older women across the spectrum of social class. She has incorporated information regarding low cost lunches at Senior Centers along with information on retreats for professional artists and writers. Consequently, no single reader will find everything of interest. Nevertheless, all readers will discover sufficient precious bits of useful information, insights, and inspiration to make it well worth the effort. It is a

wise, witty, and chutzpadic attack on a tough problem and I highly recommend it to my colleagues, clients, and friends.

Violent Emotions: Shame and Rage in Marital Quarrels, by Suzanne M. Retzinger. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1988. 238 pp., \$19.95, paper and **Psychiatric Response to Family Violence: Identifying and Confronting Neglected Danger**, by Edward W. Gondolf. Lexington: D.C. Heath and Company, 1990. 280 pp., \$34.95

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For the practicing sociologist, especially those interested in individual and family issues, there is good news and better news about these two books. The good news is that both books are useful and can be read with great profit by the student of medical sociology research. The better news is that one of the books is outstanding and is useful to the *practicing* sociologist.

Both books are written by sociologists interested in mental health and both deal with the timely topics of violent behavior and emotional interaction at the level of the family and other small groups. Each attempts to present both a theoretical statement and an empirical evaluation of the theory based on close scrutiny of several case studies. It is at this point that the quality of the two books begins to diverge for the practicing sociologist. Retzinger's book makes a greater contribution to the field of sociological practice by offering information and making direct suggestions that can be translated readily into intervention tactics, especially for the counseling sociologist. Gondolf's book, on the other hand, maintains a traditional sociological perspective and is solid medical sociology research. It is perhaps most useful as a subtext in a graduate-level mental health class.

Retzinger's book is a microtheory about the connection of the emotions of shame and anger in individuals' response to today's world. Her thesis is that people respond to a constant threat of the loss of an important social bond with the emotion of shame. The word shame is of growing significance among mental health professionals today. A number of books have been written in the last few years on the subject. (See Bradshaw, *Healing the Shame That Binds You*; Fossom and Mason, *Facing Shame: Families in Recovery*; and Kitchens, *Understanding and Treating Codependence* as examples.)

In these books, shame is defined simply as the sense of personal inadequacy and lack of personal worth. Most of these researchers argue that shame arises from the fear of abandonment in the family of origin. Retzinger shows the sociological significance of these arguments. As Retzinger sees it, the fear of alien-