

The Construction of the Self: A Developmental Perspective

By Susan Harter

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Drawing upon extensive theoretical knowledge and decades of empirical research by the author and others, this volume traces changes in the structure and content of self-representations from the preschool years through late adolescence. Harter provides a trenchant analysis of the cognitive and social processes responsible for the development of each person's unique sense of self. Throughout, normative-developmental and individual difference variables are clearly identified and clinical applications spotlighted. This authoritative work will be read with interest by scholars, clinicians, and students interested in understanding the causes and consequences of low self-esteem, or in designing interventions to promote more adaptive self-evaluations.

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The Construction of the Self: A Developmental Perspective By Susan Harter Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #2200485 in Books
- Brand: Brand: The Guilford Press
- Published on: 2001-08-02
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.02" h x .96" w x 5.98" l, 1.46 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 413 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

"This book, by one of the leading experts in self concept, is a very readable academic treatise with practical applications for psychological approaches to manage low self esteem throughout the life span. The author is an academic psychologist with a long history of academic research in this subject. She has developed useful clinical tools for measuring self esteem, writes clearly and conveys authority....This book will be useful both for the general psychiatrist as well as the child and adolescent specialist."--*The Canadian Child Psychiatry Review*

"...represents a significant core text for researchers interested in self-development and the role of self-evaluation in the development of self-worth and self-esteem....A clear strength of this book is its systematic attempt to consider the qualitative differences in the nature of the self across childhood and its exploration of how the processes underlying this development are potentially different at each stage of development....Harter should be commended...for presenting a valuable set of research ideas and findings and pulling them together to form a coherent and insightful text on self-development."--*Child Psychology and Psychiatry*

"The exploration of research is particularly thorough in the two areas in which Harter has focused her own empirical investigations: the development and integration of representations of self across childhood and adolescence and the developmental literature on self-evaluation, focusing particularly on her own important work in this area....Each of the many concepts that is reviewed is connected either to interesting research findings or to important theoretical traditions. Anyone with an interest in the self and its development is likely to find something new and intriguing in the review that exhaustively covers developmental work and touches on cognitive neuroscience, social and personality psychology, as well as symbolic interactionism. The book will serve as the first reference source for developmental research on the self for years to come....a wide-ranging review of research and theory on the self, with numerous connections made among different paradigms. Particularly valuable as illustrations of the potential value of these connections are Harter's discussions of clinical cases and pathological phenomena....Readers interested in the self will find the book to be an accessible account both of progress in the field to date and the opportunities for growth in self-concept research in years to come."--*Contemporary Psychology*

"This book will surely become a classic in the field. Dr. Harter brings her extensive theoretical and empirical knowledge of the self to bear in this important volume. Her integration of theory and research, along with attention to the practical implications of this work, will make this book a valuable addition to the libraries of academicians as well as practitioners. I highly recommend this volume for use as a graduate text in clinical, developmental, and social psychology, as well as for advanced seminars in psychiatry and related disciplines."--Dante Cicchetti, PhD, Director, Mt. Hope Family Center, Professor, Psychology, Psychiatry, and Pediatrics, University of Rochester

"In this book, Harter brings together her own and others' research and thinking about the bases of self-development. The book's coverage of such topics as the authenticity of the self and the effects of child abuse on the self has significant implications for clinical work and intervention, as well as theory. Sophisticated yet accessible, this book is 'must' reading for scholars of the self and clinicians, and an outstanding resource for advanced classes on the topic."--Nancy Eisenberg, PhD, Regents' Professor of Psychology at Arizona State

University

"This is a long-awaited and masterful synthesis of knowledge about self-development in childhood and adolescence from one of our leading researchers and clinical thinkers in this area. In addition to authoritative reviews that will be eagerly read by students and scholars alike, the book contains many of the author's own insights and empirical contributions. These culminate in valuable advice about assessment, program evaluation, and implications for facilitating healthy pathways."--Robert N. Emde, MD, Professor of Psychiatry, University of Colorado Health Sciences Center, Denver, Colorado

From the Back Cover
This book will surely become a classic in the field. Harter brings her extensive theoretical and empirical knowledge of the self to bear in this important volume. Her integration of theory and research, along with attention to the practical implications of this work, will make this book a valuable addition to the libraries of academicians as well as practitioners. I highly recommend this volume for use as a graduate text (Dante Cicchetti, PhD).

About the Author

Susan Harter, PhD, is Professor of Psychology and Head of the Developmental Psychology Program at the University of Denver. Her research, supported by funds from NIH for over 20 years, has resulted in the construction of a lifespan battery of self-report instruments to tap dimensions of the self-concept. These instruments are currently in use throughout the United States and internationally. In addition, she has received two major faculty awards, University Lecturer of the Year and the John Evans Professorship Award, the highest award to be bestowed upon a faculty member. Both awards are for national and international recognition in one's chosen field of research. Dr. Harter has written numerous journal articles and chapters, including chapters on self-concept, self-esteem, as well as motivational and emotional development in the 1983 and 1998 Handbook of Child Psychology. She has also served on National Institute of Mental Health study sections, chaired the Cognition, Emotion, and Personality Committee, and currently is on the Editorial Boards of a number of journals, including Developmenal Psychology, Child Development, Psychological Bulletin, Development and Psychopathology, and American Educational Research Journal.

Users Review

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