



The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap

By Stephanie Coontz

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The Way We Never Were examines two centuries of American family life and shatters a series of myths and half-truths that burden modern families. Placing current family dilemmas in the context of far-reaching economic, political, and demographic changes, Coontz sheds new light on such contemporary concerns as parenting, privacy, love, the division of labor along gender lines, the black family, feminism, and sexual practice.

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Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Review

Romper

“If you've ever questioned whether the ‘Good Old Days’ were really all that good, *The Way We Never Were* is worth a read. [Coontz] puts ‘traditional family values’ in a historical context and examines whether or not the idea was realistic. It will make you glad we don't have to vacuum in heels anymore.”

Spiked Review of Books (UK)

“*The Way We Never Were* was such a great achievement and an important step forward. It provided a much-needed corrective to the romanticised view of the 1950s family, and began to defuse some of the more hysterical and fatalistic discussions about teen pregnancy and the underclass....A new epilogue takes a stab at addressing some of today's mistaken assumptions about the family. It all makes for a work that continues to provide plenty of food for thought.”

Ellen Galinsky, President, Families and Work Institute

“Stephanie Coontz is a national treasure. Her work, always solidly grounded in the best and most comprehensive research, is consistently groundbreaking. She changes the way we understand the past, present, and the future. What's more, her new paradigms change the way we live and work!”

Publishers Weekly

“A wonderfully perceptive, myth-debunking report.... An important contribution to the current debate on family values.”

Kirkus

“Clear, incisive, and distinguished by Coontz's personal conviction and by its vast range of cogent examples, including capsule histories of women in the labor force and of black families. Fascinating, persuasive, politically relevant.”

Frank Furstenberg, Zellerbach Family Professor of Sociology, Emeritus, University of Pennsylvania

“This small book has had an outsized influence on the way social scientists think about the recent history of the American family. It remains the starting point for anyone who hopes to understand how contemporary family life came about and where we may be headed in the future.”

Paula England, 2015-15 President, American Sociological Association

"Stephanie Coontz has her finger on the pulse of contemporary families like no one else in America. In this book, she busts numerous myths about families in the past and clearly explains what is going on in today's families."

William H. Chafe, Alice Mary Baldwin Professor of History, Duke University, the former president, Organization of American Historians

"More than twenty years ago, in *The Way We Never Were*, Stephanie Coontz cut through all the bizarre stereotypes we carry with us about marriage and the family in America. Now, in a brilliant revision, she jolts us once again by bringing us up to date on when people marry, how income inequality affects family life,

and why we have made so much progress on issues of gay marriage, and so little on issues of poverty and women's reproductive rights. A terrific read with amazing new information!"

Newsday

"Coontz presents fascinating facts and figures that explode the cherished myths about self-sufficient, happy, moral families."

The Nation

"Historically rich, and loaded with anecdotal evidence, *The Way We Never Were* effectively demolishes the normal, traditional nuclear family as neither normal nor traditional, and not even nuclear."

Linda Burton, Dean of Social Sciences and James B. Duke Professor of Sociology, Duke University

"There is no better commentary on the status and processes of American families than *The Way We Never Were*. Stephanie Coontz writes about the realities of family life in an uncompromising way that integrates evidence-based research with the souls and everyday lives of kin within and across generations and across time and space. In my family sociology courses a spontaneous awakening occurs for students who read this book for the first time. They never look at families the same way, which is a game changer as they consider family life in their futures and question the meaning of families in their present lives. Stephanie Coontz has given the field a true gift that guides us in a journey of understanding the evolution of family life in real time and under real circumstances. Illuminating, provocative, and a must read for all!"

Jonathan Yardley, *Washington Post Book World*

"[Coontz] approaches the subject of what we now insist up on calling 'family values' with what is, in the current atmosphere, a refreshing lack of partisan cant."

The National Memo

"Stephanie Coontz's 1992 book was a work of first-rate history, and it undermined a slew of common misperceptions of family life in America, but it was also a plea to take off the rose-colored glasses that cause us to get so many political issues wrong. Fittingly, Coontz's publisher, Basic Books, has released a revised edition just as the moralizing we've come to expect from presidential campaigns kicks into overdrive."

The Society Pages

"The latest edition of Stephanie Coontz's *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* is an essential read for policymakers... Coontz's book makes for an absorbing, sometimes shocking, often wryly funny read. Both comprehensive and comprehensible, it's a veritable one-stop shop for reliable research on how public policy and culture affect families."

Los Angeles Times

"A treasure.... Coontz's ample evidence exposes the falseness, sentimentality and self-righteousness of most public statements about the family."

New York Times Book Review

"Often brilliant and invariably provocative."

Minneapolis Star Tribune

"[*The Way We Never Were* is] one of the few books I've carried with me through years and moves – because it's a welcome and hopeful reminder that families always have faced, and overcome, transitions and

challenges. In the revised book, Coontz offers an equally honest and upbeat review of the way things really are, despite dire predictions of a culture in crisis.”

Entertainment Weekly

“Coontz reminds us that the ‘good old days’ were never quite that in her excellent history of the American family.”

The Oklahoman

“David West is getting close to finishing another book. That's not some sort of metaphor. The NBA veteran is a voracious reader, almost always carrying his latest book on a team plane or his electronic tablet into the locker room. For the past few weeks, he's been immersed in a book by social historian Stephanie Coontz. It's called *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap*. The book is about shattering myths. So is David West.”

About the Author

Stephanie Coontz is a member of the faculty of Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington, where she is a historian and an expert on American culture.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Roger Ruelas:

This book untitled *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* to be one of several books that best seller in this year, this is because when you read this e-book you can get a lot of benefit on it. You will easily to buy this specific book in the book retail store or you can order it by using online. The publisher on this book sells the e-book too. It makes you easier to read this book, as you can read this book in your Smartphone. So there is no reason to your account to past this book from your list.

Michael Floyd:

Your reading sixth sense will not betray you actually, why because this *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* reserve written by well-known writer who knows well how to make book that may be understand by anyone who have read the book. Written in good manner for you, dripping every ideas and creating skill only for eliminate your own personal hunger then you still skepticism *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* as good book not just by the cover but also with the content. This is one guide that can break don't evaluate book by its cover, so do you still needing an additional sixth sense to pick this kind of!? Oh come on your studying sixth sense already told you so why you have to listening to a different sixth sense.

Krystal Wilson:

This *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* is great publication for you because the content which is full of information for you who also always deal with world and possess to make decision every minute. That book reveal it facts accurately using great arrange word or we can say no rambling sentences in it. So if you are read that hurriedly you can have whole facts in it. Doesn't mean it only

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