



Ostracism: The Power of Silence

By Kipling D. Williams PhD

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Ostracism is among the most powerful means of social influence. From schoolroom time-outs or the "silent treatment" from a family member or friend, to governmental acts of banishment or exile, ostracism is practiced in many contexts, by individuals and groups. This lucidly written book provides a comprehensive examination of this pervasive phenomenon, exploring the short- and long-term consequences for targets as well as the functions served for those who exclude or ignore. Within a cogent theoretical framework, an exemplary research program is presented that makes use of such diverse methods as laboratory experiments, surveys, narrative accounts, interviews, Internet-based research, brief role-plays, and week-long simulations. The resulting data shed new light on how ostracism affects the individual's coping responses, self-esteem, and sense of belonging and control. Informative and timely, this book will be received with interest by researchers, practitioners, and students in a wide range of psychological disciplines.

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Editorial Review

Review

"On the heels of school shootings by socially rejected youth, nothing could be more timely than this fascinating exploration of the root causes and far-reaching effects of ostracism. Williams's research and reflections, blended with compelling life experiences, make for riveting reading. This is psychological science at its best."--David G. Myers, PhD, Department of Psychology, Hope College, author of *The American Paradox: Spiritual Hunger in an Age of Plenty*

"This is a scholarly, engaging, and lucidly written work. Williams, a foremost authority on the topic, has done an admirable job documenting the prevalence of ostracism across history, cultures, and the course of human development. He elucidates the causes and consequences of ostracism by presenting a compelling theoretical model and supporting it through a series of fascinating laboratory experiments, Internet-based research, narrative accounts, in-depth interviews, and surveys. Social scientists and undergraduate and graduate-level students will be awed by the power of this book to explain a complex phenomenon so elegantly and to provide so many valuable insights into both the dark and bright sides of human behavior."--Constantine Sedikides, PhD, Department of Psychology, University of Southampton, England

"Williams writes in a lively and engaging style about a phenomenon that until now has been paid little attention by social psychologists. *Ostracism* is a groundbreaking book that sets the agenda for future research in this area. The accessible tone will draw readers in from the very first page, making the book suitable for upper-level students as well as researchers and behavioral science professionals. This is a book that is very hard to put down."--Michael A. Hogg, PhD, FASSA, Professor of Social Psychology, University of Queensland, Australia

"This is an inspiring and unusual book. It is recommended reading for everyone interested in the wider context and causes of human conflict and aggression. That is how this book has earned its place on my shelf of most favorite books."--The Bulletin of the International Society for Research on Aggression (*The Bulletin of the International Society for Research on Aggression* 2002-07-27)

"Relying on a judicious mix of case studies, experiments, and role play, Williams explores ostracism in narratives, the laboratory, office settings, and even on the Internet (being shunned online is by no means uncommon). This wonderful 11-chapter book illustrates that important, unexplored issues amenable to traditional social psychological analysis remain to be explored."--Choice (*Choice* 2002-07-27)

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About the Author

Kipling D. Williams, PhD, is currently Chair of the Psychology Department at Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia. He has taught previously at Drake University, the University of Toledo, and the University of New South Wales. He received his doctorate in social psychology from Ohio State University. The coeditor of several books, Dr. Williams has written numerous articles and book chapters on social influence, group dynamics, and psychology and law.

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