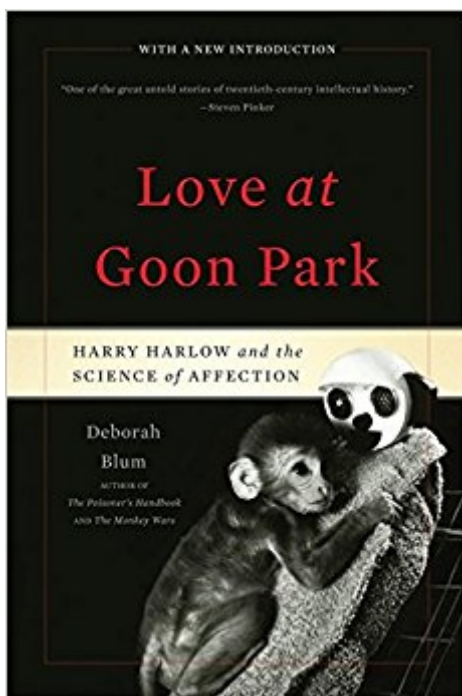


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Love At Goon Park: Harry Harlow And The Science Of Affection



Synopsis

In the early twentieth century, affection between parents and their children was discouraged; psychologists thought it would create needy kids, and doctors thought it would spread infectious disease. It took a revolution in psychology to overturn these beliefs and prove that touch ensures emotional and intellectual health. In *Love at Goon Park*, Pulitzer Prize winner Deborah Blum charts this profound cultural shift by tracing the story of Harry Harlow—the man who studied neglect and its life-altering consequences on primates in his lab. The biography of both a man and an idea, *Love at Goon Park* ultimately invites us to examine ourselves and the way we love.

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Customer Reviews

In this surprisingly compelling book, Blum (*The Monkey Wars*) reveals that many of the child-rearing truths we now take for granted—infants need parental attention; physical contact is related to emotional growth and cognitive development—were shunned by the psychological community of the 1950s. As Blum shows, Freudian and behavioral psychologists argued for decades that babies were drawn to their mothers only as a source of milk, motivated by the instinctual drive for sustenance, and that children could be harmed by too much affection. Harry Harlow's experiments, Blum finds in this deeply sympathetic investigation of his life and work, changed all this, conclusively demonstrating that infant monkeys bond emotionally with a specific "mother" a dummy figure made of cloth even if it is not a source of food. The experiments also revealed, astonishingly enough, that

puzzle-solving monkeys who were not rewarded with food actually performed better than those who were rewarded, leading him to conclude that baby primates and by extension, baby children are motivated by a range of emotions, including curiosity, affection and wonder. Born Harry Israel, Harlow changed his name because 1930s anti-Semitism prevented him from getting a research position (though he wasn't Jewish). His first marriage ended because his wife, who had given up her own promising scientific career, felt he was spending too much time at the lab and not enough at home with the kids. Monkey Wars fans who have been waiting for a follow-up will find this book irresistible. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Not too long ago, the predominant paradigm maintained that infants should be denied love or even physical contact lest they be threatened with infectious microbes. Countering the authority of reigning behavioral psychologists like B.F. Skinner and John Watson, the brilliant renegade Harry Harlow attempted to find the essence of mother love and its influence on child development. Rather than work with rats, Harlow studied primate affection using his classical inanimate surrogate mothers. Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Blum (*The Monkey Wars*) rivetingly recounts Harlow's work while examining the man himself. Harlow argued that mother-child bonding was crucial for normal development, and his experiments with monkeys showed that social organisms cannot survive isolation. But as Blum reveals, Harlow was an enigma, brilliant but distant from his own children, and his work raised ethical and controversial dilemmas concerning the research treatment of animals. Harlow had a major impact on psychologists like Abraham Maslow (who happened to be his graduate student), yet he is little known today outside the scientific community. Blum's excellent biography, the first major new work devoted to him, should change that. Highly recommended for public and academic libraries. Rita Hoots, Woodland Coll. Lib., CA Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

This is a phenomenal book about the necessity of love and exactly what that means scientifically. What is necessary from a mother and how should the child be pushed into the world with the mother's backing? What are the biochemical effects and what other sources can bring back a poorly mothered child? What relatives and friends and environment can make a difference? Watching monkey families in tough circumstances can tell us what we need to know. Harry Harlow's real life is set against the primate family situations in this compelling story of love's basic place in our lives set against the psychology of the day including other giants such as Bowlby. It makes one

challenge and examine the relationships in their lives.

Having read this fascinating book, I feel I understand so much more about child development, the important role connection and acceptance plays in it and the terrible consequences the absence of human affection brings.

"Love At Goon Park" is a fascinating look at a man and his work. Deborah Blum provides the reader with an extensive and sobering background before exploring Harry Harlow's research. Did you know that as recently as the 1950s, psychologists were trying to convince parents that too much cuddling and "love" were bad for their children? Harlow, with his revolutionary experiments on baby monkeys, was bucking the conventional wisdom of his time. He was trying to say that mother's love mattered, that touch mattered, that affection mattered. His peers didn't want to hear this, but Harlow's research finally forced the profession to listen. Blum's writing is never dry, never boring. She writes with amazing flair and humanity. You'll feel that you are getting to know this person, Harry Harlow. Even more, you'll feel you are there in the lab with Harlow and his graduate students, waiting to see how the baby monkeys will react to the latest experiment. What will we learn? Will anyone listen? Blum cares, and you'll care too. You can't help but feel for the monkeys when you read this book. And Blum doesn't gloss over the issue of abuse, especially mental, that was visited on our primate cousins in the name of science. "Goon Park" takes an unflinching look at Harry Harlow, warts and all. I think her treatment of all the issues was fair and balanced. I highly recommend "Love At Goon Park." It's well-written, interesting and important.

A great read unlike some psychology texts that you slog endlessly to get through. To a beginning psychology student it is fascinating how revolutionary and difficult it was for Harlow to prove to his fellow psychologists the now obvious attributes of mother love and how ironic that such a flawed idiosyncratic curmudgeon was the one to do it. An easy five stars!!

High recommend this book--anyone who is interested in the development of psychology as a field, the research pertaining to attachment and love and a behind the scenes look into the faces behind the theories should give this a read.

Such an insightful book in so many ways. Really helps explain why people can have a hard time moving past their childhood.

Harlow gets sort of demonized at first glance on places like wikipedia, but this book really helped me to understand why he did what he did, and just how much good came out of it. Highly recommend for anyone.

Love at Goon Park is about Harry Harlow, a scientist who uses monkeys to prove that feeling loved is very, very important to children from the minute they are born and to us all. I was curious about such a scientific project but was totally surprised at how much I enjoyed the book. It's a very good read on every page. The author explains it all clearly and simply, letting her own feeling for both the animals and the people come through. My own children are adults now, but mothers have the hardest job on earth, and we need constant reassurance that we provide a good environment for our family. Reading Love at Goon Park gave me reassurance, and I highly recommend it. You don't have to have a background in science to benefit from its words.

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