



# The Package Deal: Marriage, Work, and Fatherhood in Men's Lives

*Nicholas W. Townsend*

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In this important new work, Nicholas Townsend explores what men say about being fathers, and about what fatherhood means to them. He shows how men negotiate the prevailing cultural values about fatherhood, marriage, employment, and home ownership that he conceptualizes as a 'package deal'. Townsend identifies the conflicts and contradictions within the gendered expectations of men and fathers, and analyzes the social and economic contexts that make emotionally involved fathering an elusive ideal. Drawing on the lives and life stories of a group of men in their late forties who graduated from high school together in the early 1970s, "The Package Deal" demystifies culture's image of fatherhood in the United States. These men are depicted as neither villains nor victims, but as making their best efforts to achieve successful adult masculinity. This book shows what fathers really think about fatherhood, the division of labor between fathers and mothers, the gendered difference in expectations, and the privileging of the relationship between fathers and sons. These revealing accounts of how fatherhood fits into the rest of men's lives help us better understand what men can and cannot do as fathers. And they clearly illustrate that women are not alone in trying to 'have it all' as they strive to combine work and family. Author note: Nicholas W. Townsend has investigated the connections between men and families in the United States and southern Africa. He is Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Brown University.

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