



# The Intimacy Paradox: Personal Authority in the Family System

By Donald S. Williamson PhD, Donald Williamson

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Although most people physically leave home by their early 20s, emotional separation from one's family is a more difficult process that can continue for a lifetime. Now available in paper for the first time, this acclaimed book addresses the struggle of adults to establish autonomy without sacrificing family connections. Donald S. Williamson presents personal authority therapy, an approach designed to simultaneously foster individual development and family-of-origin intimacy. Therapists are taken step by step through conducting individual, couple, and small group sessions that culminate in several sessions with each client and his or her parents. Writing with sensitivity and humor, the author demonstrates effective ways to help adult children construct new personal and family narratives, resolve intergenerational intimidation, and enjoy healthier, more equal relationships with parents and significant others.

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#### Review

"Any person who has ever seen or heard Don Williamson speak knows he is a master at melding his personal life with his theoretical and therapeutic work. In *The Intimacy Paradox*, Williamson has succeeded in writing what he does so well in his presentations. This book is the authoritative work on the concept of personal authority in the family system."

*(Journal of Marital and Family Therapy 2002-07-05)*

"An interesting, theoretically sophisticated, and useful guide."

*(AFTA Newsletter 2002-07-05)*

"Williamson is utterly persuasive when making the case that achieving wholeness of the self cannot be best built on separation of that self from the parents of origin....He makes his points in a context of respect for the client, the client's spouse, and the client's parents—albeit a context that is open to play and humor and not taking itself too seriously. Williamson not too seriously does very serious work."

*(Contemporary Psychology 2002-07-05)*

#### About the Author

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I. Personal Authority Theory 1. Personal Authority in the Family System: An Overview 2. Background Theoretical Assumptions 3. Personal Authority: The Construct in Theoretical Context II. Personal Authority Method: The Play's the Thing 4. Setting the Scene: Playful Interventions as a Method of Therapy 5. Auditioning and Casting: Background Preparations for the Conversations with Parents 6. Black Out Sketches: The Group at Play 7. The Rehearsal: Preparing the Client for Political Renegotiations with Parents 8. Scheduling the Performance and Contract Negotiating with the Players 9. Writing the Script: The In-Office Agenda for the Primary Triangle/m-/ Part 1. The Parents Speak 10. Writing the Script: The In-Office Agenda for the Primary Triangle/m-/ Part 2. The Client Responds and the Consultant Reflects 11. Performing Outdoors: New Life at the Graveyard/m-/Renegotiation with a Deceased Former Parent 12. Production Problems: Limitations to the Method III. Personal Authority Contextual Issues 13. Personal Authority: The Personal Story 14. Personal and Professional Authority in Professional Life 15. Personal Authority, Professional Authority, and Physical Health 16. Personal Authority and Gender Differences: Typecasting, Linda M. Walsh 17. Beyond Personal Authority IV. Personal Authority Research 18. The Personal Authority in the Family System Questionnaire: Assessment of Intergenerational Family Relationships, James H. Bray

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