



Masochism and the Self

Roy F. Baumeister

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This volume provides an integrative theory firmly grounded in current psychology of the self, and offers a fresh, compelling account of one of psychology's most enigmatic behavior patterns. Professor Baumeister provides comprehensive coverage of historical and cross-cultural theories and empirical data on masochism and presents recent, original data drawn from a large data set of anonymous masochistic scripts of fantasies and favorite experiences. Drawn from the latest social psychological research and theories, Professor Baumeister returns the emphasis to the original and proto-typical form of masochism -- sexual masochism -- and explains these phenomena as a means of releasing the individual from the burden of self-awareness.

It is the first volume to present a psychological theory compatible with the mounting evidence that most masochists are not mentally ill nor does masochism derive from sadism. Instead, Professor Baumeister finds that masochism emerges as an escapist response to the problematic nature of selfhood and he attempts to foster an understanding of sexual masochism that emphasizes both "escape from self" and "construction of meaning" hypotheses.

The book is directed at all those interested in the self and identity in paradoxical behavior patterns and in the construction of meaning, presenting specific clinical recommendations.

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