

A SECRET SADNESS

The Hidden Relationship Patterns That Make Women Depressed

VALERIE E. WHIFFEN, PH.D.

Around the world, women are twice as likely as men to experience depression. Why? The answer could be in their relationships.

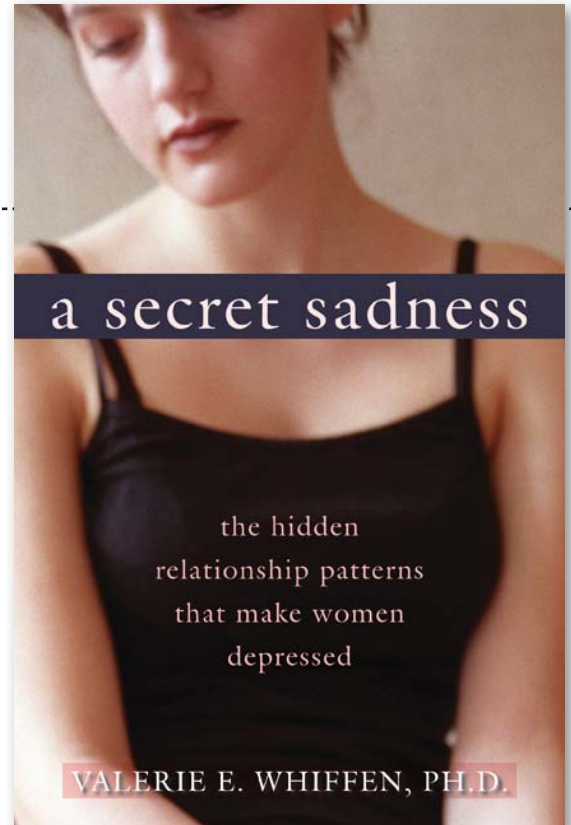
The fact that women conduct their relationships with their family, friends, and romantic partners differently from how men conduct theirs is not a new idea. Television has used these differences to propel many situation comedies, and relationship experts have talked and written about it for years. But research suggests that these differences also account for the higher rate at which women experience depression.

Clinical psychologist and researcher Dr. Valerie Whiffen, author of the newly revised book ***A Secret Sadness: The Hidden Relationship Patterns That Make Women Depressed*** explains that “girls and women place a lot of importance on their closest relationships. Our parents, relatives, romantic partners and spouses, children, and friends are central to our lives..” So how does this cause depression? “When our most intimate relationships are good, they protect us from becoming depressed, ” Whiffen says, “But when they are riddled with conflict and emotional insecurity, they actually increase our risk for depression.”

In ***A Secret Sadness***, Whiffen examines the often hidden relationship factors that make women depressed using three detailed case studies from her own practice. She shows readers how interpersonal problems can contribute to depression and how working through these underlying issues can help them heal.

Guiding readers through exploring their own relationships with parents, siblings, children, and intimate partners, and helping them look for ways that their feelings about relationships may contribute to feelings of hopelessness, sadness, anxiety, fear, failure, and inertia, Whiffen ultimately helps them to use this information to help overcome feelings of depression in their own lives.

A Secret Sadness is a must read book for women who suffer from depression and any woman who is interested in learning about how their relationships — from their family of origin to their girlfriends, boyfriends, and husbands — have affected how they feel about themselves and how they view the world.



FOR AN INTERVIEW REQUEST
OR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

Adia Colar 510-594-6107
adia@newharbinger.com

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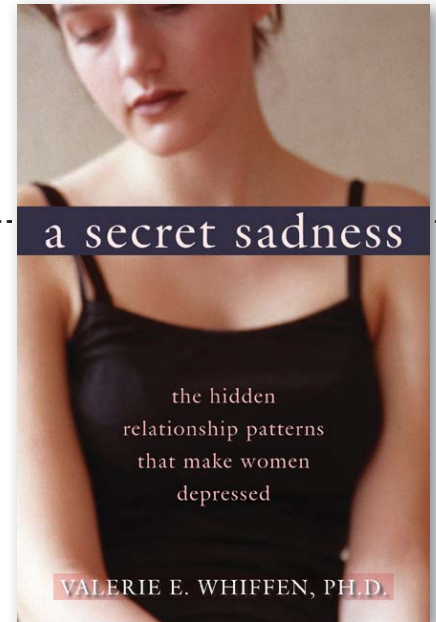
Valerie E. Whiffen, Ph.D.

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Praise

"This introduction to depression places the disease in the context of women's interpersonal relationships, simply and methodically underscoring the correlation between a woman's formative connections with her parents, her romantic relationships as an adult, and her emotional well-being and sense of self.... [A *Secret Sadness*] encourages women suffering from depression to undergo therapy, and information about treatment options, with a brief mention of antidepressants, rounds out the book. Readers are left with an encouraging mantra: 'Remember that our lives don't change; we change our lives.'"

—Publishers Weekly, January 2006

"A *Secret Sadness* is a map of what is known about the kinds of relationships that contribute to women's depression. Whiffen also discusses the influence of hormones, genetics, stressful events, losses, and gender roles in depression. The book is a compelling read and is jammed with sound, useful information—it provides a straightforward, well-informed answer to a very complex question: Can your relationships make you depressed?"

—Janice Thompson, Ph.D., registered psychologist in private practice in West Vancouver, BC

"An excellent book. Whiffen's writing style is very clear and her clinical perspective is supported by solid science. An excellent adjunct to psychotherapy for women with depression."

—Marcia McCoy, Ph.D., C.Psych.

"Blending research with clinical wisdom, Whiffen shows how the very relationships that sustain us can be the source of emotional insecurity and crippling depression. This book is essential reading for anyone who works with women facing depression."

—Sue Johnson, Ed.D., professor of psychology at the University of Ottawa and author of *Hold Me Tight*

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About the Author

VALERIE E. WHIFFEN, PH.D.

has been a clinical psychologist in private practice since 1988 in Ottawa. She is also a professor of Psychology at the University of Ottawa, where she has been teaching students to do interpersonal therapy with depressed women for 17 years. Dr. Whiffen also serves as a peer reviewer for several professional psychological journals, and has authored several book chapters in professional books, and 40 articles in professional journals.

Valerie Whiffen has been researching gender and depression for many years, and has recently received a large grant to follow a group of girls until 2007 to study how and when depression manifests itself and the interpersonal factors involved.

Valerie Whiffen lives in Ottawa, ON, Canada.

Interview Questions

1. Early in the book you spend some time discussing the differences between sadness and depression. What are some of those differences? How can a woman recognize that she is depressed and should seek treatment?
2. What are signal functions? Can you give an example of how the loss of signal functions can cause depression?
3. What are blind spots?
4. How can discovering your blind spots help conquer your depression?
5. How many symptoms of depression should a woman have before you recommend that she seek professional help?
6. What are some biological factors that contribute to depression?
7. The fact that depression rates for women increase at puberty and after childbirth would seem to indicate a link between depression and a woman's reproductive hormones - is this the case?
8. Can genetics alone determine whether a woman will experience depression?
9. What is the link between gender roles and depression in women?

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