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*How We Become the Persons We Are*

by Alan Sroufe

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Alan Sroufe and his team at the University of Minnesota Institute of Child Development conducted the longest running study of human psychological development, establishing the reasons why we each behave as we do and see the world as we do. Sroufe’s groundbreaking theoretical and empirical contributions to the fields of developmental psychology and developmental psychopathology have been reported to the academic world in over 150 papers and journal articles and seven books.

From the beginning of his academic career, Alan’s motivation to pursue the study of human development was personal. Having been raised in a dysfunctional family, he wanted to know why he had the problems he did and how his mental health could be improved. *A Compelling Idea* is his personal story of this road to discovery.

As one reviewer observed, “It is hard to imagine a person with any curiosity regarding who they are and how they developed who would not be fascinated by this book.”

“This book is brilliant! Alan Sroufe is one of the most thoughtful and inspiring social scientists in the world. This compelling memoir should be read by everyone.”

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## Advance Praise for *A Compelling Idea*

"Alan Sroufe is the leading developmental theorist of his generation. Here he shares the personal experiences and goals that shaped his own development and his landmark career tracking down the origins of personhood, identity, and intimacy."

—**EVERETT WATERS**, Professor of Psychology,  
SUNY Stony Brook

"A magnificent combination of memoir and scientific autobiography... *A Compelling Idea* is a compelling narrative that will inform, inspire and illuminate how we can create more courage in our own lives and more connection among all of us, bravo!"

—**DANIEL SIEGEL**, Clinical Professor of Psychiatry,  
UCLA School of Medicine and NY Times best-selling  
author of *The Developing Mind* and *Brainstorm*

"The balance between telling the history of the field and relating his personal journey is perfect and so very moving."

—**MARY J. WARD**, Associate Research Professor of  
Psychology in Pediatrics and Psychiatry,  
Weill Cornell Medicine

"This engaging and poignant memoir is a must read not only for students from a variety of disciplines who are beginning their career development, but also for seasoned professionals."

—**DANTE CICHETTI**, McKnight Presidential Chair,  
Institute of Child Development and Department of  
Psychiatry, University of Minnesota

"This book is absolutely wonderful! It is hard to imagine a person with any curiosity regarding who they are and how they (or important others) developed who would not find it fascinating."

—**MARY MAIN**, Professor Emerita, & **ERIK HESSE**,  
Associate Adjunct Professor, University of California,  
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"Alan Sroufe has written a landmark book on the role of early close relationships in the emergence of the self... and on how these affect the development of the person from birth to adulthood.."

— **FROSSO MOTTI-STEFANIDI**, National and  
Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece, and President  
of the International Consortium of Developmental  
Science Societies

## About the Author



**L. ALAN SROUFE**, Professor Emeritus, University of Minnesota Institute of Child Development, has been called: "The premier developmentalist of his generation" (The Bowlby/Ainsworth award citation) and "... a founder and leading contributor to the field of developmental psychopathology" (the Distinguish Scientific Award of the Society of Research in Child Development). An internationally recognized expert on early attachment relationships, emotional development, and developmental psychopathology, he has published 150 articles and seven books on these topics, including *The Development of the Person*, a two time award winner.



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