Praise for...

Mastering Crucial Moments in Separation and Divorce: A Multidisciplinary Guide to Excellence in Practice and Outcome

Families in transition are desperate for capable professionals to provide insight and guidance on how best to navigate toward the successful outcome of a separation and divorce. Kate Scharff and Lisa Herrick, two highly experienced and enormously well-respected practitioners, have set forth in clear and concise terms concrete strategies that will enable professionals in many disciplines to better accomplish those admirable goals.

Scharff and Herrick’s thoughtful work is unique in the breadth of its scope and in the creative strategies it offers to ease the pain of clients experiencing the trauma of separation and divorce and giving them the tools they need to move forward in a positive and constructive way with the remainder of their lives. There is something for everyone in this exceptional and insightful work.

Mastering Crucial Moments in Separation and Divorce has been a pleasure for me to read in its clarity, its cutting edge ideas, and its inspiring pragmatic applications for our everyday work. Even though this is my area of expertise, I learned an enormous amount and found the book informative and insightful. You will be pleased that you read it and anxious to share what you have learned with your professional colleagues.

—Sanford K. Ain, Esq., Co-founder and Principal, Ain & Bank, P.C.; Fellow, American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers; President, District of Columbia Chapter of American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers
What an extraordinarily abundant and nuanced gift Kate Scharff and Lisa Herrick have given to the divorce community! This book resonates with intelligence, compassion, and wisdom while offering psychologically sound and practical tools to help all professionals—from beginners to old-timers—get better at navigating the deep waters of divorce with our clients. The authors bring an authoritative yet kind and humble perspective from their years of multidisciplinary divorce experience, giving readers a rich mix of theoretical anchors, case studies, and concrete guidance. Although they are careful to acknowledge points at which the responsibilities of lawyers differ from those of mental health or financial professionals, the understandings they share with us transcend professional boundaries. They write with grace and clarity and have a knack for asserting complex and important truths like this one straightforwardly and powerfully:

“When a case flounders or falls out, the culprit is almost always problems in and among the personalities of professional team members, not the difficult behaviors of the clients. Collaboration is a state of mind that exists first, primarily, and sometimes only in the minds of the professionals. In other words, we are not dependent on our clients for good outcomes; they are dependent on us.”

—Pauline Tesler, Esq., Fellow, American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers; Co-founder and First President, International Academy of Collaborative Professionals; Founding Director, Integrative Law Institute at Commonweal

Kate Scharff and Lisa Herrick have once again brought forth their wisdom and compassion to enhance the evolution of the interdisciplinary practice of separation and divorce. Considering divorce as a “developmental crisis” creates a wide-open field of possibilities. Many of the authors’ previously articulated ideas come together in new ways, along with new, original conceptualizations that take the reader further into the experience of clients and of the professionals who are trying to help them. With their characteristic thoroughness and true-to-life illustrations, Scharff and Herrick create a rich yet accessible tapestry of possibilities for the practitioner to consider at their next client meeting. Presenting such delicious terms as “metabolizing an idea,” such robust models as “the Three Conditions for Positive
Change,” and extending their scope to include mindfulness practices, their work is continually evolving, practical, creative, and inspiring.

—Dr. Susan Gamache, Psychologist, Clinical Fellow in Marriage & Family Therapy; Senior Collaborative Practitioner & Trainer; Founding Co-Chair, Vancouver Collaborative Divorce Group

Once in a great while something surprising happens at the frontier of psychotherapeutic thinking. A creative mind emerges that has deeply and personally integrated established theories, infused them with original ideas, and shaped them into new conceptualizations with the power to expand our collective thinking and raise the bar of professional practice. In their inspiring second book on the universally relevant topic of divorce, Kate Scharff and Lisa Herrick have done just that.

Drawing from the most important lessons of psychotherapy, the authors offer a developmental paradigm for learning how best to help couples and families through this challenging life phase. Whether you’re an individual or couple psychotherapist, mediator, or divorce attorney of any stripe everything you need is here—plain English theory, lively vignettes, common-sense techniques, and an exploration of the importance of self-awareness.

Mastering Crucial Moments in Separation and Divorce is another deceptively simple work by two experts in both the art and the science of their craft. Like its predecessor, Navigating Emotional Currents in Collaborative Divorce (American Bar Association 2010), it’s beautifully written—sophisticated, yet accessible and often funny—and all helping professionals who deal in fractured human relationships should read it.

—Jane Prelinger, MSW, LICSW, Founding Co-Director, Center for Existential Studies; Faculty, The International Psychotherapy Institute and the Washington School of Psychiatry; Former Director, Treatment Centers of the Washington School of Psychiatry; International Speaker and Trainer

Kate Scharff and Lisa Herrick have made another major contribution to our professional library. This is a must-have book for divorce professionals who aspire to improve their level of practice by expanding their
understanding of the complex dynamics between themselves and their clients. Along the way, the authors remind us of the powerful impact of our own life experiences and biases, and of the importance of our willingness to uncover and explore our vulnerabilities.

The organization and layout of the book is exceptional and designed to make the material highly accessible. Important ideas are pulled from the text and highlighted, and each chapter ends with a helpful summary. These, along with chapter-by-chapter “learning modules” and a comprehensive glossary, make it easy for the reader to dip back into the book when reviewing a concept or looking for a quick answer.

I found the section on “Modes of Advocacy” extremely useful, especially the observation that “empathy doesn’t equate with endorsement.” It is often challenging to persuade an angry, upset client that acknowledging their spouse’s point of view does not mean abandoning their own. And attorneys can find it equally difficult to avoid aligning with their own client’s story and dismissing that of their client’s spouse. The authors offer a powerful reminder that advocacy can either suck us into the vortex of our client’s experience or lift us above and beyond so we can offer perspective and reality testing.

—Rita S. Pollak, MA, JD, Former President of International Academy of Collaborative Professionals and the Massachusetts Collaborative Law Council

Scharff and Herrick inject a psychodynamic perspective into divorce work in order to help professionals from the fields of law and mental health understand their clients and react to them in ways that are growth-promoting. The authors turn sophisticated concepts into tools, using language designed to support working at a deeper level. They write in a conversational style that makes you feel as if they are right there, talking to you.

—Marsha Kline Pruett, PhD, MSL, ABPP, Smith College School for Social Work

Kate Scharff and Lisa Herrick, both seasoned psychotherapists who have worked in the field of divorce for many years, have written an invaluable multidisciplinary primer to help professionals working
with divorcing couples move beyond the win-lose paradigm and forward with their lives. Mastering Crucial Moments in Separation and Divorce will raise the skill level and self-awareness of attorneys, divorce coaches and financial experts so they can become attuned facilitators of change. As a professional who works regularly with couples struggling to resolve money problems amid the stress of separation and divorce, I found Scharff and Herrick’s book to be a gift—packed with sound advice, surprising insights, and new techniques for navigating even the toughest moments of a couple’s divorce.

—Olivia Mellan, National Speaker, Money Coach, Business Consultant, Author of Money Harmony: A Guide for Individuals and Couples

Many highly trained divorce professionals put great emphasis on learning to work with a wide range of clients but neglect to explore (or choose not to explore) their own impact on the matter. In Mastering Crucial Moments in Separation and Divorce: A Multidisciplinary Guide to Excellence in Practice and Outcome, Kate Scharff and Lisa Herrick bring attention to the professionals involved in all manner of divorce processes, and to the impact we have on case outcomes. Early on they make the powerful point that, “The success of any case is predicated on the self-awareness and self-management of every professional involved.”

This book is filled with practical techniques and the clinical reasoning behind them. I particularly found the “Seven Factors to Consider When Deciding What to Do or Say” and the “Supplemental Study Modules” to be very effective. I believe that all divorce professionals could work together more productively if they were to read this book and use it as a guide.

Kate and Lisa, thank you for explaining so many concepts in such a usable, reader-friendly manner. All of us in the world of multidisciplinary divorce work will benefit from your wisdom.

—Linda Solomon, LPC, LMFT, Collaborative Facilitator, Therapist, Trainer, Recipient of the Collaborative Law Institute of Texas 2015 Gay C. Cox Collaborative Law Award