

**RECOMMENDATION HIGHLIGHTS****Self-Help Books**

- On improving relationships with communication and cognitive therapy:
  - ★★★★★ *Love Is Never Enough* by Aaron Beck
  - ★★★★ *The Relationship Cure* by John Gottman and Joan DeClaire
- On the nature and the forms of love:
  - ★★★★ *The Art of Loving* by Erich Fromm
  - ★★★★ *The Triangle of Love* by Robert Sternberg
- On improving relationships by understanding yourself and relationships:
  - ★★★★★ *The Dance of Intimacy* by Harriet Lerner
  - ★★★★★ *The Dance of Connection* by Harriet Lerner
  - ◆ *In the Meantime* by Iyanla Vanzant
- On improving relationships by learning effective communication:
  - ★★★★★ *I Only Say This Because I Love You* by Deborah Tannen
- On seeking partners and maintaining a loving relationship:
  - ★★★★★ *Keeping the Love You Find* by Harville Hendrix
- On improving gay and lesbian relationships:
  - ◆ *Permanent Partners* by Betty Berzon

**Films**

- On changing romantic partners as couples grow old together:
  - ★★★ *The Four Seasons*
- On the complexity and challenge of heterosexual relationships:
  - ★★★ *When Harry Met Sally*

**Internet Resources**

- On understanding love:
  - ★★★★★ *Love Is Great* <http://loveisgreat.com>
  - ★★★★★ *The Nature of Attraction and Love*  
<http://mentalhelp.net/psychelp/chap10/chap10d.htm>
- On dating:
  - ★★★★★ *One Straight Male's Thoughts and Advice on Successful Use of Internet Personals* by Dean Esmay  
<http://www.deanesmay.com/straight-faq.html>
  - ★★★★★ *Singlescoach* <http://www.singlescoach.com/resources.html>

- On talking and flirting:

★★★★★ *Erotic Talk for Lovers and Performers*  
<http://www.sexuality.org/talk.html>

★★★★★ *SIRC Guide to Flirting* <http://www.sirc.org/publik/flirt.html>

- How automatic negative thinking leads to conflict.
- How partners cognitively distort a relationship, which drives couples apart.

In the last half of the book, Beck presents a number of different cognitive methods to fit the specific needs of couples. The book was written primarily as a self-help guide to improve love relationships, and it remains the highest-rated book in its category. Practical, inspiring, and clear.

★★★★★ *The Relationship Cure* (2002) by John Gottman and Joan DeClaire. New York: Crown.

Leading researcher John Gottman describes how happiness is based on everyday communication that involves emotion. He says that this happiness depends on "bids" and how other people respond, or fail to respond, to such approaches. Gottman puts forth a five-step program to show readers how to become a master "bidder" in the emotional communications. Numerous case studies, sample dialogues, and self-assessments are included. A superb, research-supported book that would probably have reached five-star status had more psychologists in our studies rated it.

★★★★★ *The Dance of Intimacy: A Woman's Guide to Courageous Acts of Change in Key Relationships* (1989) by Harriet Lerner. New York: Harper Perennial.

Written for women and about women's intimate relationships, *The Dance of Intimacy* weaves a portrait of the current self and relationships that Lerner believes is derived from long-standing relationships with mothers, fathers, and siblings. Drawing on a combination of psychoanalytic and family systems theories, Lerner tells women that, if they are having problems in intimate relationships, they need to explore their upbringing to find clues to the current difficulties. Women learn how to avoid distancing themselves from their families of origin and overreacting to problems. Lerner intelligently tells women that they should balance the *I* and the *we* in their lives, and be neither too self-absorbed nor too other-oriented. To explore unhealthy patterns that have been passed down from one generation to the next, Lerner helps women create a "genogram," a family diagram that goes back to the grandparents or earlier. This is an outstanding self-help book on understanding why close relationships are problematic and how to change them in positive ways. It does not give simple, quick-fix strategies. Lerner accurately avows that change is difficult, but she shows that it is possible.

★★★★★ *The Dance of Connection* (2002) by Harriet Lerner. New York: HarperCollins. Continuing the themes of *The Dance of Intimacy* (reviewed above), psychologist Lerner describes the importance of positively connecting with the people who matter most to

us in life. She analyzes and tells readers to operate. Individual face betrayals and

★★★★★ *Keeping It*  
 Hendrix describes a romantic relationship. He says someone you love appear a little slick. The book positively

★★★★★ *The Art of Row*

This philosophical Fromm, a well-known as well as different the relatedness of is an act of faith, a for developing love process requiring skills. He stresses principle of love a human condition in our national situation. Rather how society can be a classic, this interesting books.

★★★★★ *I Only S*  
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Tannen explains with their loved ones. Examples of conversational communicating more effectively.

★★★★★ *The Tr*

The three sides of emotional sharing. The quality of a relationship with a partner and how it has its own time and progress. In the

## RECOMMENDATION HIGHLIGHTS

### Self-Help Books

- On healthy and unhealthy marriage styles:
  - ★★★★★ *Why Marriages Succeed or Fail* by John Gottman
- On solving marital problems and improving the relationship:
  - ★★★★★ *The Seven Principles for Making Marriages Work* by John Gottman and Nan Silver
  - ★★★★★ *Intimate Partners* by Maggie Scarf
  - ★★★★★ *Divorce Busting* by Michele Weiner-Davis
  - ★★★ *Fighting for Your Marriage* by Howard Markman et al.
  - ★★★ *Reconcilable Differences* by Andrew Christensen and Neil Jacobson
- On pastoral marital counseling:
  - ◆ *Love for a Lifetime* by James Dobson

### Internet Resources

- On improving your marriage:
  - ★★★★★ *Relationship Information for Couples* <http://www.positive-way.com/relation.htm>
  - ★★★★★ *Parenting and Marriage Articles* <http://www.drheller.com>
  - ★★★★★ *Marriage Mythology* <http://researchmag.asu.edu/articles/marriage.html>
- On rebuilding relationships after extramarital affairs:
  - ★★★★★ *The Other Woman* <http://www.glorifyb.com>
  - ★★★★★ *Marriage Builders* [http://www.marriagebuilders.com/graphic/mbi5525\\_qa.html](http://www.marriagebuilders.com/graphic/mbi5525_qa.html)

tempt, defensiveness, and stonewalling), and in concluding chapters, four keys to improving a marriage and reversing the spiral are discussed. Gottman's advice is logical, clear, and research-based. Quizzes allow couples to self-identify the status of their marriages. According to our mental health experts, this a very valuable and research-based self-help book.

★★★★★ *The Seven Principles for Making Marriages Work* (2000) by John Gottman and Nan Silver. New York: Crown.

This outstanding self-help book received very high ratings. Written by leading marriage researcher John Gottman (who also wrote *Why Marriages Succeed or Fail*, reviewed above) and based on his extensive observations, this book provides a number of positive

strategies for work. Gottman turning toward solvable conflicts and self in this category.

★★★★★ *Intimacy* by Sue Johnson

This book tells the stages of detachment, and she starts with their children. Couples are woven into families, conflictual partners at ten repeat the marriage from stages. Scarf discusses marriage and

★★★★★ *Getting*

This book is based on construct a core childhood conflict readers how to homes. In a sensitive, to elicit partners' needs. It is a mutual superb for marriage. The reader is following the reader's relationships.

★★★★★ *Divorce*

This book advocates Author Weiner-Davis says she came to be unhappy after a lengthy therapy. It is only four to five follow to make t

# CHANGES THAT WILL IMPROVE THE RELATIONSHIP

Aimless wandering can be an enjoyable and sometimes profitable activity: however, if you want to accomplish something, you'll probably find that it's best not to count on serendipity to save the day. Pilots are required to file a flight plan before taking off. Lenders require a business plan before they lend money. If you haven't defined goals for your relationship recently, you may find this exercise helpful in getting you started making the changes you are looking for to reduce your depression over the relationship.

1. Between now and your next session, make a list of the things you would like to change in your relationship.

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2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

2. When you are finished with counseling, what will be different that will make you able to look back on the things you wanted to change and say to yourself, "Getting into counseling and doing the work I did there was one of the best things I've ever done for myself and my relationship?"

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EXERCISE IIFA

3. What will be, or perhaps has been, the first and smallest sign that change is beginning?

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4. When you notice that first change, what can you do to keep the ball rolling?

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## IDENTIFY YOUR PARTNER'S FEELINGS

Sometimes the simplest solution is to just stop and listen to what your partner is saying and image how he or she could be feeling that way or seeing things in that light.

Try this experiment between now and your next session. Choose three situations when your partner is complaining about you or something you did. Don't try to defend yourself, correct his/her perceptions, or talk him/her out of his/her feelings. Just put yourself in his/her position and try to hear how he/she understands, interprets, and feels about the situation and imagine how you would feel or act if you were seeing things that way. (If what he/she is saying sounds crazy or unreasonable, consider the possibility that you are missing something and listen more to see if you can understand.) Express that understanding and let him/her know how difficult it must be for him/her, given how he/she is feeling about the situation.

1. Record your experiences for each situation:

Partner Complaint One: \_\_\_\_\_

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Partner Complaint Two: \_\_\_\_\_

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Partner Complaint Three: \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Why does your partner feel as he/she does about this issue?

Issue One: \_\_\_\_\_

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Issue Two: \_\_\_\_\_

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Issue Three: \_\_\_\_\_

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3. What did you learn by listening?

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4. How will your increased understanding of your partner's thoughts and feelings affect your future behavior?

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## INCREASE ROMANTIC BEHAVIORS

It takes ongoing effort to keep a relationship fresh and alive. But what if you're among the ranks of the "romantically challenged"? For many people, exciting, spontaneous activities are things they observe others doing that make them say, "Why don't I think of doing those things?" One way to answer this query is to plan some spontaneous activities that break your old mold. Remember that many new activities feel awkward and uncomfortable when you are learning them. If you do this exercise frequently enough, you may find that you start to enjoy being romantic.

1. List 10 or more things that you and your partner have done in the past that he or she considered romantic:

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2. Go to the library or bookstore and find one of the many popular books that gives ideas for romantic things to do. Find 10 or more that you would consider doing and write them below:

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EXERCISE IIF.C

3. Over the next month, watch and listen to what goes on around you for things that other people do that are signs of caring. Listen to coworkers. Pay attention to television shows. Use any and all sources of information. Note five things you learn:

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4. Once a week, get out your list and look it over for inspiration. Plan a specific time to surprise your partner with your activity. Record what you plan to do:

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