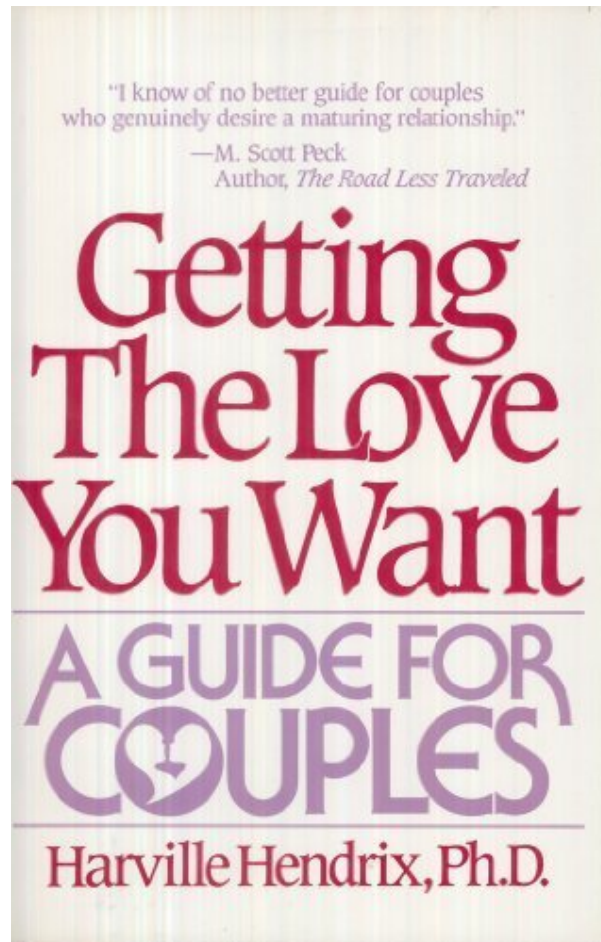


# GETTING THE LOVE YOU WANT: A GUIDE FOR COUPLES BY HARVILLE HENDRIX



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"I know of no better guide for couples  
who genuinely desire a maturing relationship!"

—M. Scott Peck

Author, *The Road Less Traveled*

# Getting The Love You Want

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A GUIDE FOR  
COUPLES

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Harville Hendrix, Ph.D.

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When Harville Hendrix writes about relationships, he discusses them not just as an educator and a therapist, but as a man who has himself been through a failed marriage. Hendrix felt the sting of his divorce intensely because he believed it signaled not only his failure as a husband but also his failure as a couples counselor. Investigating why his marriage dissolved led him to start looking into the psychology of love. Marriage, he ultimately discovered, is the "practice of becoming passionate friends."

As a result of his research, Hendrix created a therapy he calls Imago Relationship Therapy. In it, he combines what he's learned in a number of disciplines, including the behavioral sciences, depth psychology, cognitive therapy, and Gestalt therapy, to name just a few. He expounds upon this approach in *Getting the Love You Want: A Guide for Couples*. His purpose in writing the book, he says, is "to share with you what I have learned about the psychology of love relationships, and to help you transform your relationship into a lasting source of love and companionship."

Divided into three sections, the book covers "The Unconscious Marriage," which details a marriage in which the remaining desires and behavior of childhood interfere with the current relationship; "The Conscious Marriage," which shows a marriage that fulfills those childhood needs in a positive manner; and a 10-week "course in relationship therapy," which gives detailed exercises for you and your partner to follow in order to learn how to "replace confrontation and criticism ... with a healing process of mutual growth and support." The text is occasionally dry and technical; however, the information provided is valuable, the case studies are interesting, and the exercises are revealing and helpful. By utilizing his program, Hendrix hopes you too will be able to solve your marital difficulties without the expense of a therapist. --Jenny Brown

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Bestselling author Dr. Harville Hendrix offers warm, intelligent advice for transforming an intimate relationship into a lasting source of love and companionship.

Dr. Hendrix, a marriage therapist and pastoral counselor, has divided his helpful recommendations into 3 stages. First, he chronicles the fate of most relationships--attraction, romantic love and the power struggle -- and suggests ways for you and your partner to identify the conflicts associated with each of them. Then, he explores methods for achieving a "Conscious Marriage," where the early phases of romance are rekindled and confrontation is slowly replaced by growth and support. Finally, Dr. Hendrix incorporates these ideas into a unique therapeutic course, offering a series of proven step-by-step exercises that lead to insight, resolution and revitalization.

If you're not getting the love you want from the person you're with, you need to do something about it. Dr. Hendrix tells you what that something is.

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#### Most helpful customer reviews

21 of 22 people found the following review helpful.

Must read for those in a relationship

By Edwin Liem

I rarely write reviews but felt compelled to write one about this book. It was loaned to me by my therapist. My wife and I have been struggling in our marriage for years and no matter what I do (or she does), we always seem to fall back on the same old patterns of behavior that don't seem to work. Falling out of love has been a very painful experience indeed.

The situations described in the book were very, very recognizable to me and at times I felt it described it described me and my own feelings exactly. Read this book, even if it is just for the realization that you are not alone in your struggles to make something out of your marriage.

Nobody goes into marriage thinking they are going get divorced some day, but the statistics are grim. Roughly half of all marriages end up in divorce and of the remaining marriages probably 9 out of 10 couples sooner or later end up leading parallel lives where they try to find happiness and fulfillment outside of the relationship with their spouse. That means roughly only 1 in 20 couples end up building a lasting and fulfilling relationship that will last a lifetime. Are we expecting too much of marriage? Few of us would undertake an endeavor knowing there is only a 5% of succeeding, yet we do it anyway.

The book goes on to illustrate that we chose our partners for very specific reasons that few of us are even aware of. Out of thousands of potential partners we are attracted to some people that subconsciously meet very specific character and personality traits. In a sense, we all marry into our problems, the very things that attract us to our partners, become the very same issues that drive a wedge between us.

The book is very practical too in that offers specific exercises and guidelines for couples on how to interact with each other. But don't expect it to be easygoing by any means. I realize now that marriage takes a lot of

hard work and commitment every day to make and stay successful. You have to make it a top priority in your life and take nothing for granted. Expect to do a lot of soul searching, be prepared to relive some gut wrenching and painful experiences from the past, be willing to learn and undo the conditioned automated responses that you have always used, be prepared to be brutally honest to yourself and your spouse. I fear it might be too late for my own marriage but once you get through this catharsis, I do believe you might actually come out with a happier and more fulfilling relationship on the other end.

Regardless, I implore you to read this book. It might help you save your marriage or relationship before it's too late, but even if it does not, it might make you a better person, it will certainly help you build more meaningful relationships with other people and give you a better chance at building lasting and more meaningful future relationships. Good luck to all of you that need this book.

16 of 18 people found the following review helpful.

Narrow view of marriage and the unconscious; questionable assertions

By I really get it!

According to Hendrix, people choose partners that will help them resolve unmet needs from childhood. What if you resolve these childhood needs--then what, is it time for divorce? Hendrix maybe thought of this and has a section on pg 114 which states that childhood issues take a lifetime to resolve. So I guess he tries to cover himself on this question.

On pg 165 Hendrix states "Salvation is not an 'inside' job; it is the outcome of being nourished by others." Why does healing have to come from outside of yourself? It's a big assertion on his part to suggest that a person needs someone else to heal psychologically. Hendrix's main premise is that the purpose of marriage is to heal childhood needs, and that is why we choose the partner we do. It's a narrow view of marriage.

In the section "Til Death Do Us Part" on pg 114 Hendrix makes the case for a lifelong marriage commitment. Yet the author wrote the book with his second wife. Is this a case of 'do as I say, not as I do'? Maybe not a fair critique but the hypocrisy is plain.

Hendrix has some good ideas about improving communication with your partner. It is similar to the '5 Love Languages' in this regard. I'm not sure how valid his main idea is, of our partner being a mirror of our unconscious needs. He seems to have very simple views on marriage and why people choose their partners. His ideas on how the 'old brain' works as the source of our unconscious seem vastly oversimplified. It seems there is a lot of magical thinking going on with his theories.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

easy, and if you want to learn to communicate ...

By Kat

This book has saved our 5 year marriage. Period. Of course, it takes time and effort on our part to read it and do the exercises in it. It is clear, easy, and if you want to learn to communicate effectively whether you've been in relationship 1 year or over 30 years, get it and give yourselves the gift of giving - to each other. However, you always give to yourself first. We went to Rick Brown's workshop in Charleston, SC. He teaches the Imago work based on this book and does an admirable job of relaying the information, but I was really disappointed in the workshop because he would not take questions from participants during his presentation, and he only allowed two couples the whole weekend to work together in front of the group. Because we are motivated, we could have done just as well to get a room for a week, read the book to each other and practice the exercises. But there are other workshops around the country. Go for it - even if you are moving headlong toward divorce! Divorce is not the learning experience you really want! Let go of your pride and hurt and do THIS!

See all 639 customer reviews...



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