



Cupid's Poisoned Arrow: From Habit to Harmony in Sexual Relationships

Marnia Robinson , Douglas Wile (Foreword)

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Zing! Cupid's arrow skewers a primitive part of the brain. Obediently, we fall in love amid showers of passionate fireworks, bond for a time ... and then often get fed up with each other and grow irritable or numb. Perhaps we try to remodel our mate, seek solace online, or pursue a new love interest. Ancient sages recognized this biological snare and hinted at a way to dodge it: use lovemaking to balance one another and harmony arises naturally.

With an entertaining blend of personal experiences, the latest neuroscience, and forgotten insights from around the globe, *Cupid's Poisoned Arrow* confronts current assumptions about sex and love and offers a refreshing, practical approach to sexuality.

Cupid's Poisoned Arrow: From Habit to Harmony in Sexual Relationships Details

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From Reader Review Cupid's Poisoned Arrow: From Habit to Harmony in Sexual Relationships for online ebook

KB says

What I like so far...Good argument, but no solid conclusion

To be clear, there are no actual studies that Karezza in and of itself saves marriages, or rebuilds lost passion in a relationship. However, the reason why this book is very interesting is that the author has collected enough science and research from neurology, zoology, anthropology, and psychology to make a very compelling case that orgasm-centered sexuality creates an undesired neurobiological reaction that is responsible for lost romantic passions. I like that. What she does is essentially put together a lot of puzzle pieces to start a conversation about a topic that hasn't been widely explored.

Currently, I doubt there could be any studies about this, as this sexuality style is so fringe that literally no one has heard about it. But I'm sure in about 10-20 years, if/when it becomes more mainstream, we'll finally get some studies to validate her research... but... until then...

What I didn't like so far... Too Much Spiritual New Age Jargon & Overly Strict Attitude The Author Takes About Karezza

The author's chapter system works in such a way that in between chapters, she includes pieces explaining how the knowledge of Karezza-style sex has been part of many religions, philosophies, and even some long-forgotten psychology practices. Ok, that's cool. But for the rest, I find the talk about "energy exchanges" throughout the book and the inclusion of Yin/Yang system in her intimacy building exercises in the back of the book (her "Ecstatic Exchanges"), really annoying, kinda inappropriate and cringy. Sure, I'm open-minded enough where I can see past that and get to the bigger picture, but still. If you're targeting everyone and trying to have this book pass as research on sexuality and psychology, it's best for the language in this book to stay frank, and scientific.

The other problem I have is that she discourages sexual excitement and arousal during intercourse, even when this advice isn't strongly supported in her book, as her advice against orgasm-centric sex. Many of her "ecstatic exchanges" (intimacy building exercises), are very platonic and actively suppress sexual excitement and arousal as much as possible. To an extent, based on her extensive research, I can get behind this with the Ecstatic Exchanges, but at the same time, she seems to forget (or bypass) that there are other ways to practice Karezza *intercourse* and that ranges from cuddling while your partner's penis inside of you to "edging" (getting as close to an orgasm as possible without actually orgasming). All the while, partners have still commented on overall improved intimacy and mood. So with that also being said, none of her research has ever concluded or suggested that arousal or sexual excitement causes mood shifts or the "passion cycle". In fact, in many of her chapters, she hints that before the orgasm creates a dopamine crash, your dopamine and other healthy neurochemicals rise during arousal and excitement. So...? Yeah.

I think when some psychologist studies this and writes a follow-up book, 20 years in the future, they are going to include more open-ended instructions and a franker straight-forward discussion of the topic. Until then, I'll be patient since she and only a handful of others are pioneering this topic, so there's going to have to be room for some bullsh*t. In a similar way that Greek philosophers pioneered democracy, but also had room for bullsh*t....or how Freud pioneered psychotherapy...and had *plenty* of bullsh*t to go along with it too...

IN CONCLUSION, apart from the New Age stuff, words cannot express how much I appreciated this book and hope to one day try this out with an open-minded partner...While I will try a lot of her ecstatic exchanges (the ones that make sense to me), I still want to do this my way. The bigger picture I get from Karezza is that it's pretty open-ended so long as it's bonding-based and lacks an orgasm.

Liberality says

I don't know how many people will buy into the idea that orgasm is bad for you. I certainly have always enjoyed my own and I am, for the most part, happily married for going on 28 years. However, maybe the idea that we are focusing upon orgasm too much and that it is hurting the overall relationship is an idea I can consider.

The author goes into the biological impact of orgasm upon the brain and that is very interesting in itself. She also explains how the pair bond is formed and the effects of pair bonding upon the brain. This part just fascinates me! I have been conducting an experiment of my own. I've been increasing the pair bonding behaviors she lists with my husband and wow, I gotta tell you, he is much more loving toward me in return. That shouldn't be so surprising to me but it is. Sometimes the simplest things, right in front of our face, is the easiest to disregard.

I've also been more physical with my family and friends and notice the good results and how much less stressed I feel. I think these are important behaviors for me to emphasize because I come from a dysfunctional family and didn't have such behaviors modeled for me or with me. I have a standoffish attitude as a result that pains me at times and I have been at a loss on how to be different--instead of just romanticizing being the loner. So for that reason alone, I am grateful for this book.

I have finished the book and consider it good enough that I want to own my own copy.

Reginald says

For those who simply want the science, first read the "'How Do I Explain This Book To My Friends?': A Synopsis Of Key Ideas" section at the end of the book, then begin reading at chapter 4.

Kotryna says

Worth a read (and a try) for anyone who wants a beautiful, fulfilling and long lasting relationship. At first the whole idea might seem weird (thanks to our evolutionary tendency to defend any behavior that might lead to procreation and unconscious defensiveness to alternative ideas), but once you start reading this insightful book, you'll soon see the logic and wisdom behind this alternative approach that authors suggest. One of the best books on relationships IMO.

Greg says

I'm very ambivalent about giving this book 4 stars, because of the many instances where the author misrepresents or cherry-picks scientific studies to support her thesis. For reference, I am currently a working neuroscientist but in my former line-of-work I studied the psychology of addictive behaviors. The author unquestioningly embraces the "dopamine = reward" hypothesis, and a naive interpretation of brain plasticity. The dopamine=reward hypothesis has been effectively criticized by experts as overly simplistic (e.g. "The mysterious motivational functions of mesolimbic dopamine", by Salamone, et al), though non-experts like Robinson represents it as though it was gospel. Regarding brain plasticity, Robinson probably vastly overemphasizes the importance of plasticity in the development of maladaptive sexual behavior; although, admittedly, the research about the heritability of sexual dysfunction is scarce, it would have helped her thesis to emphasize that many individuals might be predisposed to sexual dysfunction, and might have masturbated compulsively even in the absence of pornography.

However, these criticisms aside, this book advanced a thesis that is both highly novel and potentially destabilizing to the current paradigmatic secular-liberal understanding on sexuality ("reject religious proscriptions regarding sex! sexuality equals liberation"). This book is, I suspect, the first drop in what will eventually be a torrent of scientific books examining the notion of pornography as a potentially-addictive superstimulus.

Elizabeth says

ILL I keep dreading reading this to do an adequate review. Next time just do one chapter.

Read the Goodreads description of this book. It was probably written by the author. This book does NOT have the newest neuroscience. As far as I know it uses ideas out of context and junk science. Not in the mainstream of science at all.

about Kerreza

It gets one star because I don't like this book. It doesn't steer people in a usefull direction IMHO. However it is clear alright, just clearly wrong.

Biology has plans for your love life -- Elephants in the living room -- A whale's tail -- At the heart of the separation virus -- The passion cycle -- The road to excess -- Outsmarting our sneaky genes -- Science that binds -- Bridging the gap -- The path of harmony -- Any questions?

Henri Junttila says

Could having too much sex be ruining your relationship? Yup, turns out it can. This book dives into why we do what we do, and how we can use the different parts of our brain to not only have more fulfilling relationships, but be happier in general.

I'd recommend this book for anyone who wants to make their relationship work, and work well (after the initial 1-2 year honeymoon period).

This book was repetitive in parts, but I liked it. It helped me learn and retain the information.

Frank Peters says

Interesting book and theory. Not a scientist but I recognize the parts with being more sharp after a few days / weeks. Too bad she did not go into more details about how this affects people without a partner.

Lia says

Okay ... so, this book is very repetitious. VERY. For the need for editing (to cut the book by 2/3), I would give this book a star or two.

BUT! for the ideas, I would give it five stars. So, despite the drastic need for editing, I'm giving it all five stars.

Because the ideas are worth getting to. They really are. At least they were for me. The book gave me scientific reasoning to explain why my marriage is so awesome. Basically, what we've been up to is bonding instead of mating. It was great to have someone explain it, and even give us all the science behind it (the chemicals released during bonding vs. the chemicals released during mating).

If you want to have a better relationship with your spouse and feel like sex is problematic, this book could be gold. OR if you're like me and have a great relationship and wonder if you're missing something by not doing what everyone else is doing, this book will be enormously helpful and validating. Either way, it's a win.

One reading tip: You'll probably read the first in-depth chapter about the two-week cycle orgasm creates and be amazed. Then, as you start the next chapters, you'll probably think to yourself, "Didn't I read this already?" Yep, you did. Skim forward until you hit a chapter later on where it all seems new again, that will be the chapter that introduces the science behind bonding instead of mating. Then, after you've read that and turn to the next chapter and think, "Didn't I already ..." just skim ahead. Watch for bits that stand out to you. Really, this book could have been so much shorter. So. Much. Shorter. And I wish it were, because then I would wholeheartedly recommend it to everyone.

Of all the books I've read on sexuality and sexual relationships, this one has actually been the most helpful to spell things out and help me see the why behind it all. It's also probably the most poorly edited. Alas. But, really, check it out from your library and give it a look!

Tigran Ghardashyan says

This book has a chance to be your relationship-saver.

Kimberly says

Nice book that directly (rather than wishy washy and ethereally) discusses the Taoist lovemaking (the physical ramifications of orgasm based sex) and channeling energy between partners. Very practical with sound examples. Through reading this book, I'm FINALLY connecting as to why, after I sleep with someone, I don't want to be around them and would rather "throw them away" and move onto someone new. And why, even with my best efforts, sex still seemed like combative showmanship in orgasm achievement.

Fascinating book and I highly recommend it. Will update my review upon completion.

Stephen Kelley says

Fantastic, the best book on love and romantic relationships I've read.

Jean Boudillon says

The book you can't afford not to read

This book blew my mind. The implications of our neurochemistry on individuals, relationships and society as a whole are nothing but huge.

Yes there is such a thing as habituation in couples and it's probably killing your love relationship.

In a sense, the history of civilization has been a sad descent from trusted relationships and connection—to an escalating and compulsive search for substitute mood medicines, ie. food, porn, drugs or shopping.

You've got two choices:

- mate to further spread your genetic pool and feed your compulsions, thus leaning toward habituation and feed even more compulsive behaviors (your rewards circuitry get hooked on it),
- or bond to develop affectionate companionships, trust and satisfaction (think tribal care and support).

Whether in a relationship or not, you can't afford not to read that book.

Joe says

The book weaves a tapestry of personal example, 3rd person testimony and actual scientific data to explain why relationships seem to just fall apart so easy. Then the book offers a mind blowing solution that has changed my whole outlook on intimate relationships. The book has managed to incite a change in me. 11/10 obnoxiously recommending this to any person I ever meet.

Brent Cope says

A really interesting perspective on the biological, neurological and psychological consequences of orgasm. Thoroughly engrossing, the facts and research as well as the 'ancient wisdom' tidbits spread throughout really make the book fun to read. It gives a lot of insight into our own behavior and can really help you acquire focus.

If you're in a relationship already I definitely recommend it for both partners to read together and share with each other, it's that kind of book.
