



Love Sense: The Revolutionary New Science of Romantic Relationships

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The bestselling author of *Hold Me Tight* presents a revolutionary new understanding of why and how we love, based on cutting-edge research.

Every day, we hear of relationships failing and questions of whether humans are meant to be monogamous. LOVE SENSE presents new scientific evidence that tells us that humans *are* meant to mate for life. Dr. Johnson explains that romantic love is an attachment bond, just like that between mother and child, and shows us how to develop our "love sense"--our ability to develop long-lasting relationships. Love is not the least bit illogical or random, but actually an ordered and wise recipe for survival. LOVE SENSE covers the three stages of a relationship and how to best weather them; the intelligence of emotions and the logic of love; the physical and psychological benefits of secure love; and much more. Based on groundbreaking research, LOVE SENSE will change the way we think about love.

Love Sense: The Revolutionary New Science of Romantic Relationships Details

Date : Published December 31st 2013 by Little, Brown and Company (first published January 1st 2013)

ISBN : 9780316133760

Author : Sue Johnson

Format : Hardcover 352 pages

Genre : Psychology, Nonfiction, Relationships, Self Help, Science, Marriage

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From Reader Review Love Sense: The Revolutionary New Science of Romantic Relationships for online ebook

Erin Henry says

Everyone go read this book right now! This book discusses how love provides us a secure attachment which is necessary to survival. The author has a lot of research to back up her findings. What I found most amazing was how strong marriages and child-parent relationships can improve the world. I love discovering how science consistently backs up what God has taught and is teaching us. (Ps. It isn't a religious book)

Candess Campbell says

Great book about attachment, but a little clinical for me. Even though I am a licensed mental health counselor, I would have liked for the author to share some solutions during the process of educating.

Ev says

This was a really fantastic book on a fascinating topic: the relatively new scientific frontier of analyzing and understanding love; in all its various complexities, overlapping nuances, contradictions; inescapable realities and uncontrollable fantasies. The way Sue Johnson approaches the topic, which has mystified human kind throughout our existence, is entirely approachable and digestible. We all know these feelings in some shape or form as she describes them in her case studies, and it is useful to see oneself within the context of this soft science - in its infancy, with already such novel insights to impart upon us.

I highly recommend this for anyone who believes love, or the unavoidable exercise of emotions which define human experience, are painful, uncontrollable, confusing or potentially handicapping; too risky to open oneself up to, or be fully honest with ad perpetuum. It is through reading Dr. Johnson's book that you are convinced of love's awesome power to heal, empower and transform us beyond what we alone can do, through the fascinating metamorphosis of the self we experience only when in love with another.

The tone of the book was also entirely suitable both in terms of the subject matter she was trying to convey, and audience she was trying to convince. The book was not full of rosy superlatives or adjectives; it was very scientific and straightforward. Translated to a fictional story or nonfictional relaying of events, I would have been bored with her voice, but in this context, it was entirely pragmatic.

Nick says

Went on a little longer than necessary, but very well written book on a very important subject. Well worth it.

♥ Ibrahim ♥ says

Self-help yes, but science of love? I don't think so! Yes, she did her research as every author worth his salt ought to be and do but this doesn't make her a scientist. The word science is the buzzword in self-help books in order to give themselves airs that they are above those "others" who write commercially oriented self-help books. Nice try!

By the way, there is no science in love or even sex!

Ruth Hyland says

loved this. maybe it is the time of my life but it has been so helpful to my relationship with my spouse. he is listening to it and i'm so glad. he is so much better at reading something and applying it to real life. I loved the science behind love. I had no idea how avoidant I was. I highly recommend. I purchased her other book as well Hold me Tight. and bought this for my sister who is getting married. the basic premise is that when you feel securely attached and loved by someone it frees you to thrive in life. I love how it is about that feeling. so many other therapies rely on techniques like parroting back or saying things a certain way when in reality all that doesn't matter. what truly matters is whether or not you feel safe/loved/connected. everything else is inconsequential if that basic need is met you can work anything out.

Kim Blackham says

Sue Johnson has done it again! What remarkable research in the field of relationships. I think the reason I appreciate Sue's work so much is it is not just gimmicky advice. She clearly explains, in a reader- friendly way, what the current research on love tells us. She demonstrates what we know about love and how it makes sense. And she provides real, conversational examples of couples that find their way out of disconnection to a safe and lovingly attached relationship. The examples she uses really are inspirational. They are just normal people, like you and me, who have found the answers and made it work. I purchased the audio book and the hard copy. Some audio books are so painful to listen to, but Sue's soothing voice made my driving kids to and fro much more pleasant. It was actually really cool – I would arrive somewhere and have her words so fresh in my mind that I found them making an instant impact. While I like the hard copy to highlight and refer back to, I would highly recommend the audio version. I think there is something really powerful about hearing her tone and expressions. Overall, I would recommend this to everyone who wants to improve any relationship.

Salla Korpela says

Required reading for anyone in a relationship, dreaming of a relationship or even convinced of never entering one again.

Katrina Sark says

“People think love is an emotion. Love is good sense.” (Ken Kesey)

“Unless you love someone, nothing else makes any sense.” (e. e. cummings)

p.3 – We know that love makes us vulnerable, but also that we are never as safe and strong as when we are sure we are loved.

But although, at the end of the first decade of the 21st century, our species has smarts enough to split the atom and soar into space, we still seem to have no clear or rigorous understanding of the intense connection that is so central to our being.

p.5 – And far from being unfathomable, love is exquisitely logical and understandable. What’s more, it is adaptive and functional. Even better, it is malleable, repairable, and durable. In short, we now comprehend, finally and irrefutably, that love makes “sense.” The word derived from the Latin *sentire*, meaning “to perceive, feel, or know,” and also “to find one’s way.” And that is why I have called this book *Love Sense*. I intend for it to help you find your way to more fulfilling and lasting love.

p.6 – You will learn that love is a basic survival code, that an essential task of our mammalian brain is to read and respond to others, and that it is being able to depend on others that makes us strong. You will learn that rejection and abandonment are danger cues that plunge us into real physical pain, that sexual frustration and novelty are overrated, and that even the most distressed couples can repair their bond if they are guided to deal with their emotions a little differently.

p.18 – But the big push came with the advent of functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI). Neurophysiologists devised experiments that peer into the brain and actually see structures and areas lighting up when we are afraid, or happy, or sad – or when we love.

p.19 – The first and foremost instinct of humans is neither sex nor aggression. It is to seek contact and comforting connection.

This drive to bond is innate, not learned.

John Bowlby: attachment theory

p.20 – Adult romantic love is an attachment bond, just like the one between mother and child.

p.21 – Hot sex doesn’t lead to secure love; rather, secure attachment leads to hot sex – and also to love that lasts. Monogamy is not a myth.

It is secure attachment, what nature set us up for, that makes love persist. Trust helps us over the rough places that crop up in every relationship. Moreover, our bodies are designed to produce a cascade of chemicals that bond us tightly to our loved ones. Monogamy is not only possible, it is our natural state. Emotional dependency is not immature or pathological; it is our greatest strength.

Dependency is a dirty word in Western society. Our world has long insisted that healthy adulthood requires being emotionally independent and self-sufficient; that we, in essence, draw an emotional moat around ourselves.

p.22 – Far from being a sign of frailty, strong emotional connection is a sign of mental health. It is emotional isolation that is the killer.

p.23 – Being the “best you can be” is really only possible when you are deeply connected to another. Splendid isolation is for planets, not people.

p.26 – In contrast, at the core of happy relationships is a deep trust that partners matter to each other and will reliably respond when needed. Secure love is an open channel for reciprocal emotional signaling. Love is a constant process of tuning in, connecting, missing and misreading cues, disconnecting, repairing, and finding deeper connection.

Today we have cracked the code of love. We now know what a good love relationship looks and feels like. Even better, we can shape it. For the first time, we have a map that can guide us in creating, healing, and sustaining love.

In general, therapists have attacked the problem in two ways. The first is analytical: couples dig back and sift through their childhood experiences to find the reasons why they respond the way they do.

p.27 – The second approach is practical. Couples are instructed on how to communicate more effectively – “Listen and repeat back what your partner has said.” Or they’re taught how to negotiate and bargain their way through divisive issues, from sex to cleaning.

Ultimately, these remedies are ineffectual because they don’t address the source of relationship distress: the fear that emotional connection – the front of all comfort and respite – is vanishing.

p.28 – When we know how something works, fixing it and keeping it healthy is much easier.

p.45 – Attachment styles line up neatly with the basic way we see ourselves and others. These “mental models” shape the way we regulate our emotions, and they guide our expectations in love relationships, assigning meaning to our partner’s actions and becoming “If this, then that” templates for how to interact.

Secure people see themselves as generally competent and worthy of love, and they see others as trustworthy and reliable. They tend to view their relationships as workable and are open to learning about love and loving. In contrast, anxious people tend to idealize others but have strong doubts as to their own value and their basic acceptability as partners. As a result, they obsessively seek approval and the reassurance that they are indeed lovable and not about to be rejected. Avoidant folks, meanwhile, view themselves as worthy of love – at least that is their conscious stance. Any self-doubt tends to be suppressed. They have a negative view of others as inherently unreliable and untrustworthy.

p.50 – In sum, we can see attachment theory and science as offering us an architecture of romantic love. Think of yourself as a house. On the first floor and reaching into the foundation are your basic needs for comfort, reassurance, connection, closeness, and care as well as your basic emotion, including joy, fear, sadness, and anger. These are wired in by thousands of years of evolution. On the second floor are your ways of coping with these needs and emotions, opening to and trusting them, cutting them off or defending against them, or becoming obsessed and being taken over by them. On the third floor are your attitudes and ways of thinking about relationships – what you can expect from others and what you are entitled to. At the tip-top is the piece your partner and other loved ones see – your actual behavior.

p.51 – A very common pairing has one anxious and one avoidant partner.

Matches between two secures tend to be the most satisfying and stable, since both partners are able to be emotionally available and responsive.

p.52 – Knowing how attachment works means that we are not in foreign territory when we find ourselves estranged from our enraged by the person we were convinced was the One and we now see as a Stranger, even the Enemy. We can understand that what we're dealing with is the panic and pain of separation distress, and that we experience it in the same way children do.

p.53 – Separation distress usually proceeds through four steps. The first is anger and protest.

The next step is clinging and seeking.

The third step is marked by depression and despair.

The final step is detachment. In this stage a person, whether child or adult, accepts that the relationship is not going to fulfil his or her longings, stops investing in it, and decides just to let it die.

p.56 – Adult attachment researchers have identified three basic attachment styles, or habitual strategies.

1. Secure: I find it relatively easy to get close to others and am comfortable depending on them and having them depend on me. I don't worry about being abandoned or about someone getting too close to me.

2. Anxious: I find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I often worry that my partner doesn't really love me or won't want to stay with me. I want to get very close to my partner, and this sometimes scares people away.

3. Avoidant: I am uncomfortable being close to others; I find it difficult to trust them completely, difficult to allow myself to depend on them. Often others want me to be more intimate, but I am nervous when anyone gets too close.

p.61 – “The emotions do not deserve being put into opposition with ‘intelligence.’ The emotions are themselves a higher order of intelligence.” (O. Hobart Mowrer)

p.63 – The message touted by popular media and therapists has been that we're supposed to be in total control of our emotions before we turn to others. Love yourself first, and then another will love you. Our new knowledge stands that message on its head. “For humans,” says psychologist Ed Tronick of the University of Massachusetts, “the maintenance of emotional balance is a dyadic collaborative process.” In other words, we are designed to deal with emotion in concert with another person – not by ourselves.

p.66 – Emotion is actually nature's exquisitely efficient information-processing and signaling system designed to rapidly reorganize behavior in the interests of survival. Emotion apprises us that something vital to our welfare is occurring.

p.67 – The word emotion derives from the Latin *movere*, meaning “to move out.” We see its power most clearly when we sense we are in immediate physical danger.

p.68 – We broadcast emotion mainly through our facial expressions and tone of voice, and we apprehend and comprehend these signals instantaneously. It takes just one hundred milliseconds for our brain to register the smallest alteration in another person's face and just three hundred milliseconds more to feel in our own body what we see in that face – to mirror the change we see (I will talk about just how this mirroring process

occurs in the next chapter). Emotion is contagious; we literally “catch” each other’s sentiments and feel what the other person is feeling, and this is the basis of empathy.

There are only six innate and universal emotions: fear, anger, happiness, or joy, sadness, surprise, and shame (some theorists divide shame into disgust and guilt).

p.70 – Love doesn’t have a distinct facial expression. It’s not a single emotion, a lone note. It’s a mix of feelings, a medley.

p.77 – It is now clear that there is a literal neural overlap in the way we process and experience relational and physical pain. Both pains, as experiments by psychologist Naomi Eisenberger of UCLA attest, are alarm systems, designed to grab our attention and focus our resources on minimizing threat. The threat in hurt feelings, arising from triggers such as rejection by a loved one, is emotional loss and separation. In mammals, perhaps because of their need for extended maternal care, isolation is a clear danger cue: it registers as a physical threat to survival.

p.78 – This neural overlap explains why, as researchers have found, Tylenol can reduce hurt feelings and emotional support can lessen physical pain (including that of childbirth, cancer treatment, and heart surgery). Our need for connection with others has shaped our neural makeup and the structure of our emotional life. The good news is that even if we were emotionally starved in our childhood relationships, our adult lovers offer us a second chance to learn new and more effective ways to deal with our emotions and signal our longings to others.

p.79 – More secure bonding teaches us how to tolerate, work with, and use our emotions, and being able to manage our emotions in turn helps us adapt to and connect with others.

A secure relationship is one in which we learn to become emotionally intelligent. Loving partners help us when we are confused and unsure about our feelings, as when we feel too little or too much.

If we find ourselves caught in the too-much-or-too-little mode across lots of situations and relations, chances are that we are having a problem with emotional balance, with regulating our emotions. The ability to find this balance is the most basic lesson we learn (or not!) from our early attachment figures. Those of us who have had even just one such positive relationship with a parental figure gain an advantage: we acquire a procedural map of how to hold on to our emotional equilibrium and connect with others. Being in balance allows us to move in many directions easily and this have more ways of responding to and dancing with others.

All this adds up to the fact that the more secure we are, the more able we are to turn emotion up or down with relative ease. A secure base creates safety that continues to foster personal growth, emotional balance, and loving connection. Being able to securely attach is the gift that keeps on giving!

p.81 – Positive emotions turn on our curiosity and desire to engage and explore. They set us up for openness and learning. Joy, for example, invigorates us.

p.82 – In his book *The Wise Heart*, Buddhist teacher Jack Kornfield offers a beautiful image for our new understanding: “We can let ourselves be carried by the river of feeling – because we know how to swim.”

p.87 – Emotional interaction advances brain development, and lack of it does the reverse – dendrites don’t branch out; the tendrils that relay signals are fewer and stunted, and messenger chemicals are in shorter supply.

p.93 – Oxytocin was discovered back in 1909, but research on this chemical has exploded just in the last decade.

A whiff of oxytocin increases our tendency to trust and engage with others in a less defensive, more empathetic way.

p.94 – oxytocin turns off our threat detector, the amygdala, as well as the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis – the “get up for challenge” part of our nervous system – and turns on the calming, “relax, all is fine,” parasympathetic nervous system. The effect is to reduce fear and anxiety and lower production of stress hormones.

As one person takes small emotional risks and the other learns to respond, they “retune” each other’s nervous systems to higher levels of equanimity, which makes them more trusting and flexible. And this is exactly what happens when we first fall in love. “Falling in love” is an accurate phase. It’s a risk, reach, reassurance dance. Oxytocin seems to prompt us to take chances and reward us with contentment when we find reassurance in our partner’s arm. Mutual vulnerability and recovery with our lover, accompanied by oxytocin

release, is the true tale of love.

p.116 – Those of us who are avoidant, that is, uncomfortable with emotional closeness and dependence on others, are more likely to have what I term “sealed-off sex.” The focus here is on one’s own sensations. Sex is self-centered and self-affirming, a performance aimed at achieving climax and confirming one’s own sexual skill. Technique is prized; openness and vulnerability shunned.

p.119 – it makes perfect sense that our basic comfort with closeness and vulnerability affects how we express and experience sex. We are wired to put safety first. If we have to constantly monitor our partner’s level of love for us, we are distracted from the attunement and responsiveness that good sex requires.

More anxious men and women fantasized about their partner being very affectionate in sex, reflecting the yearning for love and reassurance that pervades their sexuality.

Partners who were more avoidant imagined themselves or others acting in alienated and aggressive ways.

p.121 – Sexual satisfaction for both the anxiously attached and the avoidant is constricted: the anxious partner is preoccupied with being loved, and the avoidant partner is determined to stay detached.

Many studies now attest to the fact that because secure partners feel safety connected to their lovers, they can access the full richness of their sexuality. Feeling protected gives them the freedom to explore and be sexually adventurous. Think about it. If you trust that your partner is there for you, then you can relax and let go without fear of embarrassment or rejection. Safety fosters a willingness to experiment, take risks, and be fully immersed in the sexual encounter. Sex becomes more spontaneous, passionate, and joyful.

p.122 – Studies indicate that the more secure you are, the more you believe that you can control the quality of your sexual experience – that it is up to you rather than your partner or factors like where and when you have sex.

As Yogi Berra said, “If you don’t know where you’re going, you will wind up somewhere else.”

p.129 – The truth is that we stray and have affairs not because we are all naturally inclined to have multiple mates but because our bond with our partner is either inherently weak or has deteriorated so far that we are unbearably lonely. We haven’t understood love or known how to repair it.

What about the argument that passion is impossible to sustain over the years? This is true – if we do not know how to invest in the security of our bond or if we only know how to have sealed-off, avoidant sex. For secure partners, however, rigorous studies and survey shows that the thrill can last indefinitely.

p.133 – Much more so than men’s, women’s sexuality appears to depend on the quality of the relationship rather than the intensity of the sensations in their skin.

Recognizing that cues concerning safe attachment are fundamental to women’s arousal and sexuality opens the way to new remedies.

p.134 – For men, that means overhauling their view of female sexuality and adjusting their verbal and physical approaches to make it apparent that there is desire from the person, not just for orgasm.

p.145 – As the actor Peter Ustinov quipped: “Sex is a conversation carried out by other means.”

p.151 – “Love doesn’t just sit there, like a stone, it has to be made, like bread; remade all the time, made new.” (Ursula K. Le Guin)

p.152 – What the revolutionary new science is teaching us is that long-term relationships go through distinct periods – an initiation phase and three major subsequent stages – and that within each are critical transitions that shake every couple, even the most secure and serene. The prelude to every relationship is what I call the Spellbound phase, during which two people become infatuated and increasingly obsessed with each other.

When the two shift into a more explicit dependency and commitment, they enter the first stage of a relationship, which I call Formal Bonding. This typically occurs between one and two years into dating. The second stage, Parenthood, centers around the appearance of a couple’s first child. This is an especially trying time for women, many of whom became deeply unhappy and even clinically depressed. A couple enters the third stage, Mature Love, usually when the last child is ready to leave home. Another stressor, retirement by one partner, may occur at the same time or later.

p.153 – At the very beginning of love there is infatuation and obsession.

Psychologist Lane Beckes of the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, has found that, indeed, any kind of threat automatically turns on the attachment system, calling up our need for comfort and making others who are potential sources of this comfort more attractive.

p.154 – Anxiety and threat automatically call up the need for comfort and prime us to find security in

another. If someone is there at a vulnerable moment, we begin to bond, and every risk we face together thereafter strengthens the sense of connection.

Many romantic partners break apart when one person starts to ask, "Are you there for me?" and cannot get a clear answer.

Dawn Ellis says

This book was fluffier than I was expecting when I decided to read it. Although the author does include case stories of couples in crisis, and close to divorce, the difficulties faced by these couples seem to not be very emotionally complex and Dr. Johnson's exercises designed to help fix the problems strike me as a bit simplistic. The author does not really discuss more challenging issues in relationships such as substance abuse, intimate partner abuse, personality disorders, etc, and how these factors influence/contribute to attachment styles and the interplay between the styles of 2 partners. Overall I didn't find the book to be very useful or enlightening, and it read to me like an overly long magazine article.

Kat says

Read this book - it will improve your relationship. Both my spouse and I agree that her first book was a huge turning point in our marriage and this one very much deepens my understanding of attached partnership.

Nice approachable science applicable to daily interactions with loved ones, especially your life love.

Chuck Kollars says

A seemingly thorough and complete exploration of the implications of "attachment theory" for "romantic relationships". In my experience one of the best books available on this topic.

The case briefly: A "pair bond" greatly enhanced survival in prehistoric times, and is still very important to humans. Baby pair bonds (relationship with mother) and adult pair bonds (relationship with SO) share brain mechanisms and tend to be very similar. The ideal of an adult being "completely independent" does not at all match how humans are actually put together. A romantic relationship grows out of a pair bond, not vice versa as our culture tends to tell us -- in fact, when relationship problems occur, it works better to probe the pair bond directly than to probe the romantic relationship.

The book covers all of this in a thorough, well-organized, easy to read way. Although on reflection I don't totally disagree, I was initially a bit surprised to find the author thinks of it as "somewhat academic". It is indeed a little more chewy than the relationship advice one might see on the newsstand, but it's still quite accessible to the general reader. I was also a bit surprised to find that her publisher apparently contributed some of the motivation for this second book on the subject by this author. Such books are often either a tired rehash of old material, or a deeper dive into a few specialized issues but without enough connective tissue ...but this one is not.

Another way to view this book is a plea to pay much more attention to emotions, especially in relationships (a theme that seems to always be present under the surface). The common view that "emotions" just interfere with "rationality" is flat wrong. In many cases - especially pair bonds and personal relationships- emotions

are already so correct they don't even need to be monitored by rational thought. In fact, the cost of not paying sufficient attention to such emotions is very high, both for individuals and for our society as a whole.

I do have some possible quibbles: One is that the research on and the clinical use of attachment theory tend to form a self-reinforcing circle, so much so there's some danger of an "echo chamber", concluding "attachment theory" applies to every romantic relationship when in fact it might be that it applies to only "most" (or even only "some"). Another is that the last chapter, on how improved attention to bonding would greatly bolster our society as a whole, is oddly unconvincing (even though it's quite consistent with the rest of the book and even though I'm predisposed toward those arguments).

Brennan says

I really enjoyed this book. In therapy circles, Sue Johnson is the number one authority on improving couple relationships by strengthening attachment bonds. I use her text on Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy (EFT) for my graduate students, but this book is more accessible and is written for a general audience.

The book is well written. It is grounded in scientific research, advances in neuroscience, and years of significant clinical experience. She provides clear explanations that help demystify love, and she provides a clear road map for how couples can make sense of what previously seemed impossible to understand - namely how couple conflict and erosion often stems from a lack of safe and secure emotional bonds, and how learning to express one's attachment needs to a responsive partner can build emotional bonds that last a lifetime. As a couple therapist, I can attest to the truth of what she says here. True change in couple relationships comes when couples learn to trust each other and rely on each other to meet their deepest and most vulnerable emotional needs. This is clearly a tall order, and likely only about 25%-30% of couples ever get here, but if they do, the rewards can be immense.

I normally give a book like this 4 stars. But I gave this one 5 stars for a few reasons. First, it was almost unbelievable to hear her take a stand on the negative impact of pornography on a couple's emotional bond. You just don't hear this from psychologists - it is quite the contrary. Hearing her articulate the dangers of this for a couple's attachment bonds was refreshing and rings true. I also loved how she takes a stand against plastic surgery and Botox injections - for the main reason that removing the wrinkles and lines from one's face, removes the traces of years of emotion and life experiences that defines who we are. Aging with dignity is such a foreign concept in our society and so rarely discussed, it was again refreshing to hear this view expressed. Finally, I appreciated her ability to synthesize the attachment literature and bring the early attachment researchers work to life. It is not quite at the level of Susan Cain in *Quiet*, but she does so in a clear enough way to make it meaningful and insightful.

If you are interested in how to build secure emotional bonds in a couple relationship, this is a great book to read. I would recommend it to anyone wanting to learn more about this topic.

A.M. says

Dr Sue Johnson is a leader in this field and she does a lot of work with couples in Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy (EFT).

More than a few very interesting findings.

She talked of a study where they put people in an fMRI machine and subjected them to pain and asked them to rate that pain in three situations: alone, holding a stranger's hand, or holding the hand of their loved one.

Guess which one they report feeling less pain? And the MRI shows exactly how much anxiety/stress their brain showed.

We fear more when we're alone. [no back up?]

Sue's theory is that we are meant to be together. That it is an evolutionary requirement for us to be supported by loved ones in order to thrive.

Our partners are central to our sense of safety. How can they shelter us, be our safe harbour, if they don't know what we are afraid of and what we yearn or hunger for? Emotion is the music of the dance between lovers; it tells us where to put our feet, and tells our partners where we need them to put theirs. p. 68

She is NOT in agreement with the male/female brain thing [mars/venus or whatever]

At p 181 she says

Differences only emerge when people are explicitly told that they are *expected* to act in a certain way because of their sex.

Interesting...

She also talks about how desire/sex is different for women and guesses it may have to do with anxiety over pregnancy. Even in a world of contraception, it is the woman who bears the brunt of this. Viagra doesn't work on women because desire in women isn't about blood flow to the genitals. Women respond to their partner's interest. Good communication and foreplay cements their sense of security and encourages them to be more involved.

I laughed at one client who complained he'd spent all that money on sex manuals when all his partner wanted was for him to talk to her and to be held.

Snorts - any romance author could have told you that, dude.

More info at her website here:

<http://www.dr.suejohnson.com/>

4 stars

D says

This book is dedicated to my children, in the hope that their love relationships will be richer, deeper, and more fulfilling.

Also, this book is dedicated to those I love -- those who continually offer me a safe haven and a secure base from which to joyfully leap into the unknown. You know who you are.

Provocative finding:

The first and foremost instinct of humans is neither sex nor aggression.

It is to seek contact and comforting connection.

The core of happy relationships is a deep trust that partners matter to each other and will reliably respond when needed. Secure love is an open channel for reciprocal emotional signaling. Love is a constant process of tuning in, connecting, missing and misreading cues, disconnecting, repairing and finding deeper

connection. It is a dance of meeting and parting and finding each other again, minute by minute, and day by day.

Attachment styles: avoidant, anxious, secure.

Secure: Generally competent & worthy of love themselves; others are trustworthy and reliable

Avoidant: worthy of love themselves, but view others are inherently unreliable and untrustworthy

Anxious: Strong doubt as to their own value, acceptability; obsessively seek approval and reassurance that they are lovable and not about to be rejected; idealize others.

Separation distress:

- 1) Anger and protest - Attack often for self-protection; anguish
- 2) Clinging and seeking - Deep misery; repeated requests
- 3) Depression and despair - rage, sense of helplessness; let go of the longing, and move into grieving
- 4) Detachment - accepts that the relationship is not going to fulfill her longings; stop investing in it; let it die.

Experiment 1

When you were growing up, who did you go to for comfort?

Do you have this kind of a relationship now, as an adult?

Experiment 2

When do you feel precious and loved?

What makes your partner feel precious and loved?

Experiment 3

When facing a recurring event that makes you anxious, which loved one comes to mind?

Can you see this person, hear her/his voice, remembering some soothing words?

Can you use this memory to calm yourself and regain your emotional equilibrium?

I can see him, his smiles tells me how much he believes in me. It's okay; I can tolerate this.

Learning to love and be loved is about learning to tune into our emotions so that we know what we need from a partner, and express those desires openly, in a way that evokes sympathy and support from him or her.

In these moments, we are 'effectively dependent' - we can call to others and respond to their call in a way that makes us and our connection with them stronger. **Nothing makes us stronger and happier than loving, stable long-term bonds with others.**

Devoted, early nurturing grows brains that are better able to regulate stress, connect with others, collaborate, and dance. The greatest gift a parents has to give a child -- and a lover to give a lover -- is emotionally attune attention and timely responsiveness.

Voice and touch can soothe... and just calling up the memory of singing and touching can sooth.

Secure lovers can be playful and adventurous throughout the relationship. Sexual satisfaction and excitement for both women and men increases with emotional commitment and sexual exclusivity.

Unraveling

1. Disconnection and deprivation

2. Recurring separation distress
3. Frantic demand-and-withdrawal
4. Freeze in despair

Erosion, escalation and emptiness

The past is never dead. It's not even past. - William Faulkner

Hold Me Tight: Seven Conversations for a Lifetime of Love

Are you there for me?

A secure bond has three basic elements:

- 1. Accessibility - You give me your attention and are emotionally open to what I am saying**
- 2. Responsiveness - You accept my needs and fears and offer comfort and caring**
- 3. Engagement - You are emotionally present, absorbed and involved with me**

- Tune in and stay with softer emotions - hold on to the hope of potential connection
- Regulate emotions and look at the other person with openness and curiosity; show willingness to listen; don't stay numb or shut down
- Turn emotions into clear, specific signals. Communicate feared danger, and longed-for safety.

The danger is they will get stuck in the content issue and miss the attachment cues.

They will assume the fight is about the rain, and forget about the **lack of connection** and **what kind of bond they are going to have**.

The quality of our relationships with others is the bedrock on which we build our existence.

The ways we tune in to and engage with others sculpt the very society we live in.

Secure connection with loved ones help us to be open, responsive, and flexible, and that, in turn, inclines us to perceive the world as kinder, safer and more malleable. It allows us to take a more active role in the universe. Positive relationships make us more apt to be community builders - creative works, leaders and caring citizens. A civil society depends on connection with and trust in others. Primatologist Frans de Waal calls it the 'invisible hand' that reaches out to others.

We are united by natures; we are all imbued with the same existential fears and needs. Empathy is our birthright.

We naturally favor empathy unless we are consumed by fear or rage.

When as a society we fail to grasp, honor and nurture our need for emotional connection, we pay a huge price. We lapse into depression and anxiety.

Without time and attention, all relationships evaporate.

Sacred (Latin - to sanctify) 'worthy of devotion'; to make holy

Feelings of isolation and rejection are signals to move us to repair our social ties. We need to heed them and refashion our individual and collective priorities.

Begin by looking at the implications of business policies on families, especially at times of stress and transition. Relationship breakdown often begins with the birth of a child. Norway, Sweden and Denmark lead in 'bonding matters' policies. They offer 12-16 mos full paid leave to mothers and fathers, who can decide how to share that time between them. Canada offers almost a year off, but with much less remuneration. The USA has no national law mandating paid time off for new parents, although California has begun to offer short leaves.

It promotes marriage stability, gives child caregivers some respite, fosters bonding and promotes infant health, getting baby off to a healthy emotional and physical start.

Know your neighbors. If I need anything, there are people I can call on.

The one thing that robots cannot do is feel emotion; they offer a counterfeit performance that imitates connection. It offers immediate comfort, but further distorts our ability to really connect with another person.

Real connection with others is being crowded out by virtual kinship.

Empathy can be 'caught, not taught.'

If dependency/vulnerability is recognized and handled well in loving relationships, it is the source of the best human qualities: empathy, kindness and cooperation.

Civilization (Latin 'citizens') signifies an advanced state of human social development and organization. Do we judge it by the quality of our relationships? Civilization works most effectively when we take our social capital seriously and cultivate it.

Secure relationships and more compassionate partners make for more secure and caring citizens, who are more tolerant of those who are not like them.

Liberté, égalité, fraternité - French national motto

The USA forgot the fraternity, the last pillar of democracy. The human bonding that recognizes the need for feeling and cooperation between neighbors. It places our emotional and physical interdependence and **the need for safe, trusting, caring relationships at the very core of human nature and of a truly human society**. This is a blueprint for the reform and optimal development of human society.

Start by raising awareness of the perils of loneliness and validate our need for belonging and support.

Connection Campaign

"Take someone you know (or don't know) for a latte today. It's good for your health."

Family dysfunction results in disconnection from others. Fragile, unstable families do not create strong, safe emotional relationships to stabilize children and help them grow into well functioning adults and citizens of the world.

We need to take care of the planet we live on, and guard the ecological niche we occupy -- close connection with others.

Strengthen adult love relationships, families and communities.

We all benefit when love relationships blossom; we all suffer when they become distressed or break.

Direct costs: food, housing and healthy care for needy single-parent families and child-support enforcement.
Indirect costs: physical and mental health problems, lost work time, addiction, and crime.

As we educate for love and see romantic love as intelligible and malleable, we shift from 'falling' in love, to 'making' love. We develop more confidence in our ability to shape our love relationships. The more you believe you can influence what happens, the harder you try to keep and mend it. We can make love last b/c we know how to repair and renew it.

Mayans predicted destruction.

Incas and Tibetan Bon shamans foretold renewal and transformation.

Hip prophesied a 'time of turning the earth over.'

Kwame Anthony Appiah of Princeton says: In life, the challenge is not so much to figure out how best to play the game; the challenge is to figure out what game you are playing.

Soul (Old English - vital breath)

We are never so alive as when we love.