



Hold Me Tight: Seven Conversations for a Lifetime of Love

Sue Johnson

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Heralded by the *New York Times* and *Time* as the couples therapy with the highest rate of success, Emotionally Focused Therapy works because it views the love relationship as an attachment bond.

This idea, once controversial, is now supported by science, and has become widely popular among therapists around the world. In *Hold Me Tight*, Dr. Sue Johnson presents Emotionally Focused Therapy to the general public for the first time. Johnson teaches that the way to save and enrich a relationship is to reestablish safe emotional connection and preserve the attachment bond. With this in mind, she focuses on key moments in a relationship-from "Recognizing the Demon Dialogue" to "Revisiting a Rocky Moment" -- and uses them as touch points for seven healing conversations.

Through case studies from her practice, illuminating advice, and practical exercises, couples will learn how to nurture their relationships and ensure a lifetime of love.

Hold Me Tight: Seven Conversations for a Lifetime of Love Details

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From Reader Review **Hold Me Tight: Seven Conversations for a Lifetime of Love** for online ebook

Austin S. says

This has replaced all the other books on relationships as the number one must-read book. It delves below the more superficial layers of content and process addressed by other authors (e.g., Gottman, Hendricks, Hendrix) and finally gets to the heart of the matter: attachment, safety, and emotional presence/engagement

Terri R says

This is the best book on relationships that I have ever read. The writer is clear and non-judgmental and stays away from too much psychological analyses and language. **Hold Me Tight** is designed to help partners gain insight about themselves and one another and to enhance their communication, whether or not it is broken. The writing style creates topics that are easily discussed between partners and the book is filled with exercises that allow one to practice better communication and understanding. I think the book is relevant to partners at all stages of a relationship, not just relationships that are "in trouble." I enjoyed reading the book and using some of the exercising to deepen my insight and understanding of myself and my partner. The book is worth reading and engaging.

Darwin8u says

Because I'm dead inside.

Matt Evans says

Dr. Johnson's book easily wins the "World's Worst Title Ever" award. "**Hold Me Tight**" qua self-help book title evokes, in this reader, all the wrong associations. Much as does the scent of patchouli oil and as does the sound of gauzy-eyed adults whispering for their inner child to come on out for a good old back rub, "**Hold Me Tight**" evokes (again, for this reader) scary New Agey associations. For example, "**Hold Me Tight**" made me recall against my will that Kenny Loggins dumped his first wife in order to marry his colonic therapist. In a nude wedding ceremony. Nude, as in, everybody in attendance, guests and minister (excepting, hopefully, his clerical collar) included, sans sartorial stitch one. Nothing wrong with the concept, I guess, but who wants to see Mr. Danger Zone, singing, nakedly, to his new wife "Cut foot-loo-zah! Cut foot-loo-zah!"

Nothing against the New Age, per se, but everything against Kenny Loggins. That man's music has done way too much harm for him to ever have hope of redemption.

The foregoing may indeed be a strange preamble for the review of a book I thoroughly enjoyed, but I kind of feel like I needed to say what I felt about the title. Because many people who feel like I do about touchy-feely New Age hand-holding might otherwise bypass a truly remarkable and helpful book.

"Hold Me Tight," contrary to whatever negative images or atavistic longings its title triggers, is a phenomenal book. Dr. Johnson is part of the EFT (Emotionally Focused Therapy; again, sorry for whatever horrible associations this phrase conjures) movement. EFT espouses spousal connection and intimacy over technical communication proscriptions and mars-venus feelings flowcharts. Unlike most traditional "get along with your spouse" theories, EFT actually works real wonders.

I could go on, but I won't. If you seek to communicate more meaningfully with your spouse, fight your feelings and look past the bad title and read "Hold Me Tight."

Jennifer Chin says

wish I had read this book years ago... everyone should read it to learn how to be more compassionate to the people who care about you.

Janet says

The application of attachment theory to adult romantic relationships is genius. According to Johnson, the need for attachment underlies the conflict involved in the pursue-withdraw dance that couples often get locked into, a dance she aptly metaphorizes as the Polka. Her work provides tools for couples who want to stop dancing the Polka and start doing a Tango, her language for a relationship that allows for deep connection.

Jared Bird says

This book was recommended by my wife's uncle, a teacher/couples therapist, who recommended it as one of the best books written about relationships. Having read through the whole thing, I can agree, in my limited experience. I found many intriguing insights in the book that offer good looks into my own psyche and my wife's. I enjoyed reading through the scenarios who were in situations that I find myself in in my own relationship, and the lessons learned were deep and moving. At the same time, The sections that I didn't find applicable were significantly less interesting. I feel that this book isn't meant to be read (like I did) so much as it is meant to be studied. I should have had a pencil and notepad handy to jot down ideas, questions, and goals. This book should also be read in steps as you progress from one level to the next. I consider buying my own copy just so I can do this study. I can see this kind of book as being a relationship-saver.

Austen to Zafón says

Why: Because a friend of mine said about it: This book is FABULOUS! The premise is that we are so emotionally caught up in the minutia of our romantic relationships because of our associations and links to our past relationships with our parents. We long for that same closeness, the opportunity to be who we are completely, permission to be needy and longing for affection from our spouse (as we had from our parents). Once we understand this and can allow for it (and can show/speak to our spouse with this understanding) then our marriage will flourish (as well as our relationships in general). Because when it comes down to it,

most of our arguments with our spouses is about wanting to feel more loved/cared for/affection/connection. How to share that with one another and receive that love and affection in return is what this book teaches.(less)

Janet Ferguson says

Best book about human relationships EVER. In a relationship? Read it. Not in a relationship? Read it. It's written for everyone. And you don't need to be a psychology student to "get it." Dr. Sue Johnson will go down in history alongside Freud and Jung as a pioneer. Her approach, Emotionally Focused Therapy, has been proven to help 86 percent of couples become happier in their relationships. This is compared to most other forms of couple therapy that achieve a 35 percent success rate. Endorsed by the American Psychological Association with empirical proof. Read it.

Christina says

I can't recommend this book enough. It's for anyone who's ever loved or been loved by anyone, and wanting to get better at building loving relationships. It is dense and can't be read quickly. I had to think about and sit on, over time, these ideas and concepts. I needed to journal and grow with it a bit and that took months. Reading this book has been a spiritual activity for me and a journey inward. I gained a lot of insight about how I love, how I need to love better, what healthy love really looks like, my love relationship, how and why people struggle in love and how to overcome some of those pitfalls, how to build loving relationships and how loving, securely attached couples are not only transformed and healed themselves through that secure attachment but how those individuals are then available and needed to form the foundation of a civilized society. Powerful. I'm so grateful I read this book!

"It seems to me that if we, as a species, are to survive at all on this fragile blue and green planet, we have to learn to step past the illusion of separateness and grasp that we truly are mutually dependent. We learn this in our most intimate relationships." p. 265, concluding paragraph

Olivia Kienzel says

amazingly barfy language used to convey truly fascinating and revelatory concepts regarding interpersonal relationships and the dynamics you find within them. i was able to get past the awful self-help style and diction and get to the heart of what she's saying--basically applying bowles' attachment theory to adult partnerships, and putting forth the idea that it is not only normal to need other people (esp your partner), but it is actually healthy. the book actually helped me understand every relationship i've ever had. i'll read the last half of it if/when i find myself in another relationship.

the only thing it's missing, because of its intended audience i'm guessing, is how to figure out whether a relationship is worth saving. this book will help couples to communicate better, understand their and their partner's motivations and actions much better, but what if that only prolongs the inevitable? i suppose the honesty it would hopefully engender would preclude that, but i did find myself wondering.

in any case, very helpful. i wish i could take a crack at editing it, though. be prepared for terms such as "the protest polka" and the like to come atcha. *shudder.* such a shame, considering the worthiness of the ideas

inside.

Deborah says

This was much better than the kitschy title led me to believe. The premise is that a love relationship is an "attachment-based" relationship and has all the same hallmarks as that of a parent/child attachment relationship, with additional complexities. In the end, you need the security of knowing that no matter what happens, you can rely on your spouse for comfort and support. Most relationship issues arise because of miscommunications regarding how the need for that comfort is shown and responded to.

One of the points that I thought was the most relevant was the circular behavior pattern, the "Protest Polka"-one spouse is looking for attention/ reassurance that everything is ok, and when they feel ignored, they keep poking harder at their partner to get any kind of response, who keeps retreating defensively further and further into silence, or physical distance. In the end, the fight is never about anything substantial at all, just one spouse asking to be acknowledged and for the relationship to be back on an even keel.

Tatyana Naumova says

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Jennie says

I am going to start this review with two contradictory statements: this is an amazing book for laypeople and therapists alike, a total revolution in how we look at romantic partnerships, and very engaging and readable. And I did not finish it.

When I added this book to my "to read" shelf, it was primarily with the hope of being able to help counseling clients to understand their romantic attachments, but when I finally picked it up to read, it was in the hopes of improving my own rocky relationship. My partner was feeling smothered and unappreciated, and I was feeling abandoned and insecure.

As I read, I came to understand that adult human beings are interdependent and have the same attachment needs we did when we were children. But rather than seeking that primary attachment from our parents, we seek it from our romantic partners. This flies in the face of the common idea that as we become adults, we should grow to not need others, and to be able to attend to our emotions without the help of others. As Fanny Brice says in Funny Girl, "people who need people are the luckiest people in the world." And if we let ourselves admit it, aren't we all just people who need people?

She then goes on to talk about the types of "demon dialogues" people get stuck in, and how to put an end to them, as well as how to build intimacy (emotional as well as sexual) once the fighting is over. The process is accessible, and the book is intended for people to use in their own relationships, so it's an easy read.

So why didn't I finish it, you ask? Well I got about 4/5 of the way through, and my partner and I decided our life goals are quite different, and that after 8 years, we would be better off as friends. I tried to keep reading,

because I actually found the content of the book to be as useful for my clients as for myself... But given the task of grieving a relationship, I just couldn't do it.

But it's good to know that at a less transitional point in time, this amazing book will be there to come back to, rife with wisdom and relatable information.

London Mabel says

Hands down the best relationship book I have ever read. A paradigm changer--it felt intuitively right from the first chapter, yet I also see the world in a different way. It took the core values I held about life, and showed me how to really live them better. Of course, starting with the relationships closest to me.

There are no complicated rules here, what you need to do doesn't feel like an overwhelming amount of work, and what Johnson says makes so much sense it's not hard to remember. By chapter four you'll have a good idea of some things you can do and STOP doing, without even having started the "seven conversations."

Johnson's methods are based on 25 years of clinical research, and have a 75% success rate. So at least ask yourself this: What have you got to lose? It's not a long book, the science is super interesting, and many of the stories are touching.

And don't be fooled by the frouffy title, it's not a frouffy book. ;-) Johnson's a scientist, not a writer, so the writing might veer into the self-helpy; or her retelling of the couple's conversations sound fake at times (people always "giggle" when I'm sure in real life they just laughed). But the science she talks about is serious stuff, and the ideas are deep, so I never felt I was being frouffed-over.
