

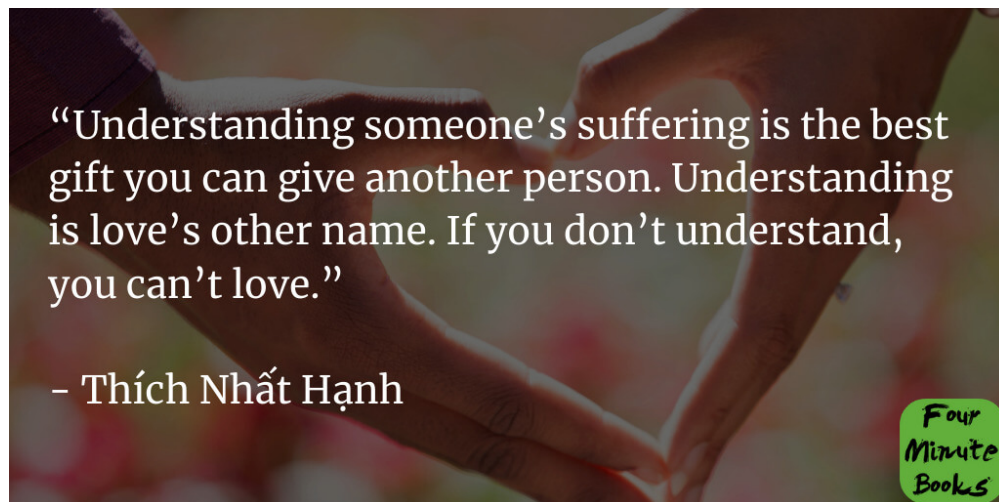
# How To Love Summary

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**1-Sentence-Summary:** *How To Love* teaches the secrets of caring for and connecting with yourself, your partner, and everyone in the world by looking at love through the lens of mindfulness.

**Read in:** 4 minutes

**Favorite quote from the author:**



In the last few years, the practice of mindfulness has spread like wildfire. Just look at any magazine or lifestyle site and you will probably see something about its benefits. But don’t worry, it’s not just a hippie fad everyone will forget about in a few years— practicing mindfulness actually has many scientifically proven benefits.

Being mindful can help you with everything from becoming happier to becoming more focused and productive. Being in the moment can help you be healthier too by helping you be mindful about what you eat and how you feel when you exercise. These are just a few of the many benefits.

As world-renowned Vietnamese Buddhist monk and teacher Thích Nhất Hạnh saw this age-old Asian technique become increasingly popular in Western culture, he had an idea. What if we were to apply this technique to help us in the area most important to us— our love life?

In his book *How to Love: Mindful Lessons on Love*, Hanh shares his invaluable wisdom on the subject of love. He masterfully guides us on how we can be more mindful in how we love those around us as well as ourselves. He teaches how we can use mindfulness to find happiness and true love.

Here are 3 of the best lessons I’ve learned from this book:

1. You must nourish love with happiness and share it with others if you want it to grow and flourish.
2. To understand love, become knowledgeable about loving-kindness, compassion, equanimity, and joy.
3. When you are mindful about love and consider how it's like being a healer, you unlock new depths of connection with others.

Are you ready to discover *How To Love*? Let's get right to these lessons and find out!

## **Lesson 1: If you want your love to grow and flourish, nourish it with happiness and share it with others.**

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Think about adding a spoonful of salt to your water. It's pretty much undrinkable, right? But now imagine putting that spoonful into a river. It won't change much at all. In the same way, if our hearts are small, the mistakes and faults of others will upset us easily. But if we open our hearts, we will find empathy and compassion for our fellow human beings.

How can we do this? **Hanh explains that like a loving thing, love needs nourishment.** And that nourishment comes in the form of happiness. Only when you are happy can you truly expand your heart and be capable of loving others.

Zen Buddhism can teach us a little bit about happiness and how we can become truly happy. Sometimes we believe it will come through superficial desires, but true happiness is the fruit of mindfulness. A quick exercise you can do to experience happiness through mindfulness is to go walking. Rather than thinking about the destination and rushing, instead, think about the movement of your body and the beauty of the surroundings.

When you practice mindfulness you will notice beauty in the simple things, like a blossoming flower. When you find this happiness in the present you can share it with others and help them become happier too.

## **Lesson 2: Love is made up of joy, equanimity, compassion, and loving-kindness.**

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Love is much more than just securing an attractive and successful mate. To understand more about love, you need to understand it has four traits: joy, equanimity, compassion, and loving-kindness. Joy is all about deep and lasting happiness. When we have joy, we want to bring this gift to others.

Equanimity is also known as inclusiveness. **This trait entails the ability to dissolve boundaries between yourself and someone else to the point where their suffering is your suffering.**

Compassion allows us to see suffering and understand it. This helps us listen and become empathetic.

Loving-kindness means using mindfulness to help others be happy. This trait allows us to spread sunshine to even the saddest heart.

Hanh teaches us that true love isn't about gaining something, but rather being able to recognize and understand the suffering of someone else.

### **Lesson 3: You will connect with others better when you are mindful about love and discover how it relates to being a healer.**

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True love can be achieved through mindfulness. Hanh teaches that we should be more mindful of the word “love” and how we use it. Love is a beautiful, special thing, and the word loses its value when we say that we “love” ice cream. When we restrict when it is said to only be when it's *actual* love, we become more mindful of its meaning.

Love that is mindful is also holistic. **It cares for the whole person, flaws and all.** It puts a stop to the automatic tendency to judge and reject others for the faults. Suspending these tendencies will allow you to become a healer.

The ancient Sanskrit word for love is *karuna*. It means to have empathy, but also takes on a deeper meaning of doing everything in our power to alleviate the suffering of another person. If you go to the doctor, you don't just want the doctor to empathize with your pain, you want them to *do* something about it, such as give you antibiotics.

Love is similar to medicine in this way. It doesn't just help you understand someone's pain—it gives you the ability to heal them. However, we need to understand that love is a two-sided coin. Both partners must be healers. This means that sometimes you need to ask for help if you're suffering. This can be tricky, but asking for help from your partner is the only way to achieve mutual healing.

### **How To Love Review**

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I've been interested in mindfulness for a couple of years now and have read a lot of books about relationships and was excited to learn from this book about how they're related. Thích Nhất Hạnh is a great thinker and author. I love reading everything he writes, and How To Love was no exception!

### **Who would I recommend the How To Love summary to?**

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The 21-year-old couple who is caught up in infatuation that yearns for something more meaningful, the 48-year-old husband that wants to find out how to deepen his relationship with his wife, and anyone who is curious about how love is easier to understand when you

apply mindfulness to it.