

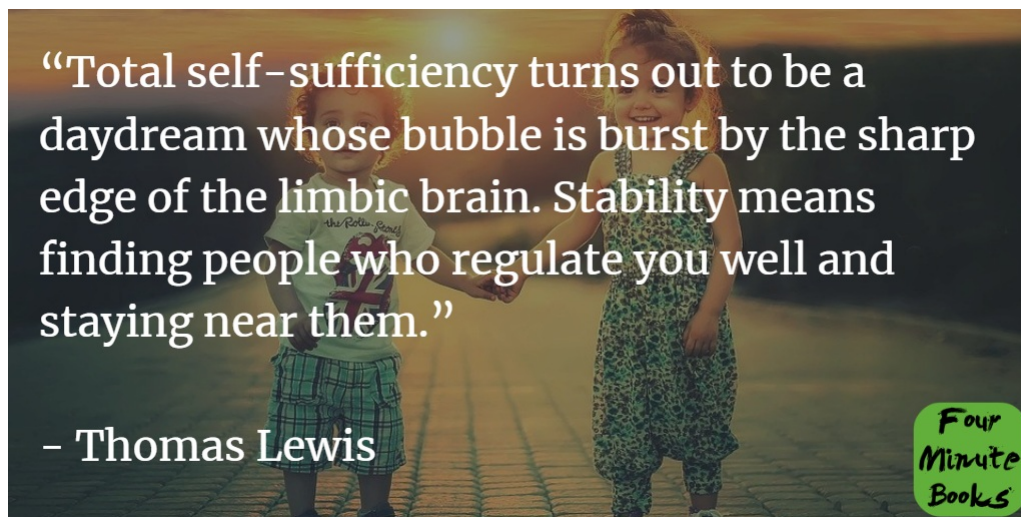
A General Theory Of Love Summary

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1-Sentence-Summary: *A General Theory Of Love* will help you reprogram your mind for better emotional intelligence and relationships by teaching you what three psychiatrists have to say about the science of why we experience love and other emotions.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



If you've ever been in love, you know how fun it can be. Life seems perfect when you think you've found "the one" and get to spend every day with them. But then you break up and your entire world falls apart. What's the deal with that?

Too often we trust the lyrics of love songs to get us through the good times and the bad. But what if our idea of affection isn't as mysterious as we've come to think? What if, just maybe, science has a thing or two to say about our relationships that can really help us have healthier ones?

This is just what you'll get with Thomas Lewis's *A General Theory of Love*. This is a great book if you've ever known what infatuation feels like on any level. Even after almost seven years of marriage this book taught me a lot about my relationship with my wife!

Here are the 3 most powerful lessons from this book about love:

1. The reason we love and feel attachment is because of chemicals in the brain like serotonin, oxytocin, and opiates.
2. We learn how to have different feelings from the way our parents treat us, and we can optimize our brains for emotional intelligence through long-term therapy.

3. Loving someone and being in love are two different things, and understanding the signs of both will improve your relationships.

All you need is love, right? Let's take a closer look at this phenomenon!

Lesson 1: **Serotonin, oxytocin, and opiates are naturally occurring chemicals in the brain that are responsible for feelings of love and attachment.**

We all like to believe that it's fate, cupid, or some other mysterious force that brings us and our companions together. But taking a closer look, we can explain this phenomenon in scientific terms with what are known as neurotransmitters. Our sense of attachment depends on three specific ones called serotonin, oxytocin, and opiates.

First we have serotonin, which reduces feelings of depression and anxiety. When you lose someone close to you, these can kick in to help you feel better. They can also help a person who has a hard time getting away from toxic people. **By boosting serotonin levels with antidepressants, for example, someone in a bad relationship can finally get the courage to get out.**

Oxytocin is another neurotransmitter necessary to feeling attachment. During childbirth, it's present in high levels and is what causes the close bond between mother and child. This chemical also affects other attachments throughout our lives. Two different species of prairie dogs, for example, have varying levels of it in their brains. Those with less oxytocin are more promiscuous and less caring for their young.

And finally let's take a look at opiates. When you touch a hot stove, these are what help your brain get relief from the feeling of pain. But the authors also identify that these also help heal emotional trauma as well. They help us make these connections in the first place and repair our broken hearts anytime they end.

Lesson 2: The difficulties you may have with emotions come from your upbringing and you can fix this by optimizing your brain through therapy.

In the brain, our memory connects together to form attractors, which indicate how we should classify the information we receive. Our experiences build these vital components, which directly affect our memories. When we're born, our minds are clean slates without any attractors. We must have our parents to teach us, but when they lack emotional development, it can affect our capabilities to feel also.

For example, when a kid falls on the ground, they'll look to their mother or father for a reaction. **If they see concern in their parents facial expression, the toddler will learn to cry at these experiences.** On the other hand, when adults express amusement, children can learn to smile and laugh at failures.

Because our ability to connect with others and form relationships hinges on what our parents teach us, these experiences are vital. But inheriting your parents emotional problems is no fun. How can we fix these? Through the reprogramming possible with psychotherapy.

Your attractors form by learning, so they can be broken and re-shaped by modifying the neural network to which they belong. There are many different methods of psychotherapy, but as long as a patient gets what's known as *limbic revision*, they can get emotionally healthy again.

Lesson 3: Be careful to know the difference between being in love and loving someone, it can save your relationships and make them far better.

It's pretty obvious when you're in love. I remember when I was at this stage with my now wife, it seemed like there was nothing else in the world but her. My grades began to suffer, and I didn't realize it but I was ignoring almost everyone else in my life. But I didn't care because I was in love and everything was wonderful.

While vital to the process of forming loving relationships, being in love isn't all it's cracked up to be. Just ask anyone who's just gone through a bad breakup and it's easy to see the pain it can cause. **Some of us are more in love with the idea of being in love than with actually loving our partners.** And that's a huge problem because this "honeymoon phase" of love will end someday. That's why you need to learn how to be loving.

The key to healthy long-term relationships is the level of emotional connection within a couple. While unrequited love is possible, a loving relationship is always mutual. Mature affection comes from knowing and caring for each other instead of just being mere acquaintances as falling in love requires.

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A General Theory Of Love Review

If you love psychology, you're going to love *[A General Theory of Love](#)*! The ideas and principles this teaches about what makes us love and experience other emotions are incredibly intriguing. This book gave me some amazing new insights about why my family and I feel and do certain things, and I'm certain it will do the same for you.

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Who would I recommend the A General Theory Of Love summary to?

The 19-year-old couple who think that they love with each other but might actually be more infatuated with the idea of being in love, the 45-year-old with an interest in neuroscience, and anyone who wants to know what love really is.