



Intimacy.

It's something we strive for in our relationships, and yet most of us struggle to even define it.

Google defines it as being *close to someone*, but I like to simply think of it as *connection*.

What we do know is that at the heart of every loving relationship we find that couples who nurture intimacy and find time to really focus on one another, stay together.

So here's your Ultimate Guide to your Intimate Relationship! We've trawled the web for the best books, blog posts, apps and videos to help you and your partner be even more awesome, together.

Enjoy!

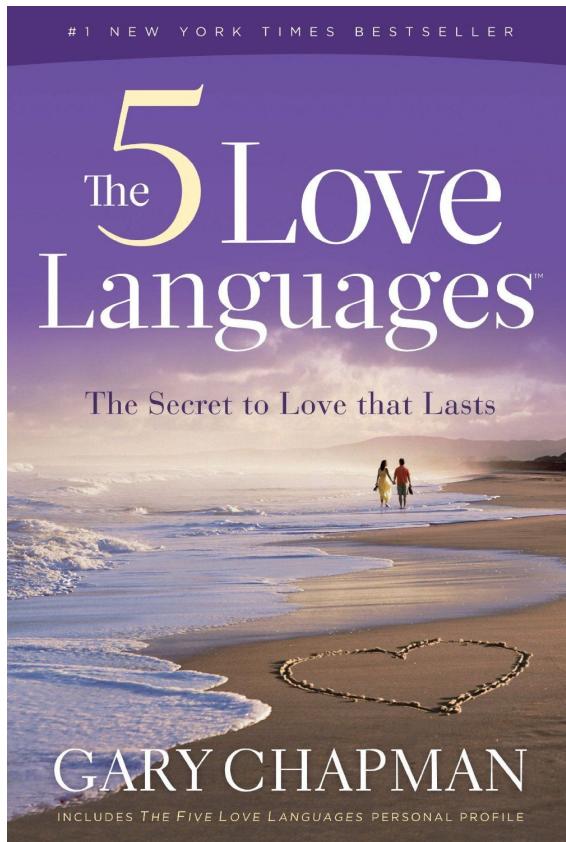
Love,
Darren & Kate xxx
Pillow Play
pillow.io

Emotional Intimacy

Emotional intimacy is defined as the ability to create closeness through sharing thoughts, feelings and desires. It's those late night conversations, where we expose the deepest parts of ourselves to our partners, no matter how ugly or beautiful they may be.

If you're looking to grow more emotional intimacy in your relationship, try these resources:

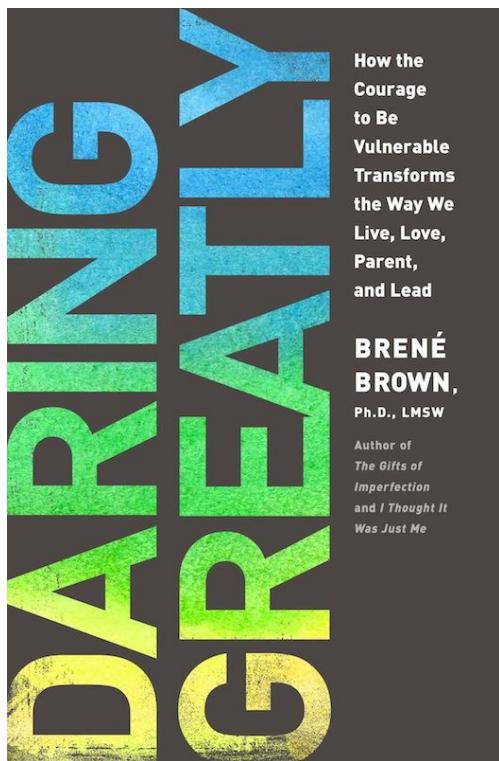
[The Five Love Languages by Gary Chapman](#)



This is one of the classics and certainly a must read no matter what phase of your relationship you might be in. Chapman argues that while falling in love is easy, it's staying in love that's hard. Most relationships fail not because people don't love each other, but because they are speaking completely different love languages.

The book comes with a couples assessment so you can not only out your own language, but also tips on how to speak the language of your partner as well.

[**Daring Greatly: How the courage to be vulnerable transforms the way we live, love, parent and lead. By Brene Brown**](#)



A New York Times #1 Bestseller, this book explores how vulnerability is at the core of how we cope with love, fear, grief, disappointment, and of course intimacy. By stepping back and examining our lives, only then can we find the courage to grapple with these emotional demons. Brene Brown is so insightful, and if opening yourself up to people has been difficult in the past, this book will be wonderful.

[**Love In the Age of Big Data**](#)

While a bit of a heavier read, this piece left me feeling hopeful and refreshed. Sometimes, in the midst of your own relationship struggles, you can forget that you truly are not alone in your anguish and passion. The author had the opportunity to attend one of the Gottman's workshops and observe the famous couple in their element. Beautifully written, it reminds us that all of us are going through the same things.

[**The Four Qualities Of A Conscience Relationship**](#)

A short read, this blog article takes several paradigm shifts that are often programmed within us about what we *think* love is and what we *think* makes strong relationships, and flips them on their heads. This article is about taking archaic values and replacing them with a new conscious framework of loving.

6 Toxic Relationship Habits Most People Think Are Normal

This article hit a little too close to home for me. As someone who has found themselves in a few long term relationships that didn't end well, I already identified with several of the toxic habits. From why you shouldn't keep a 'relationship scorecard' to how to avoid 'blaming your partner for your own emotions' this is a goldmine. Read it, and then read it again.

6 Healthy Relationship Habits Most People Think Are Toxic

The companion article to '6 Toxic Relationship Habits Most People Think Are Normal', this was yet another goldmine of amazing information. For those couples who have been 'in it' for awhile and have not only stuck through but are truckin' along, you will likely identify with this piece.

A Brief History of Male/Female Relationships

If you've ever wondered what historical and sociological influences led us as a society to be where we are today in regards to love, sex and marriage....then THIS is the article to read. The author describes it as a 'highlight' reel of the past billion years of human development and I couldn't agree more. Well written, educational and entertaining.

Attachment Theory

I'm a big believer that the more you know yourself, the better partner you can be. After all, it's hard to personally develop if you don't even know *what* to develop. That's why I love reading articles like this. Psychologists break down people into four types of attachment: secure, anxious, avoidant, and anxious- avoidant. Which of these you fall into greatly affects how you handle your romantic relationships. There is a quiz at the end that you can take, too. A very insightful read!

Breaking Out of the Anxious- Avoidant Cycle

Expanding upon the idea of attachment theory, most anxious people tend to date the avoidant types. This leads to a very specific kind of relationship dynamic that can become toxic if not properly understood. Going deep into the thought processes of these two types and how they interact, this article might feel like it's reading your mind at times. Highly recommend.

5 Ways To Have More Intimate Conversation

Sometimes when we spend months that turn into years with the same person, it's hard to remember that they aren't the same person they were when we first started dating them. After all, the changes were likely gradually and may have gone unnoticed. But we do change, and our partners change too. That's a good thing, and it's never a bad idea to 'refresh' the kinds of conversations you have with your partner to build more intimacy. This article offers solid suggestions on helping you do just that.

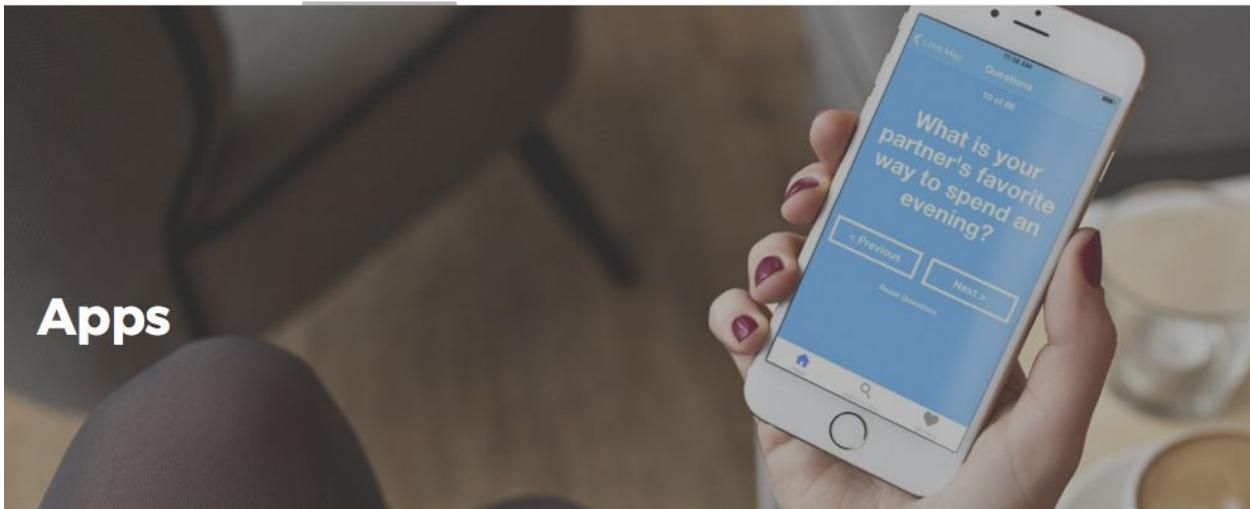
[Gottman](#)

Contact

The Gottman Institute

A RESEARCH-BASED APPROACH TO STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIPS

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Apps

Leading the way in scientific and data driven love, anything that Gottman pumps out is sure to be excellent. If you click on the link, you'll see that they have several apps you can download depending on what your particular relationship challenge is. These apps are paid apps, but with the amount of research that Gottman has accumulated about the science of love, it's a worthwhile investment.

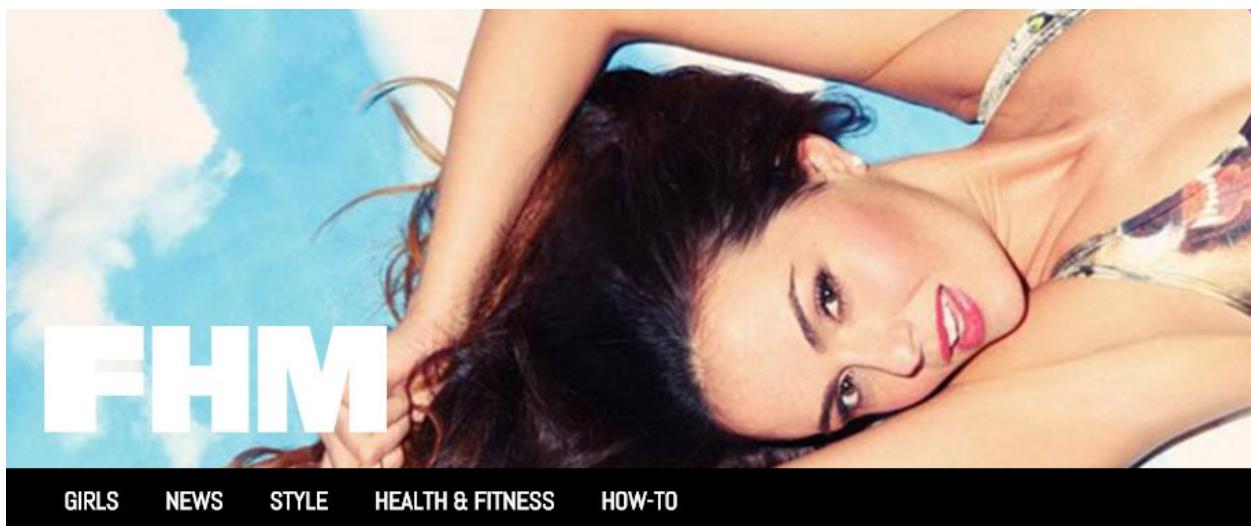
[Elle's Sex and Relationships](#)

Also geared towards women, Elle is like the smarter slightly more sophisticated version of Cosmo. The articles are a little less 'listicle' and more thought provoking, written like essays. For

those looking for a deeper dive into some topics of interest, this site is surprisingly awesome. (I totally misjudged you, Elle!)

One article I found myself clicking on was titled 'Generation Break Up, Then Make Up'. Having gone through one of these recently myself, I was surprised to see an entire well written piece dedicated to the phenomenon. It made me feel less alone, and I think is a perfect example of the kinds of content you can find on the site.

[FHM's Relationships](#)



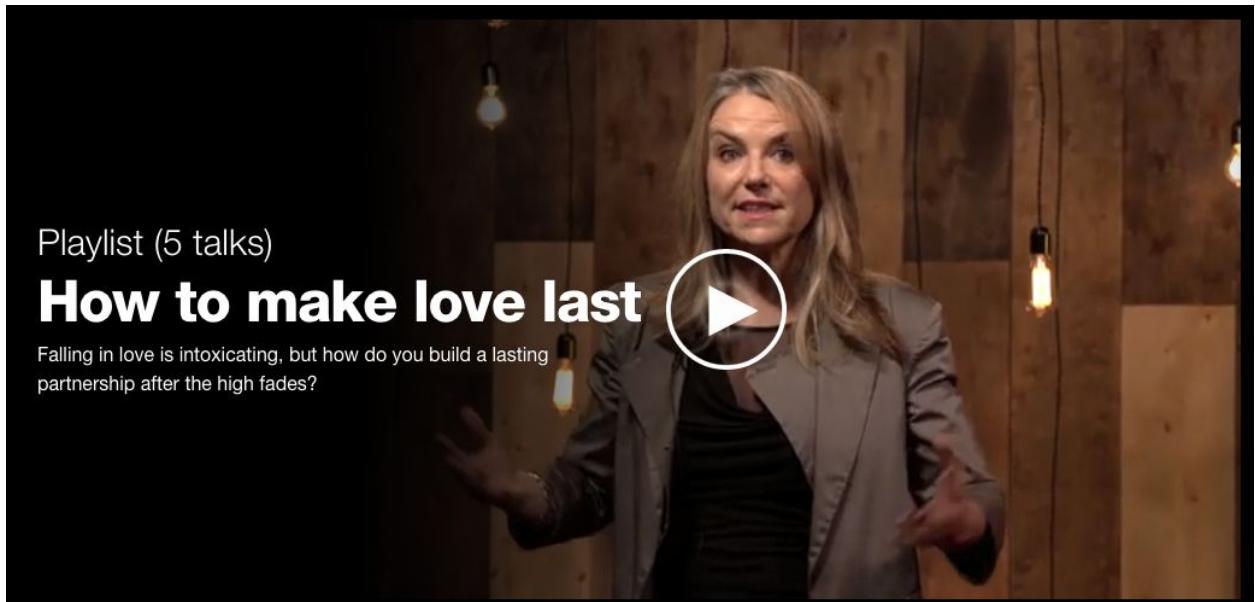
This is basically Cosmo, but for men. From 'The Do's and Don't to Texting Girls' to 'How To Join the Mile High Club' , there are a ton of articles to help you navigate the complicated world of courting women.

There is even an entire section of the site just called 'GIRLS' and revolves around the art of attracting them!

And for the lazier dude that just wants to look at hot girls, you can find articles that gather all the sexy Instagram babes you should be following.

Watch this:

[Ted Playlist: How to make love last](#)



A great playlist to watch if you find yourself tired of everything on Netflix and want to snuggle up to your significant other and introduce some new ideas into the relationship. The first video by Esther Perel is particularly enlightening. If you've ever wondered about the dichotomy between stability in a relationship and keeping things spicy, she breaks it down for you.

[The Power Of Vulnerability by Brene Brown - Ted Talk](#)

A screenshot of a YouTube video player. The video shows Brene Brown, a woman with blonde hair, speaking. She is wearing a brown button-down shirt. The video player interface includes a progress bar at 8:06 / 20:49, volume controls, and a full-screen button. Below the video, the title is "The Power of Vulnerability | Brene Brown | TED Talks". The TED Talks logo is in the top left. To the right, it says "Subscribed" and "5,110,926". The view count is "4,961,536 views". At the bottom, there are buttons for "Add to", "Share", and "More". There are also like and dislike counts: "50,815" likes and "1,035" dislikes.

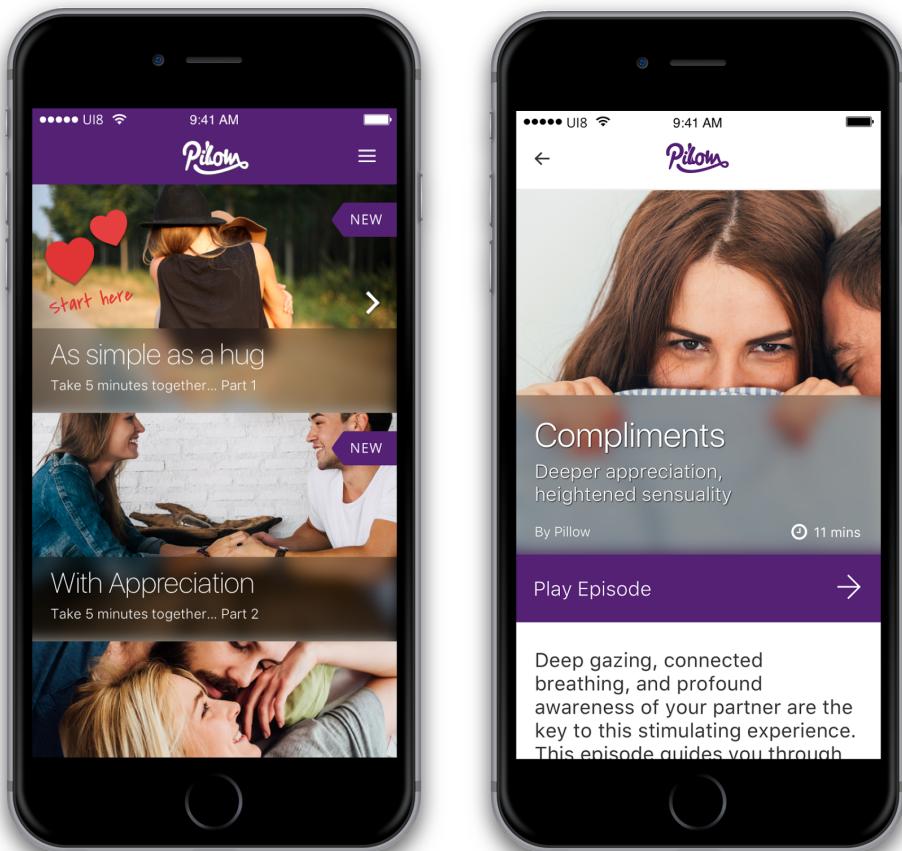
If you are pressed for time and can't read her amazing book, this Ted Talk distills some of her best points into 20 minutes. One of the most popular Ted Talks EVER, this will not disappoint.

[How to be vulnerable without risking rejection from men](#)

Adam breaks down why vulnerability is the key to finding real love, and ways in which you can use your vulnerability as a strength and not a weakness. He walks you through some exercises that are geared towards helping women overcome any barriers to displaying their most beautiful and authentic selves.

Download this:

[Pillow Play - App for Busy Couples to Feel Close](#)



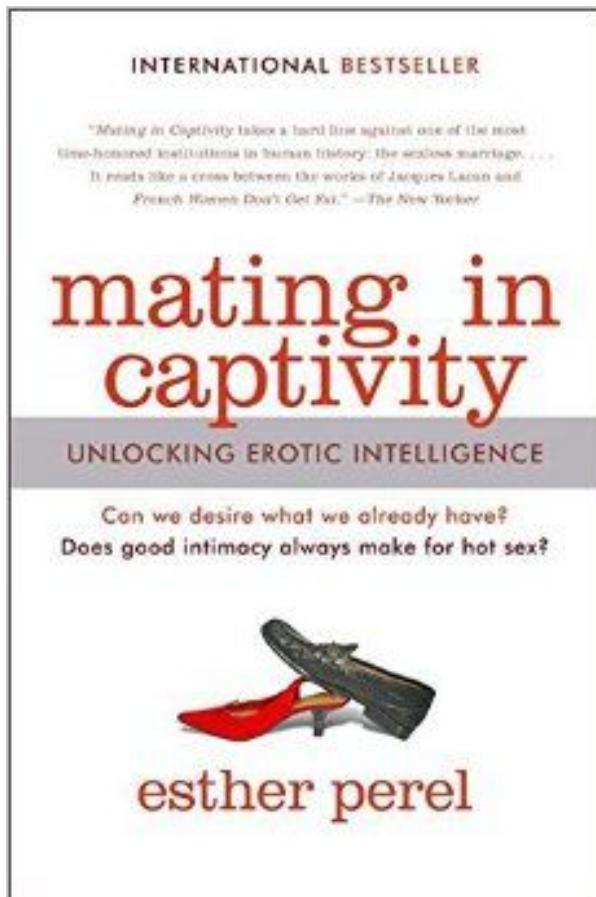
Pillow Play has bottled up potent ways to nurture intimacy in your relationship by crafting 5-20 minute experiences to share with your partner. Simply press play, and follow along to the exercises at home with your partner!

Intellectual Intimacy

Intellectual intimacy is all about being on the same page when it comes to the important areas of your relationship. Whether that's your finances, lifestyle design, future goals, values --- being intellectually intimate is grabbing your partner's hand and walking in the same direction.

Here are some awesome things to check out to help you grow the intellectual intimacy in your relationship:

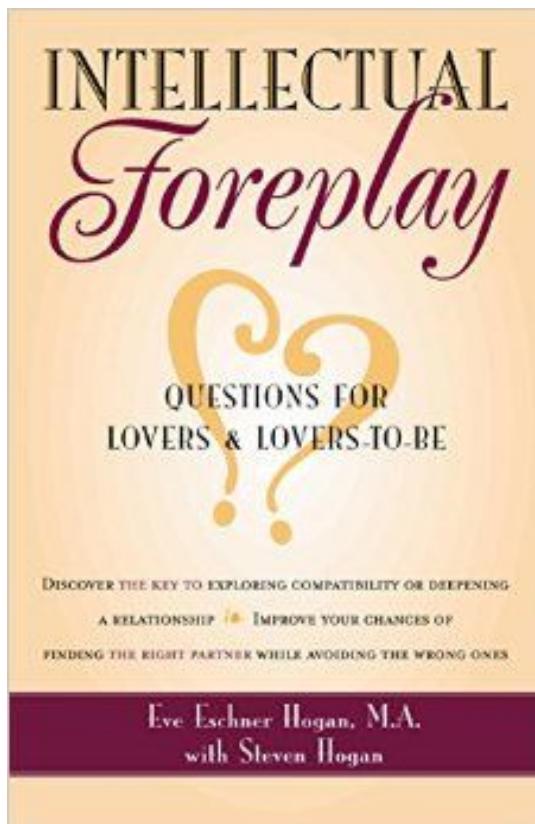
[Mating in Captivity: Unlocking Erotic Intelligence by Esther Perel](#)



Esther Perel is to long term relationships what Tim Ferris is to digital nomads. In other words, she knows her Sh*T. After spending 20 years as a couples therapist, she decided to dive deep into what exactly keeps a relationship exciting.

Try watching her Ted talk first and if she tickles your fancy, then be sure to download a copy of her book to your Kindle for some midnight reading.

[Intellectual Foreplay](#)



This book takes an in depth look at the belief systems of ourselves and our partners and examines how those beliefs affect the relationship. Touted as a 'solutions oriented' guide, it's all about creating deeper, intimate, and more meaningful conversation. If you find yourselves lost at what to talk about one night on Skype, try cracking this open.

[Attached: The New Science of Adult Attachment and How it Can Help You Find and Keep Love by Amir Levine and Rachel Heller.](#)



Attached.

THE NEW SCIENCE OF ADULT ATTACHMENT

AND HOW IT CAN HELP YOU FIND—

AND KEEP—LOVE

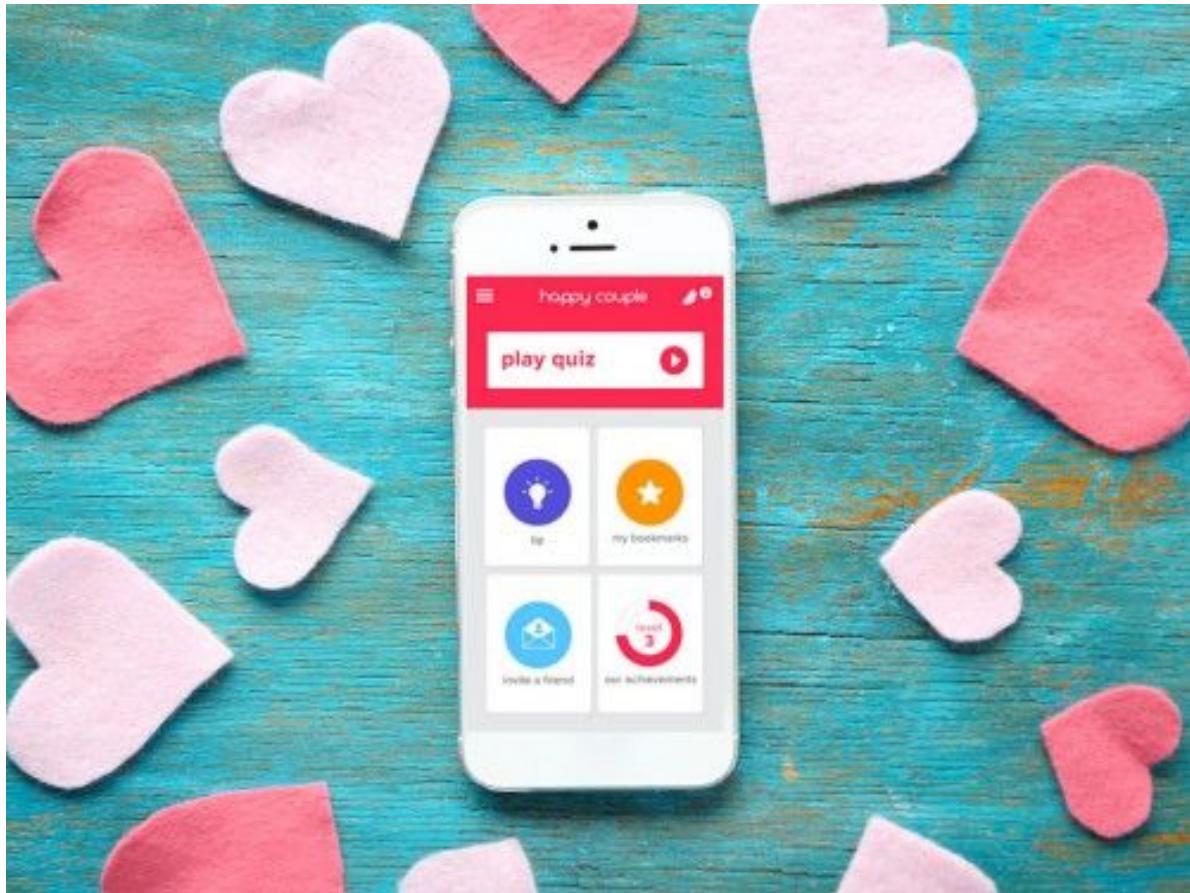
AMIR LEVINE, M.D. *and*
RACHEL S.F. HELLER, M.A.

Is there a science to a successful relationship? According to the authors of this book, the answer is yes. Without giving too much away, people can be broken up into 3 kinds of archetypes and (*spoiler alert!*) only one of them is capable of a successful long term relationship. Fascinating read.

To Fall in love with anyone, do this

Arthur Aron, a psychologist, put together 36 questions that claimed to have the power to make any two people fall in love. The author of this article happened to fall in love with the person she tried it with, and then wrote about her experience. It's a fascinating insight into how quickly 'intimacy' can potentially be established and what it means to truly be seen by your partner.

Happy Couple



When it comes to 'question' apps, I'm usually fairly confident that I can answer most questions accurately about my current beau....but even I was pleasantly surprised at how deep some of the questions went. Only five are asked a day, but I was left at the end of the quiz unsure whether or not I had gotten any of them right. Turns out, we both guessed correctly on only 1 out of the 5.

Moral of the story?

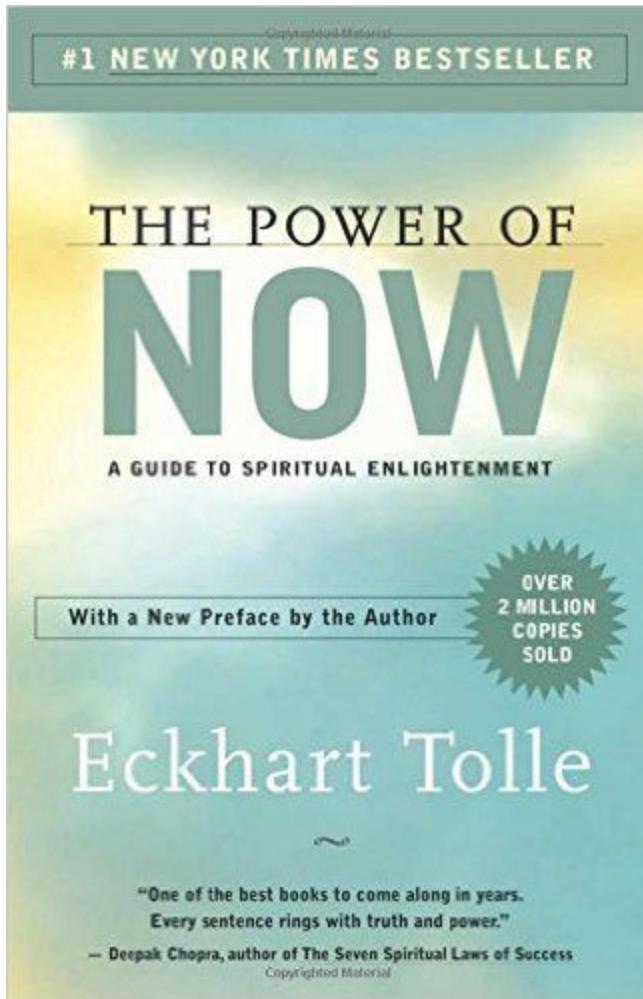
Even if you THINK you know your partner, this app may still surprise you. Plus, there were several helpful tips that you can bookmark as well as challenges to make for a more 'happy couple' that you can accept.

Spiritual Intimacy

Being spiritually intimate varies from couple to couple. For some it can involve sharing a religious belief, and for others who don't subscribe to a religion, it can simply mean making sure you both are on the same path in the search for meaning in this crazy world we live in.

Check out these resources if you're looking to explore the spiritual intimacy between you and your partner:

[**The Power Of Now by Eckhart Tolle**](#)



Learning to live a pain free identity and be able to be present in the moment is so critical to enjoying any intimate moments you may create with your partner. This book has sold over 2 million copies and would make for epic discussions and enlightenment with your special someone.

[Finding Our Enlightened State](#)



A screenshot of a YouTube video player. The video shows a man in a light-colored blazer and glasses speaking on stage at a TEDx event. The background features large red and white letters spelling "DX Penn". The video player interface includes a play button, a progress bar showing 4:09 / 15:01, and a set of control icons. Below the video, the title "Finding our enlightened state | Andrew Newberg | TEDxPenn" is displayed, along with the TEDx Talks channel logo and a "Subscribed" button with 4,506,353 subscribers. The video has 163 views.

Andrew Newberg, a scientist, conducted hundreds of brain scans in order to discover how our brain functions when we are in prayer, trance, or some other kind of 'enlightened state'. Finding unique patterns, this Ted talk analyzes those patterns to help you and your SO find this same enlightenment together.

Physical Intimacy

Physical intimacy, different from sexual intimacy, is all about creating more loving touches. This can range from snuggling to handholding, and can build up desires that can then eventually translate into sexual intimacy.

For ways in which you can increase your physical intimacy, check out these resources:

[How To Become More Intimate Without Having Sex](#)

A solid list of ways in which you can explore physical connection beyond intercourse. Extra kudos for the fun Japanese inspired Anime art.

Six Ways You Can Be A Better Cuddler

I read this through slightly bemused and wondering if there was a truly a ‘technique’ to any of this...and yes. Yes there is. A very interesting read and quite possibly a game changer for your cuddling world.

How To Make Better Eye Contact



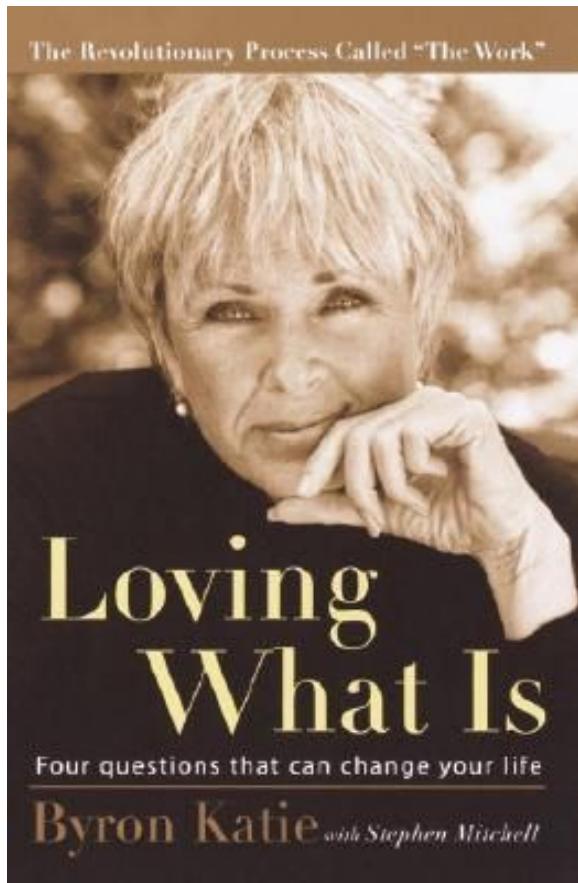
Michael Ellsberg is a successful author and entrepreneur and discusses how you can use eye contact to create more meaningful connections with people that you meet. Not necessarily geared towards couples, there is still great technique here that can cross over.

Experiential Intimacy

Experiential intimacy, sometimes known as Operational Intimacy, is all about sharing experiences and using teamwork to tackle the various parts of life together. From exercising together to running a household, this type of intimacy is very important and when done successfully, can build a solid foundation for a happy couple.

Here are some great resources for helping grow experiential intimacy in your relationship:

[Loving What Is: Four Questions That Can Change Your Life by Byron Katie](#)



This book explores Katie's concept of "The Work". What is this mysterious "The Work"? It's a series of 4 questions that can be applied to any problem that will bring you enlightenment on the issue.

For those struggling with relationship issues, this might be an approach worth trying.

[How To Write A Love Letter](#)

In an age of digital everything, there is something MAJOR to be said about someone who will take the time to write you a letter. It's a wonderful experience to share together and shows extreme thoughtfulness. Being able to touch and feel something that your lover has created is amazing. This particular guide teaches men, who tend to struggle with this more, on how to woo their special lady, but women can find guidance out of this, too.

[**50 things to do with your partner besides watching movies \(Part 1\)**](#)

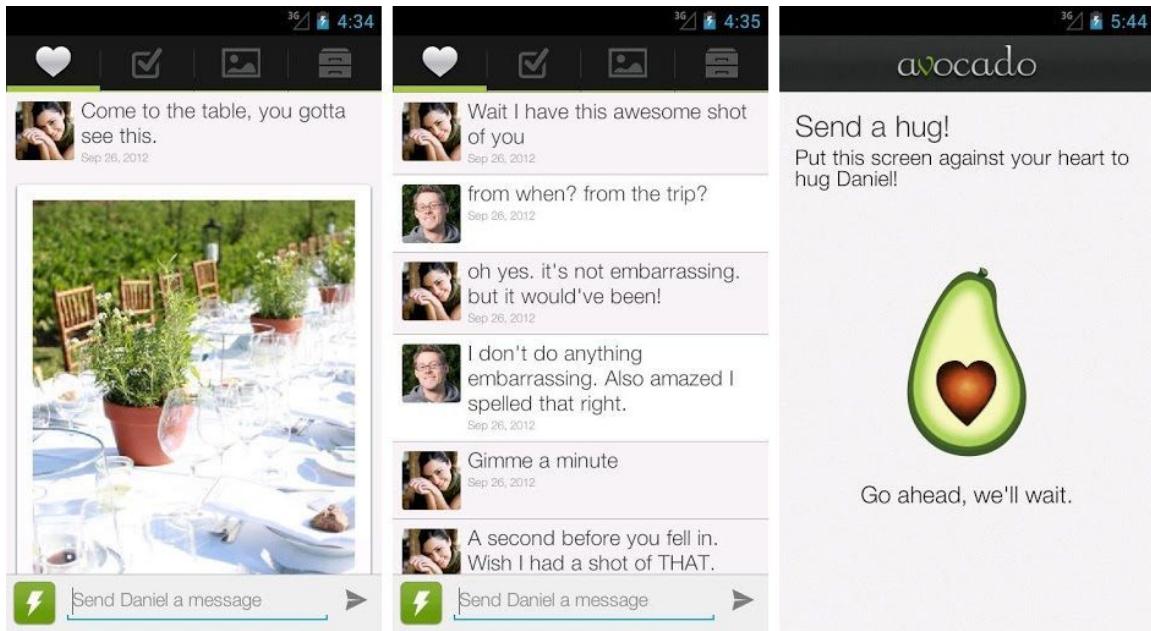
[**50 MORE things to do besides watching movies \(Part 2\)**](#)



Pretty self explanatory, these posts are chock full of several creative ways that you and your partner can continue to share meaningful experiences together outside of Netflix in bed. Not that we're hating on that, but it's nice to mix things up a bit!

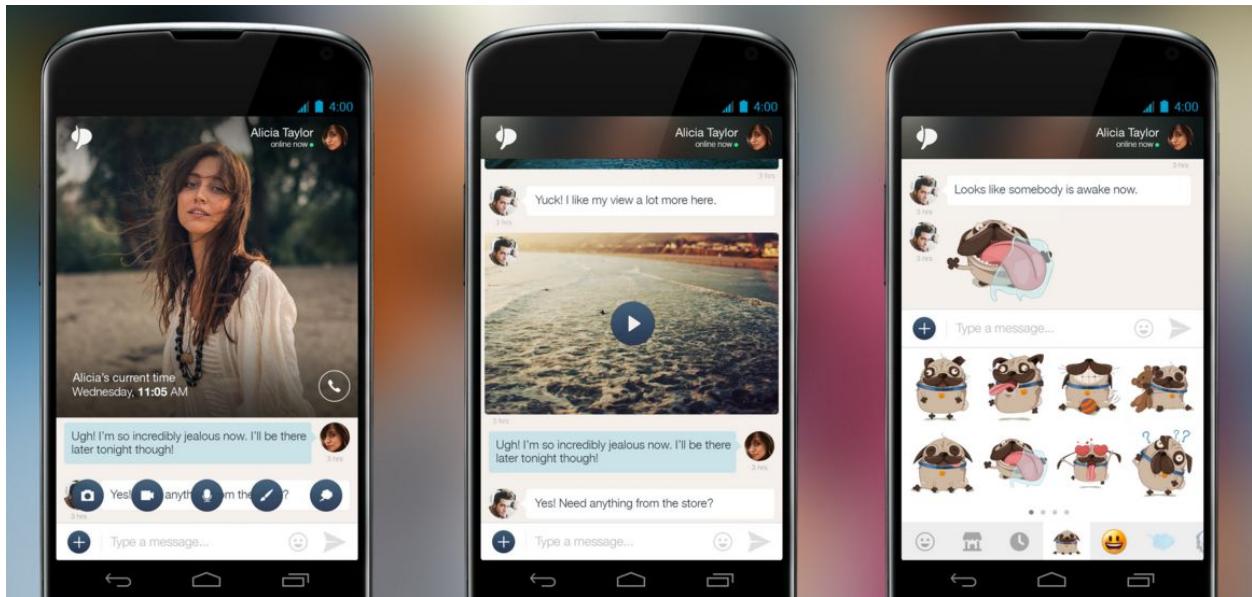
Here are a few apps that were created to foster intimate experiences digitally. These apps are great if you find yourself far away from your beloved and want to feel connected despite the distance.

[**Avocado**](#)



Create grocery lists together. Make art together. Sync your google calendars. Lots of great features to help bridge that distance gap. Cute extra perks: You can request and send virtual hugs and smooches. <3

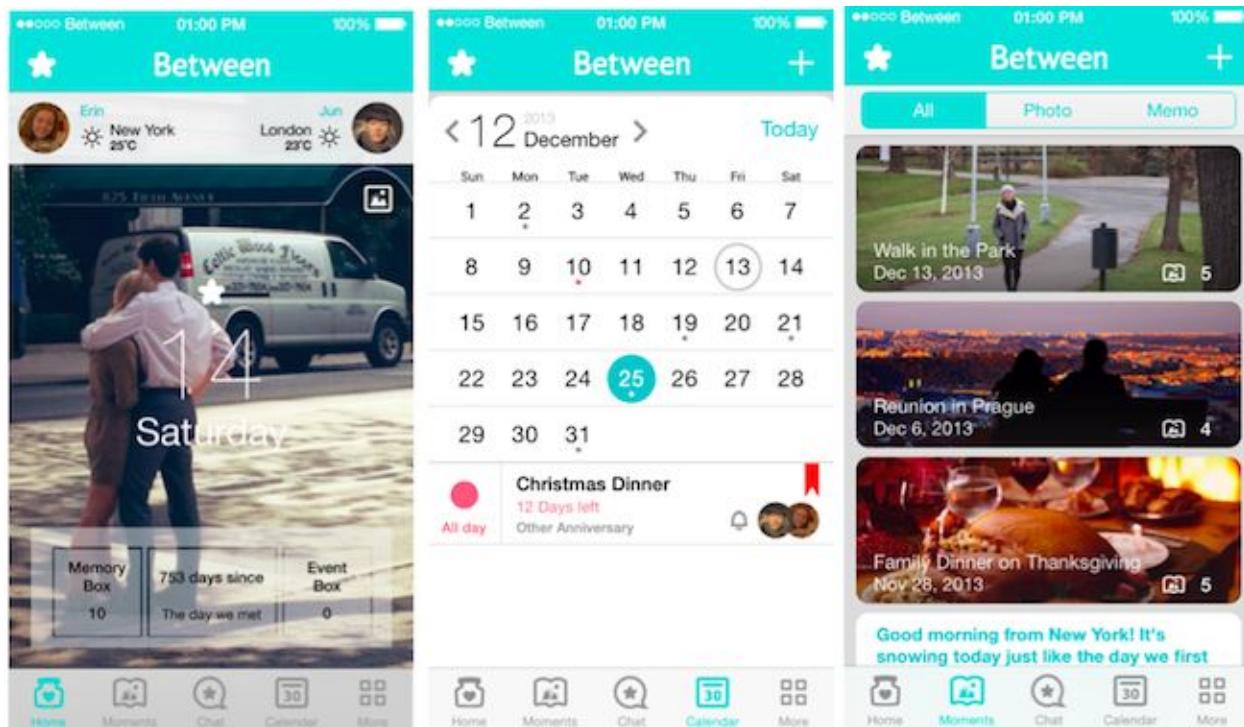
Couple



Similar to apps Between and Avocado, Couple is a great app for long distance couples. You can favorite future restaurants, dinner dates, and excursions. You can create lists and 'thumbprint'

kiss. You can live sketch together and share a photo timeline that only you and your SO can see. It's adorable and will be sure to bring a smile to your face.

Between



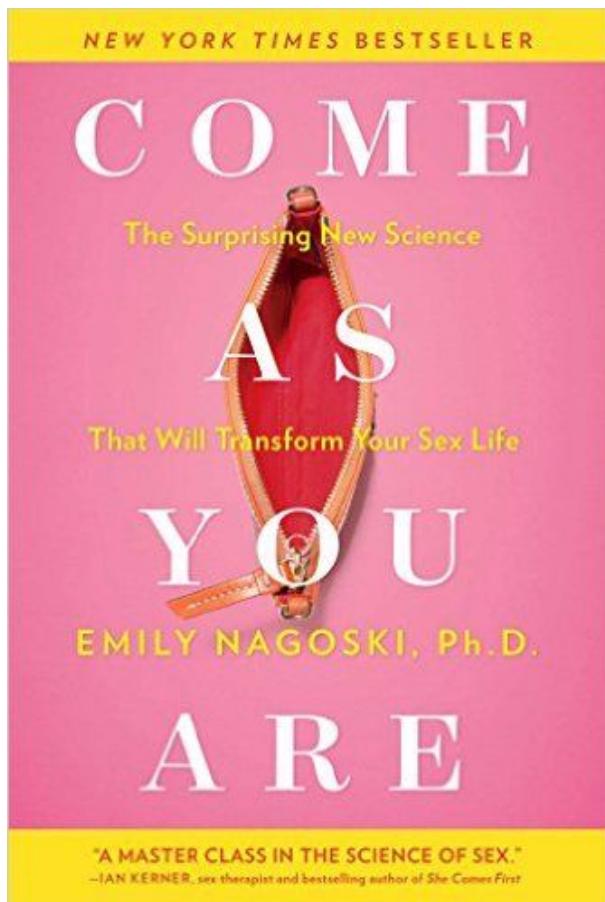
Just like Avocado + Couple except a little more cutesie. Think adorable Korean emojis that like to get a little naughty sometimes. (My personal favorite is the spanking one!) One feature I really appreciate about Between is that the home screen shows you the weather and time of your significant other, no matter how far away from them you might be. *Sigh* It's the little things, isn't it?

Sexual Intimacy

Sexual intimacy, often mistaken for being the *only* kind of intimacy, is still a crucial type of intimacy that many couples are looking to explore and foster. Having sexual intimacy means keeping that sexual spark alive.

Here are some of our favorite resources for helping you foster more sexual intimacy in your relationship:

[**Come as You Are: The Surprising New Science that Will Transform Your Sex Life**](#)



First of all, the cover of this book is badass. I can appreciate a clever depiction of a hoo haa any day. This book dives deep into women's sexuality and helps you understand why you can't just give a woman a viagra like pill and expect her to transform into your favorite pornstar. A wonderful resource for anyone looking to understand female anatomy on a whole new level.

[**She Comes First: The Thinking Man's Guide To Pleasuring A Woman by Ian Kerner**](#)

MORE THAN 250,000
COPIES SOLD!

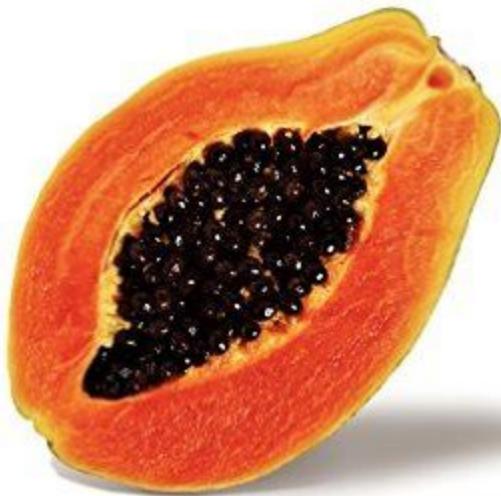
"With a cool sense of humor and an obsessive
desire to inform, [Kerner] encourages men through
an act that many find mystifying."

—New York Times



SHE COMES FIRST

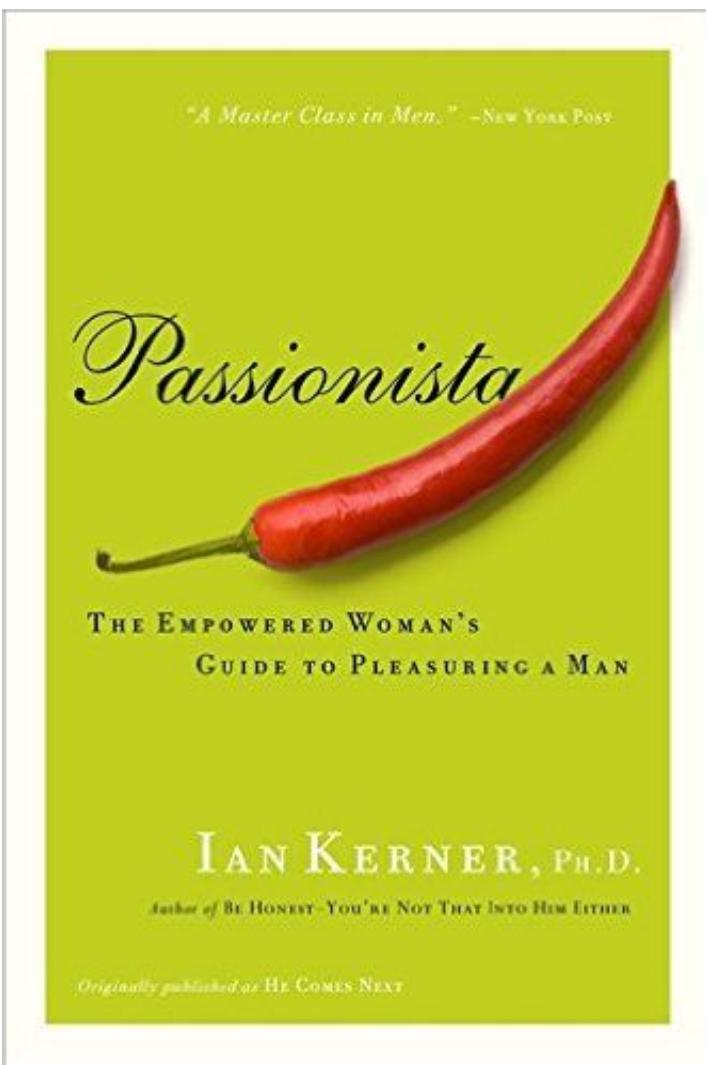
the thinking man's guide
to pleasuring a woman



IAN KERNER, Ph.D.

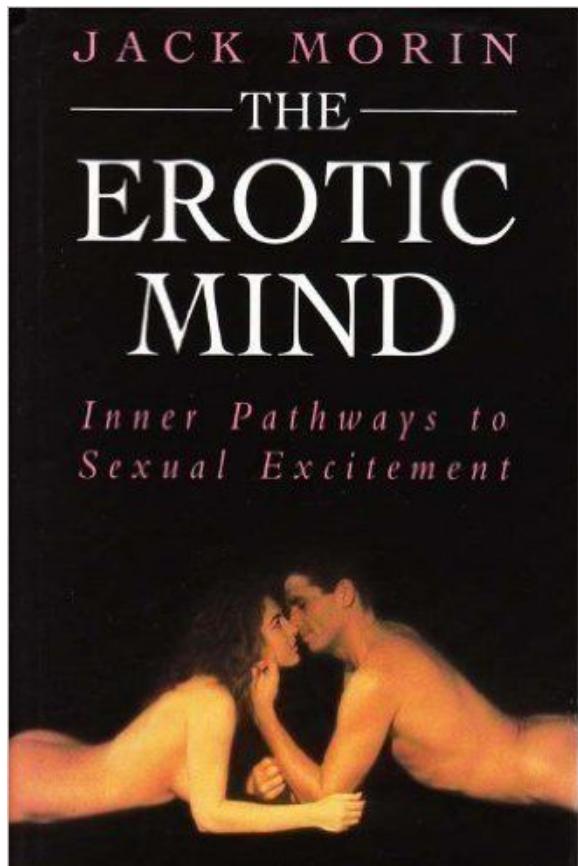
This is basically THE guidebook to going down a woman. Nuff' said. Dare I say this should be required reading for hetero guys in particular? Yes, I dareth.

[**Passionista: The Empowered Woman's Guide to Pleasuring a Man by Ian Kerner**](#)



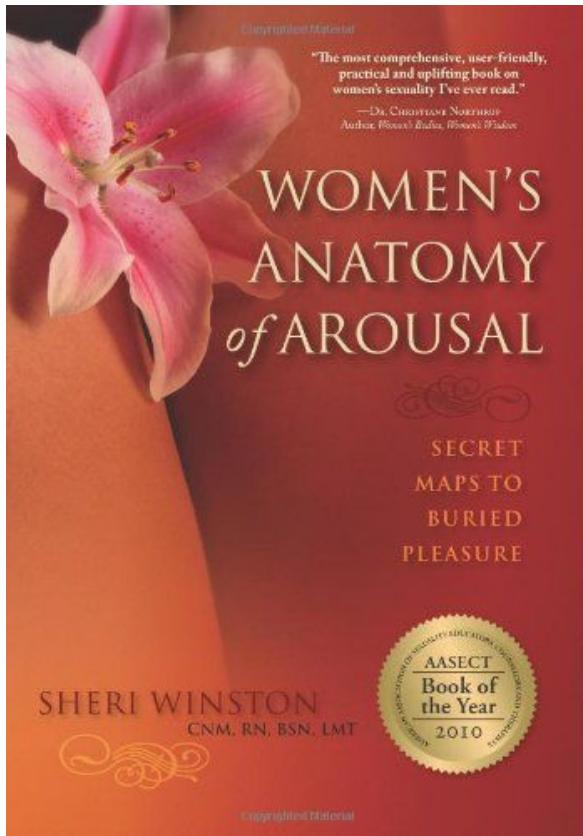
After a successful launch of *She Comes First*, Ian Kerner decided to write a guide for women on how to give amazing blowjobs and help understand what makes a guy sexually tick. Another stellar resource on a fairly mystifying topic.

The Erotic Mind by Jack Morin



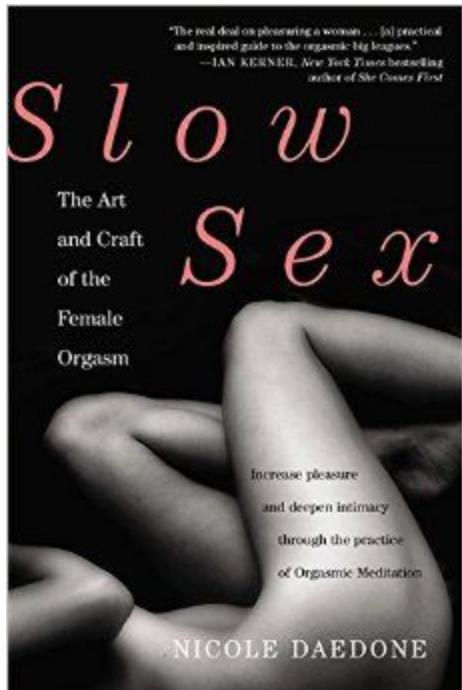
Analyzing over thousands of stories of people performing at their peak sexuality, Morin explores the sexual concepts of desire, arousal and fulfillment. A nationally known sex therapist, his thoughts on eroticism are sure to shed some light on our own preconceived notions.

[Women's Anatomy of Arousal by Sheri Winston](#)



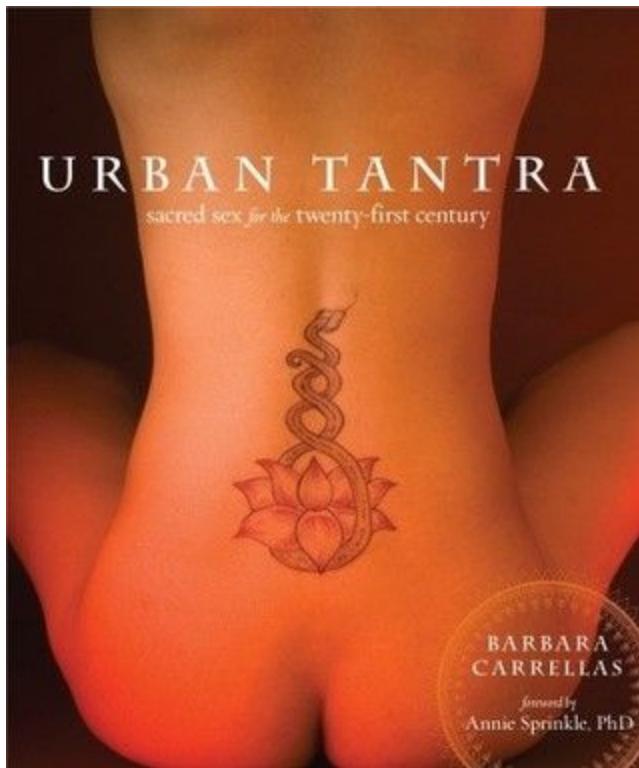
Touted as the complete anthology to 'women's sexuality', this book has been said to help women discover things like female ejaculation while simultaneously helping men find new ways in which they can bring their partner complete fulfillment. A great couples read where both parties are sure to learn a new trick or two.

Slow Sex: The Art and Craft of the Female Orgasm.



For those looking to explore the art of Orgasmic Meditation, this is the perfect book. Not only has it gotten rave reviews, but it isn't just about orgasms. Readers can also find tips on how to rekindle a relationship and sustain emotional connection.

[**Urban Tantra - Sacred Sex for the 21st Century**](#)



This book is the modern playbook to joyful, conscience sex. I've always thought of Tantra as the naughty version of Yoga. Turns out, it's so much more than that. If you've ever wanted to know the keys to mind blowing sex, this is a great guide.

Sex Guru and loose fitting pants not included.

[Ted Playlist: Sex - Can We Talk?](#)



Playlist (9 talks)

Sex: Can we talk?

A few things you've always wanted to know about sex: why we enjoy it, how to explain it, and, importantly, how flowers do it.

▶ Watch now | ⌚ Watch later | ❤️ Favorite

As titillating as this sounds, this playlist is more titillating for the mind than anything. That being said, there is a very entertaining video titled '10 Things You Didn't Know About Orgasm' and

without giving too much away, there is this thing with a toothbrush and then a thing with a pig.... Gotta love science.

How to have sex on Skype or Facetime



How To Have Sex On Skype or FaceTime



Pop Trigger



363,768

411,933 views

+ Add to

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More

830 199

Having sex over Skype doesn't need to be awkward and can in fact enhance sexual anticipation on a whole new level! While only three minutes long, these guys cover a lot of territory. From how to make sure you're picking the right time and place, to the best way to initiate, there is a lot of value here.

4. Explore the world of Sex Toys:

A Beginners Guide to Sex Toys



It turns out there is a lot more to sex toys than just turning you on. If you've ever wondered about proper hygiene and maintenance or what kind of vibrator to start out with, this post is a nice intro to a whole new world of adult fun.

Sex Toys R Us? Yes? Maybe? Someone build that please.

[Buying Your First Vibrator](#)



From bullets to pocket rockers to magic wands, vibrators come in many shapes and sizes. Thankfully! Which one is right for you is mostly an exciting game of trial and error, but if you're

curious about which one will tickle your fancy the most, (haha), then this post will give you all the buzz. (I'm on a roll!)

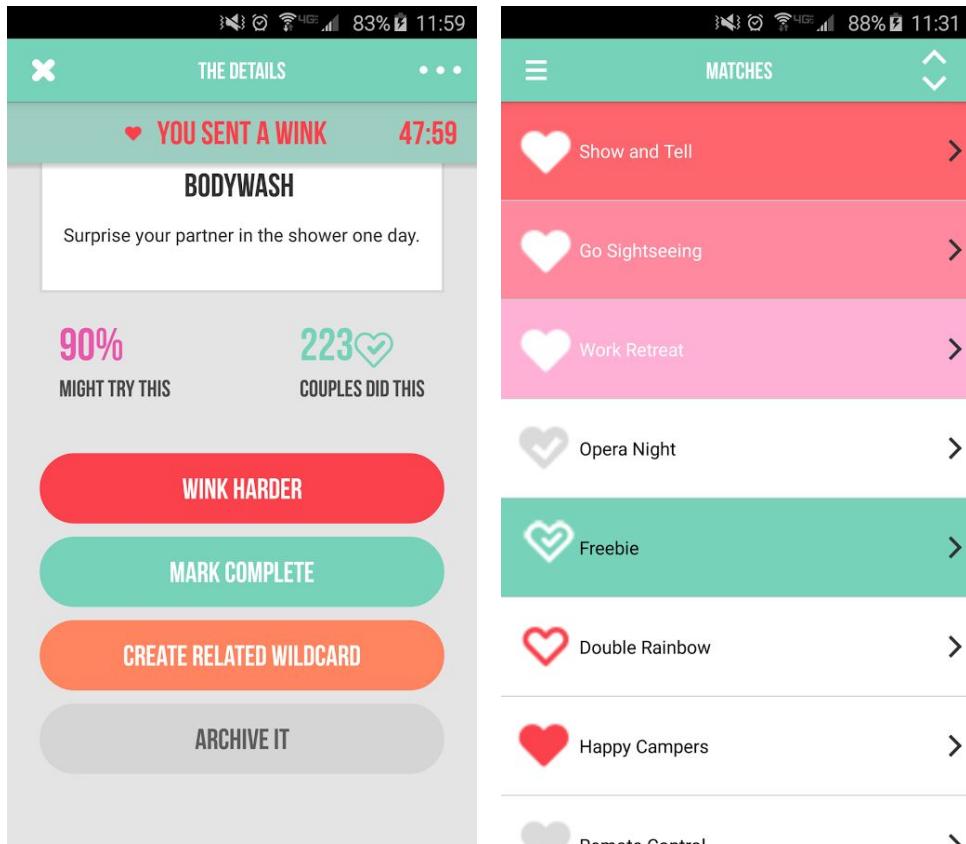
[Best Toys to use as a couple](#)



Refinery 29 asked several couples to test drive several swanky new sex toys on the market, and give their honest reviews. Besides being a highly entertaining blog post, I'm mostly just trying to figure out how to convince Pillow to sponsor me for something like this.

Still thinking about this. #staytuned.

[Kindu: Intimacy Ideas For Couples](#)



If you and your partner are looking for exciting new sexual things to try together, Kindu boasts over 1000 ideas that are delivered daily.

You and your special someone are given these ideas on cards that you flip through. A la Tinder, you then express whether you would love to try the idea, would maybe try the idea, or wouldn't try the idea.

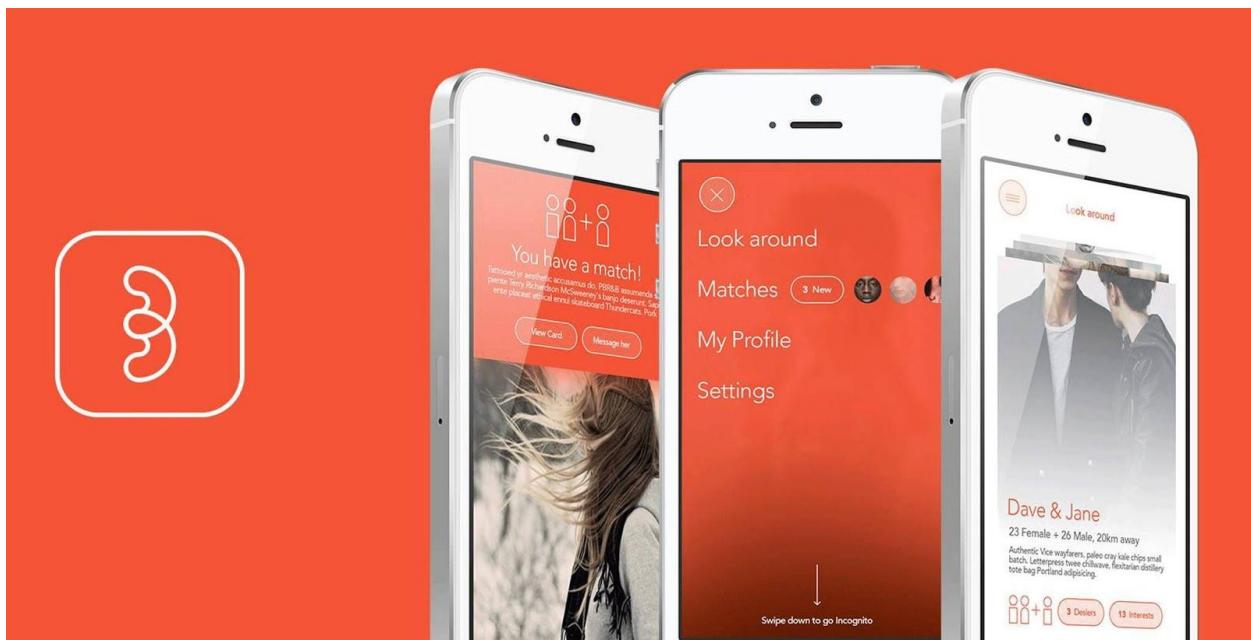
Ranging from 'wearing a whipped cream bikini' to 'attending a swingers party', you then see where you match with your partner. After browsing through your matches, shoot a wink to your partner for the ones that sound particularly appealing. ;)

[**myKegel**](#)



Let's get real, Kegels aren't just for the benefit of the man. Stronger Kegel muscles mean for stronger orgasms, which is something everyone can celebrate. This app is a great way to get in your 'workout' from anywhere.

3nder

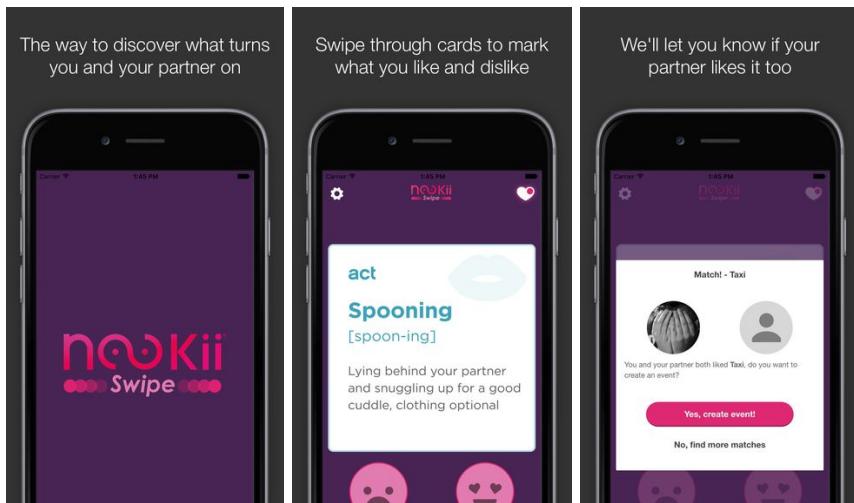


For those singles who are bi-sexual or are part of a couple that has a bisexual, then 3nder is a great opportunity to connect with other open minded people.

If you're a straight male looking to hook up with two women, you're probably better off using other dating apps like Tinder. Most people on the app are looking for a bisexual woman, but a man can still dream!

Who knows, you might get lucky!

[Nookii Swipe](#)



An app similar to Kindu, in which you can swipe the fantasies that sound most intriguing to you and see where you and your partner match!

[Esquire's ultimate guide to sex](#)

From how to properly have sex in the shower without getting a bloody nose to whether or not women actually like it when you hold their head during blowjobs, this collection of articles is a sex Q&A treasure trove.

While geared mostly to men, there are plenty of resources in this list that would be very interesting to women as well.

[Cosmo Sex Advice](#)

A similar compendium to Esquire with lots of articles geared towards women.

[Guide To Make Love.Com](#)

This is pretty self explanatory. This a site all about sex and it is definitely NSFW, so save you're browsing for when you're in a private place. The articles are chock full of information and are longer reads than Cosmo or FHM.

Something that I thought was pretty noteworthy is that the site has a whole section dedicated to sexual health. Topics range from whether or not you can have sex with a yeast infection to what are considered dangerous sex positions for men.

Anything to add?

Let us know!

darren@pillow.io