

# A General Theory of Love

Thomas Lewis, M.D., Farf Amini, M.D., Richard Lannon, M.D.

*"An insightful look at the science of human emotions. . . . A rare example of the fusing of scientific rigor with literary eloquence."  
—San Francisco Examiner*



Thomas Lewis

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This original and lucid account of the complexities of love and its own essential role in human well-being draws on the most recent scientific research.that our nervous systems are not self-contained: from earliest childhood, our brains actually link with those of the people close to us, in a silent rhythm that alters the very structure of our brains, establishes life-long emotional patterns, and makes us, in large part, who we are. Explaining how associations function, how parents form their child'AN OVER-ALL Theory of Love demonstrates Three eminent psychiatrists tackle the difficult task of reconciling what artists and thinkers have got known for thousands of years about the human heart with what has only been recently learned about the primitive functions of the mind.s developing self, how psychotherapy does work, and how our society dangerously flouts essential emotional laws, this is a function of rare passion and eloquence that will forever change how you think about human intimacy.



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A very long overview of the book *Book Review: AN OVER-ALL Theory of Love* Kirk  
Honda February 14, 2013 In their book *A General Theory of Love* (2000), Thomas Lewis, Fari  
Amini and Richard Lannon, psychiatry professors in the University of California, SAN  
FRANCISCO BAY AREA, examined the phenomenon of like and attachment by synthesizing  
the previously individual areas of cognitive psychology, art, neuroscience, lifestyle, and  
evolutionary biology. They point out that current biological investigations of love focus on  
three crucial chemical substances: serotonin, opiates, and oxytocin (p. In Lewis's terminology,  
it is the limbic system and the neocortex." Transference is usually a myth while Attractors is a  
truth. Attachment theory was mentioned only briefly in the publication. 2) within intimate  
relationships, our limbic systems synchronize with each other; Limbic Attractors The authors  
dedicate a substantial part of the book to describing research in cognitive psychology that  
demonstrates that much of our motivations, memories, and processing occurs outside of our  
awareness or control. and 4) American culture often frustrates our attempts to fulfill our  
biological dependence on connection. With this empirical base, the authors assert that the  
limbic human brain contains psychological Attractors, encoded early in existence (p.  
Fascinating read, boring title, could have offered more solutions Excellent description of the  
limbic system and its own development in mammals. Every bit a 5-star publication. Through  
chemistry (neurotransmitters), neurons send signals to each other. Lifestyle is rife with tiny and  
not-so-tiny rejections - a disagreement, an apathetic appearance, a break-up. 95). The book of  
is filled with aha moments and insights. These Attractors compel bias when viewing emotions  
and associations. 61). This multitude of inborn human brain structures encourages survival by  
fostering a relationship between parent and child, so the child could be protected and taught  
by the mother or father. Recounts much of the research and weaves it jointly extremely  
skillfully. 89). Grim evidence of this could be found within findings that extreme psychological  
deprivation may also cause infant loss of life (p. 87). Human kids are pre-designed for  
attachment and they need it for biological and useful survival., Kronish, I. Structures of the  
brain developed incrementally and without and end goal (p. By altering the chemistry in the  
brain, you can alter the working of the mind. Lewis for introducing me to myself! Theoretically,  
all aspects of the mind are modulated by chemistry, including love. The authors briefly discuss  
the neurotransmitters involved in experiences of like. The style of the publication lies within a  
happy medium between stagnant scientific journals and available self-help books. 92). For  
example, oxytocin levels have already been found to surge in human moms around birth  
which stimulates labor and also facilitates bonding between mother and neonate. Also,  
oxytocin gushes at puberty which motivates crushes and intimate love (p. 97). *AN OVER-ALL  
Theory of Love* enlightened me. And since the body needs a way to restore balance, opiates  
advanced to assuage that discomfort. When mammals developed the limbic human brain to  
facilitate the reliance on each other for survival, development recruited this primitive  
pain/opiate system to motivate mammalian public behavior." There are several more reviews  
like this one. For example, a lot of people say that there is nothing more painful than dropping  
someone you care about (p. Early Relationships The authors take us further later on toward  
love by describing the evolved functions of the mind structures involved with early  
relationships. Reducing. As an especially poignant application of the theory, the authors  
attempt to explain reducing behaviors. 21). These social encounters produce emotional pain,  
which in some ways is definitely indistinguishable from physical discomfort. Also, this reserve  
helped me to comprehend the biological ramifications of love and the biological effects of too  
little love. Eventually, the mind releases pain's counterweight: the soothing, numbing opiates.

In place, she triggered a physical discomfort to trick her anxious system into eventually numbing both her physical discomfort and her emotional discomfort (p. Five Stars Fabulous! 3) our brains can be transformed for the better through long-term therapy; Evolutionary Biology

The authors begin by educating all of us in biological fundamentals, explaining the triune brain (reptilian with its fundamental functions, limbic using its psychological function, and neocortical with its facility to reason) and explaining how evolution led to our illogically-structured brain. 140). For example, infants have an instinctual appeal to faces and a pre-programmed knowledge of facial expressions (p., Abbass, A. Since these templates had been established within the mostly-unconscious limbic brain, these Attractors are extremely difficult to modulate by the mindful mind (p. 142). Probably they simply omitted the research for the sake of readability. Since my early teenagers, I've established a design to be in relationships that start out on a high and then eventually deteriorate and fail. Perhaps that benefit far outweighs any shortcoming. If parents love kids healthily, wherein errors are forgiven, children's needs are paramount, and hurts are soothed, then that's how the children will feel about themselves and relate others later in life (p. 141).

Romance The market of the book seems to be those who have had a troubled romantic lifestyle in that the authors are often attempting to explain why so most of us have dysfunctional relationship patterns. Early experiences establish particular neural pathways that set the stage of adult romantic relationships and how they feel to us. If a kid is not given a reliable limbic resonance, that child will have difficulty empathizing with others. So when two healthful limbic systems sign up for, limbic attunement enables these lovers to regulate each other's emotions, neurophysiology, hormonal status, immune system, and other functions (p. 207).

Psychotherapy The authors go on to say that the human limbic system is stabilized through relatedness. In the short-term, when folks are hurting and out of balance, they convert to others for support - this returns them to limbic homeostasis (p. 170). In the long-term, people can permanently fine tune their limbic systems through prolonged contact with a caring, smart, responsive person who, as time passes, can bolster their healthy neural networks which will lead to increased self-soothing and relationship satisfaction. Many people leave therapy sessions (regardless of the theoretical orientation of the therapist) feeling calmer, stronger, safer and often they don't know why (p. 171). This is the result of limbic resonance, which is normally outside of conscious consciousness. The authors disparage brief therapy as a universally unfortunate advancement because it denies clients' need for long-term limbic attendance. They have however to reply. Woo Everything was great Short-term self-help solutions are ineffective because they suggest that a strong-willed client will be able to change how they think that and feel, & Not enough to knock it straight down a celebrity, though., & Society

The authors produce a compelling argument that American individualism, materialism and capitalism are frustrating our psychological and physical health. Americans are encouraged to achieve and not really to attach (p. What a reduction that would have been. For example, we disparage "needy" people, but we glorify self-made individuals., & Therefore the authors advise that we should not only privilege our cortex/cognitive mind, but we should also pay attention to our limbic/psychological selves (p. 229)., opiates) was the missing puzzle piece in my formulation of self-misuse. Mainstream medicine has taken care of immediately exterior and internal economic pressures by paying less focus on patients' limbic system. The authors declare American patients have deserted mainstream medicine for the warm embrace of practitioners who attend to patients' limbic system: massage therapists, chiropractors, acupuncturists, and a bunch of others (p. 222)., sleep quality, mood, disease

fighting capability), which affects their cuddle time, creating a recursive routine. Critique The authors wisely admit that even though love emanates from the physical brain and science offers a valuable tool for exploring the brain, human beings come built with an older means of discerning the type of emotion: subjectivity (p. A reviewer on Amazon. I would've liked to see some connection with mindfulness and compassion centered therapies, although maybe they weren't that well known and researched back when the book was written. Short Therapy. When a client comes in to therapy suffering from unfulfilling relationships or low self-esteem, the therapist, through long-term limbic attendance, alters the microanatomy of the client's brain. Science delivered with warmth This book popularized the term, "limbic resonance," and I purchased it within my research right into a book I'm writing which includes information on limbic resonance. In support of this, there exists a growing body of empirical proof assisting the efficacy of long-term, psychodynamic therapy (City et al. For example, I have worked with many clients who trim., Mcduffie, J. Some customers' goals are best met in short-term therapy. Furthermore, brief therapies possess a much larger body of evidence assisting their efficacy. I've never understood why I involve myself-a successful, intelligent, generally happy person-with people who leave me dissatisfied, feeling worthless, and convinced that I will just give up and relegate myself to a lonely Siberian outpost. Williams, 2012). No Credit Given. Instead of speculating, I wrote the authors and asked them. (2000). However, since the authors usually do not credit the giants upon which they stand, many visitors might attribute these wisdoms to the authors themselves. I would not purchase that limbic ignorance and chilly parenting can be behind every ill that plagues culture, but a greater awareness of the part that intuition, instinct, and emotion play in our lives certainly can't harm. One might defend the authors by pointing out that this book is meant for the lay target audience who don't value citations. However, they are adept writers who could possess woven in a few references to satisfy the academic audience. Not really in some namby-pamby, self-help, touchy-feely sort of way-but by explaining the technology of brain advancement and the associated outcomes in our personal lives using available, easy to understand vocabulary that borders on lyric prose. Williams J. The Main Points The four details of the book are: 1) our brains are influenced by those nearest to us, particularly during childhood; The authors did not credit Bowlby, Ainsworth, and the countless additional theorists who had equivalent if not identical promises - this is like writing a publication about gravity rather than mentioning Newton. Myths and Truths. As an example, after a somewhat long, circuitous dialogue regarding cognitive research results, the authors arrive at one of their main principles: Limbic Attractors, or biases created early in life that affect one's look at of adult relationships. During this discussion, the authors point out that Freud's concept of transference is similar to their idea of Limbic Attractors. This exhibits responsible writing: provide credit where credit arrives.e. 160). The main element words and phrases are "myths" and "truths. In this way, this book attracts academics and nonacademics alike, and its own popularity is evidenced because of it having been translated into Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese, Korean, Latvian, Croatian, and Farsi. Limbic Resonance. (I am not a biologist, so my opinion on the next matter should be used with a grain salt.) Throughout the book, the authors claim that our limbic brains synchronize, resonate, regulate, and revise. However, in my humble opinion, they didn't provide any direct empirical evidence of this state. Parenting and the Development of Self In the first few years of life, the over-abundant neural pathways are whittled right down to a select group of frequently-used circuits. the reading encounter enjoyable. Thank you Dr. Perhaps the authors did not want to bore the lay audience with

research and jargon. This is among the best books I've ever read by far. This is among the best books I've ever read by far. Much of the book is common wisdom: like feels good, childhood experiences affect adult romantic relationships, parents should pay attention to children's needs, society pressures us to go too fast for our very own good, etc. Long-term, relationship-oriented psychotherapy strengthens or weakens particular neural pathways (p. Conclusion). This book put into my knowledge of attachment. It provides illuminated connections I had not noticed previously. (i. However, within the next paragraph, they write "Science has a method of supplanting myths without less fantastic truths: transference exists because the brain remembers with neurons" (p. To the end, the authors also recommend that lovers should spend time jointly if they want to maintain their bond. Whenever a teen cuts her skin, pain fibers send pain signals to her brain. The authors possess bolstered and motivated my initiatives to foster more love in the globe. After reading this book, I found myself focusing more interest on my clients' "limbic" selves. Are they getting enough love within their lives? Could they provide more want to others? I've always recommended cuddle period for couples but now I can make connections between cuddling and their brain chemistry, which in turn affects other areas in the lives (e. Whereas if a kid experiences a steady limbic connection, that kid will develop the ability to empathize, to appear inside someone else, also to respond appropriately. They recommend mainstream medication modification their systems and practices to the way points had been before, when kindly doctors attended to the individuals' limbic systems. 12).com wrote (retrieved on 2/8/13): "This book was an eye-opening knowledge for me. Through repeated encounter with caregivers, the mind becomes imprinted with what love feels like to the child. As one of many good examples, a 2012 meta-evaluation of 15 randomized controlled trials found brief psychotherapies to become more efficacious than control (Nieuwsma, Trivedi, Mcduffie, Kronish, Benjamin, & Early animals evolved a mechanism to detect bodily damage: the neurotransmitters mixed up in sensation of pain. The title of book might have been The Recent Biological Research that Helps the Long-Established Bowlby/Ainsworth Attachment Theory. Their claims make intuitive feeling, but without biological evidence, the authors are simply just repackaging long-established emotional philosophy within biological terminology. Caffeine can cause alertness, SSRI's can alleviate depression, Ritalin can increase concentrate, and so on. This is why interactions are both pleasurable and agonizing. Whatever the critique, this book has helped visitors to understand themselves and to forgive themselves for his or her relationship foibles. This assortment of experiences and their neural effects tell the kid what associations are, how they function, what to anticipate, and how to carry out them. References Lewis, T. Quite the contrary it is warm and exudes a humanity I did not expect. Since our culture promotes self-sufficiency which leads to isolation, we suffer needlessly from anxiety, depression, narcissism and other such maladies of the 21st century. Lannon, R. These are good messages, and the authors provide an inspiring new angle on these old wisdoms. An over-all theory of love. Plus, its probably the most well-written and easy-to-read nonfiction books I've eber come across. Nieuwsma, J., Diener, M. However, many of my customers also come to therapy for issues that are not suited for long-term therapies. Neurons and Neurotransmitters The authors continue by explaining that the mind is a network of neurons., Benjamin, D. However the psychophysiology of psychological life can't be changed so easily. But I suppose that title could have spoiled the book's marketing efforts. The content was valuable; Brief psychotherapy for despair: A systematic review and meta-analysis. Its about so much more than romantic like and has seriously changed the way I see things. Town, J.M.,

Trivedi, R.J. They impact our connection with romantic relationships., Leichsenring, F., Driessen, E. 177). Rabung, S. What I came across useful was the discussion of the role of limbic resonance and relatedness. Nevertheless, this reserve gives the best, most succinct explanation yet for why adults get into the same dysfunctional human relationships over and over. *Psychotherapy*, 49(3), 276-290. As ancestor animals adapted to their environment, each evolutionary answer was solved by modifying already-established structures, like the nervous system. Along these lines, analysis has found that a lack of nurturing love will harm the human brain forever (p. I only gave it 4 superstars because the only solution it provided for having inadequate parenting/dysfunctional attachment in childhood was psychotherapy. Psychotherapy can change brain structure but it will take years of work for that to occur. They also ended the book rather abruptly and it seemed almost unfinished in some way. A meta-analysis of psychodynamic psychotherapy outcomes: evaluating the consequences of research-specific techniques. If this reserve was coupled with research into additional more efficient treatments for addressing a badly programmed limbic system, such as psychedelics, it would have been much more comprehensive. As a relational therapist, I buy into the authors' assertion that some therapeutic goals are best met through an ongoing attuned therapeutic romantic relationship. It shipped what I wanted and much, much more. Although AN OVER-ALL Theory of Like provides ample scientific evidence for the findings it presents, it is not a dried out read., Amini, F. (2012). Or simply such supporting evidence does not exist. It was like harvesting apples on a sunshiney day. I'm grateful my research led me to the book; experienced it not it's unlikely General Theory could have possess ever entered my recognition. 206). My one gripe is that the dirt jacket on my reserve didn't have that image of the two chairs, that i think is a wonderful bit of graphic artistry genius. It took a limbic link with create the issue and it will take a lived limbic link with repair it (p. Thus, over the eons, evolution's twists and turns led to a quirkily designed brain. A good theoretical framework for discussion of emotion and logic The author seeks to provide a theoretical framework for the oft-discussed relationship between emotion and rationality, heart and head, elephant and rider. The book effortlessly sways backwards and forwards from romantic sentiment to cutting-advantage scientific analysis. (2012). In these terms, love is normally resonance and a sense of relatedness, which gives a reciprocal regulation of emotion. Though there's nary a mention of the primary literature to be found, and I suspect that some of the evolutionary explanations are given a little too much play, the publication introduces a useful vocabulary for talking about the interplay between logic and emotion. It's quite common for self-help authors to create as if these were the initial to help with their ideas, but educational psychiatrists should know better. Brilliant Book, Must Read It is surprising when a publication that focuses a lot of its interest on neuroscience -- a field which continues to be relatively new and is expanding exponentially -- remains incredibly relevant and informative nearly 17 years following its publication. This reserve is usually beautifully and poetically created, scientifically sound (to my knowledge), and an incredible resource for anyone looking to learn more about love, attachment, and how the brain processes like. One of the best and useful books I've read in years. Discusses like in the context of associations, intimacy, and attachment over the lifespan Five Stars great book One Star Ditched the book. Throughout the ages, instincts have advanced. It's relentless focus on limbic resonance, regulation, and revision for their growing, developing, and healing power mobilized my very own limbic motivations. That is a welcomed admission for those readers who are skeptical of the broad and reductionistic claims often made within technology today. Essential read for everyone, parents, teachers, doctors,

mindfulness instructors, lovers. Great book for discussions and interesting biological/ evolutionary takes This was overall an excellent book and a straightforward read. Targets evolutionary, psychological, and biological understandings and theories of like. A General Theory of Love I found very useful the thoroughness with which it examines the many measurements of attachment and bonding. 96). Or perhaps the authors wished to make it seem as though these were truly inventing a new General Theory of Like. Make sure you read it! International Journal of Psychiatry in Medication, 43(2), 129-51. This should be required reading for anyone thinking about mental health, family members well-being, and the like. New York: Random House. Its well worth a lot more than it price here hands-down. 176).



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