

COLLECTION

The Essentials of Applied Psychology

Together, but No Longer Talking

*Relationship communication, recurring
conflicts, and exercises for couples*



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Communication, Crises, and Renewal — The Gottman Method, NVC, and Practical Exercises

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Crisis resources

If you are going through a crisis and suicidal ideation comes to you, please do not face it alone.

- 988 — 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. Call or text, 24/7, free and confidential (US and Canada).
- 741741 — Crisis Text Line. Text HOME to 741741 to reach a trained crisis counselor.
- 116 123 — Samaritans, free, 24/7 (UK and Ireland).
- 911 — in case of immediate danger (US and Canada).

These numbers apply to the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Ireland. Wherever you are, findahelpline.com lists helplines country by country.

To all those who have the courage to fight for their love, even when all seems lost.

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Introduction

When Love Falters

You are holding this book in your hands, and perhaps your hands are trembling a little. Perhaps you have just lived through a particularly violent argument — not necessarily physical, but the kind that leaves invisible marks, the kind after which silence hangs like lead in the house. Perhaps it has been months, even years, since you felt your relationship slowly dying out, without understanding exactly why or how to reverse the trend. Perhaps you are sitting in your car, in the supermarket parking lot, unable to go home right away because the atmosphere has become unbearable.

If so, know this: you are not alone.

Every year in France, approximately 130,000 couples divorce. But behind this cold statistic lie hundreds of thousands of other couples who suffer in silence, who hesitate, who wonder whether to leave or stay, who no longer know how to speak to this person they once loved — and whom they may still love, somewhere beneath the layers of resentment, fatigue, and accumulated disappointments.

This book is written for you. For you who have not yet given up, even if some days the temptation is strong. For you who are looking for concrete answers, not platitudes or ready-made formulas. For you who need to understand what has happened in your relationship before you can envision a future — together or apart, but at peace.

What This Book Offers

This is not a book of miracle cures. No book, however well-documented, can substitute for therapeutic work guided by a professional. I want to say this from the outset, with all the transparency you deserve: if your relationship is going through a severe crisis, if violence — whether physical, verbal, or psychological — has taken hold, reading this book will not be enough. It can serve as a first step, an awakening, a complementary tool, but it will never replace the personalized support of a qualified couples therapist.

What this book does offer, however, is a solid framework for understanding, grounded in decades of research in relationship psychology. You will find the work of John Gottman, the American researcher who spent more than forty years observing couples in his laboratory and who can predict with stunning accuracy — over 90% — whether a couple will divorce or stay together, simply by watching them discuss for fifteen minutes (Gottman & Silver, 1999). You will discover John Bowlby's attachment theory, which sheds new light on how our earliest relationships shape our adult love lives. You will learn about Marshall Rosenberg's Nonviolent Communication, a remarkable tool that transforms reproaches into requests and accusations into expressions of needs.

But above all, you will find stories. Stories of couples that resemble yours — fictional, of course, but constructed from real clinical situations, from patterns I observe daily in my practice as a cognitive-behavioral psychotherapist. Stories that will allow you to recognize yourself, to name what you are experiencing, and perhaps to feel a little less alone in this ordeal.

And finally, you will find practical exercises, concrete and actionable, that you can complete alone or as a couple, at your own pace. Not theoretical or abstract exercises, but tools you can use this very evening, at the next difficult conversation, at the next moment of tension.