



# Eight Dates: Essential Conversations for a Lifetime of Love

*John M. Gottman*

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**Eight Dates: Essential Conversations for a Lifetime of Love** John M. Gottman

**Strengthen and deepen your love with a fun, ingenious program of eight life-changing conversations—on essential topics such as money, sex, and trust—from two of the world's leading marriage researchers and clinicians.**

Navigating the challenges of long-term commitment takes effort—and it just got simpler, with this empowering, step-by-step guide to communicating about the things that matter most to you and your partner. Drawing on forty years of research from their world-famous Love Lab, Dr. John Gottman and Dr. Julie Schwartz Gottman invite couples on eight fun, easy, and profoundly rewarding dates, each one focused on a make-or-break issue: trust, conflict, sex, money, family, adventure, spirituality, and dreams.

Interactive activities and prompts provide motivation to stay open, stay curious, and, most of all, stay talking to each other. And the range—from the four skills you need for intimate conversation (including Put Into Words What You Are Feeling) to tips on being honest about your needs, while also validating your partner's own emotions—will resonate, whether you're newly together or a longtime couple looking to fortify your bond. You will discover (or rediscover) your partner like never before—and be able to realize your hopes and dreams for the love you desire and deserve.

## Eight Dates: Essential Conversations for a Lifetime of Love Details

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# **From Reader Review Eight Dates: Essential Conversations for a Lifetime of Love for online ebook**

## **Ramona Mead says**

I find the title and subtitle a bit cheesy and a little misleading, although the content of this book is absolutely solid. I can't wait for it to be released in physical form so I can go through it again with my husband.

I am married for the second time, as is my husband. We put a great deal of effort into our relationship and have discussed many of the topics in this book, although we certainly have not discussed all of them, or to the extent this book suggests. I wouldn't have thought to, because we believe our marriage is strong.

After reading this book, I can see all the ways having these discussions will be fun and make our bond even stronger. Eight sittings may seem like a lot, but I don't think it's nearly enough for us to tackle all this information. A different format, maybe spread out over a year, would feel much more manageable to me. For us at least, going through the questions for one date alone would probably take hours and leave us emotionally exhausted, even if they produced a positive result.

There's a lot of potential here for this book to improve the relationship and lives of so many people. I appreciate that it is inclusive of all types of relationships, sexualities, and life choices. It doesn't assume everyone is going to have children, for example. The language used is straightforward and positive.

I recommend this book for any couple in a romantic relationship who are considering marriage or long term cohabitation. There are so many aspects of life we often don't consider before embarking on a long term relationship because we believe love will save the day, but that isn't the case. This book will help! It will also help married couples like us, to re-evaluate their relationship and focus on each other.

Many thanks to NetGalley for my digital advanced copy of this book.  
You can find my reviews and other bookish writings at [ramonamead.com](http://ramonamead.com).

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## **Ann T says**

Thank you Workman Publishing and Netgalley for an ARC of this book in return of my honest review.

This relationship to anyone, those in long term relationships, Jewish relationships and even those who hope to be in a loving relationship someday soon. The book is divided in eight chapters, each one called a date. The date is relevant to a particular theme within relationships, eg trust, conflict, sex, money, spirituality. Each date includes questions and exercises to ask one another.

The book is easy to read, very informative and an important reminder to cherish our partners and relationships at all stages, by celebrating our similarities and differences.

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## **Tara Weiss says**

Nothing novel or new, but sound advice from a lot of case studies.

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### **Kelly Long says**

I have enjoyed all of John Gottman's books that I've read so far and this one is no exception. Good, solid information for new relationships or long-term relationships.

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### **Jen says**

Whether you are staring out with your sweetie, or are looking to get more serious, this book from the Gottmans' and the Abrams' will give you lots to talk about. The book covers eight areas (trust and commitment, conflict, sex and intimacy, work, family, fun and adventure, growth, and spirituality, and dreams) important for couples to discuss to grow in intimacy and understanding of one another. The authors suggest making a date out of each conversation area; hence, eight dates. Ideas are provided for in-home and out-of-home dates, as well as dates that are easy to afford or free. The chapters are short and sweet with real couples who tested the dates sharing their experiences and feelings about them. Date instructions are complimented with exercises and discussion bullet lists. Each chapter closes with a bulleted chapter summary. If you read straight through cover-to-cover, it won't take long to read. If readers take time to digest, soak up useful exercises and discussion points for their relationship, map out dates, then the book provides that potential for deep learning of one another. If you're a long-standing pair, you may already know a fair amount about your partner, but this can be a chance for renewal and attentive connection with one another; a check-in, because as the authors stress, we all change. The book closes with a call for cherishing your partner as that will not only benefit you but will also provide a ripple effect to your extended network, including any descendants.

\* Please see my other suggested relationship resources at my website, [www.thecouplessyllabus.com](http://www.thecouplessyllabus.com) \*

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### **Siobhan F. says**

3.5 stars

Review copy provided courtesy of NetGalley. Review is unbiased and reflects my personal opinion.

The premise of this relationship self-help book is that the eight conversations held within are necessary ones you and your partner should have in order to have a happy lifelong relationship. The first part of the book introduces you to the authors, the research that went into creating the exercises outlined in each chapter and different strategies for having what can be difficult conversations. The following eight chapters each cover a different date or conversation prefaced by a story about a couple who went on the date and what they learned. The end of the book surmises the findings and offers bonus exercises.

While the book is supposedly geared towards all couples let's be clear that it is more accurately geared towards those who are considering making a lifetime commitment to one another or those who have with the past few years. While couples who fall outside of that category may also find it interesting, those who aren't at that point yet in their relationships will be at a loss for what to do with some of the exercises and those that

are much further in may find it better to pick and chose which "dates" best meet their current needs.

The book also purports to be for all couples regardless of gender. Here I am a little torn. The exercises themselves work fairly hard to be gender neutral, and at least appear as though they would work for couples of all gender. However of the majority of the examples given at the beginning of each chapter involve heteronormative couples, along with a handful of same sex couples. This may be due to lack of available research as the authors note but it leaves the book very much feeling like it is geared more towards heteronormative couples.

They do embrace a wide range of definitions for family and spirituality along with other topics. I was very happy to see in the family section to see that not having kids was seen as a valid life option and one to be upfront about. Also in there section on spirituality, they do not use religion and spirituality interchangeably but allow for a personal definition of spirituality to be developed.

Overall I think for couples that are looking to spend a lifetime together and need a little help getting started with difficult conversations regarding finances, family and more these "dates" or conversation exercises could be a great way to get started.

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### **Meghan says**

This is the ultimate book for every couple married or not. A lot of us underestimate the significance and effectiveness of going on dates. Whether its to the movies, walks in the park or beach, or even a fancy dinner, the time you share with your significant other is very special and in one way shape or form we all take it for granted. Eight Dates provided great ideas and examples for dates to have for a better connection physically and mentally. This book is essential for all couples.

Thank you Netgalley and Workman Publishing Company for the ARC in exchange for an honest review. We will definitely consider this title for our Non-Fiction collection at the library. That is why we give this book 5 stars!

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### **Joyce Wheeler says**

This book has the potential to change your relationship for the better IF both parties can set down their pride and take advantage of it. I can see a lot of pain, reflection and understanding being processed through each of these dates but they could make all the difference. It scary to be vulnerable enough to go through these dates and it may take some prodding but the questions and topics are on point. I haven't tried these yet but I am hopeful my other half will be receptive. I suggest a paper copy of this book rather than eBook because you will need to reference it without an electronic device to be sincere and because it may need to come with you on your dates. Reviewed as an ARC on Netgalley, and as such is my honest feedback for the publisher and the readers alike.

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### **TrillianAstra says**

This is a great book for couples - there is a lot of really good information here! I think this book is applicable

to new relationships as well as established long-term relationships. It contains helpful information about relationships as well as advice on big conversations to have with your partner.

The introduction was a bit lengthy and potentially overwhelming. It reviewed lots of data, numbers, and statistics. While helpful, this may be off-putting to a more causal reader.

Following the introduction, the book walks you through 8 dates/conversations to have/explore with your partner. The chapters start with examples from test couples who underwent the dates in the “love lab.” Most chapters then include various tools for you to use on the dates: questionnaires for you to fill out, scenarios to consider before the date, and checklists. The chapters end with a “speed dating” section for those who are not inclined to read the entire chapter, and summarizes the main points. Finally, the date is laid out for you: purpose of the date, location, trouble shooting, questions to ask your partner, and an affirmation to read to one another once the date is over.

The dates cover a variety of topics that are important to discuss in a relationship: trust/commitment, addressing conflict, sex/intimacy, work/money, family, fun/adventure, growth/spirituality, life dreams.

I must say that I really enjoyed this book. There were a number of typos (I assume/hope these will be cleaned up by publish time) but overall, the information and advice was extremely helpful. I found myself highlighting things in almost every chapter. At first, the set up of the dates seemed a little awkward - they jump right into examples from the test couples with no explanation of what that chapter is about. Initially, I thought it would be more helpful to have a brief (even 1 short paragraph) introduction before getting into examples, but as I continued reading it seemed to flow better. Maybe I just got used to it.

And I really like the “speed dating” section - I want to do these dates with my husband, and I image he'll be more amenable to reading the one-page billeted summery then reading the entire 230 page book.

One last thought - the book is very inclusive. The authors take into consideration couples having kids and not having kids, new relationships and long established relationships, and LGBT+ couples. I thought they did a great job including all types of couples and relationships.

\*I received an advance review copy of this book via NetGalley in exchange for a fair and honest review.\*

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### **Jenny Beason Morrell says**

I received an arc from the publisher in exchange for my review. The book consists of 8 dates ideas that couples can go on, and open ended questions they should ask to get to know each other better. The chapters also give background information on why the date topic is important. The author's suggest that couples who talk and date regularly have better relationships than those who don't. My husband and I did one of the dates and one of the questions/exercises brought out some of his preferences about future dates and time together. This book would be great for new couples to get to know each other and a good refresher for couples who are "settled" in their relationship.

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### **Sumit says**

I liked this book quite a bit more than the previous (and only other) Gottman book I read, "The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work." While that work was a constant stream of self-aggrandizement and conflation of his ability to predict divorce with an ability to preserve marriages, this book is far more humble, conversational, thoughtful, and engaging - perhaps because of the involvement of the three other authors (his wife, and Rachel Doug Abrams). This book walks through eight fundamental issues that come up in any long-term relationship, from financial matters to intimacy to life goals, and along with thoughtful dialogue on what makes these issues hard to talk about, comes up with creative worksheets, quizzes, and settings to help open up a discussion between partners. While I feel the various dates and mechanisms vary in quality and applicability, I dog-eared quite a few pages, and expect to go back to this as a source of helpful suggestions in talking about complex issues with partners.

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## **Jess Macallan says**

EIGHT DATES is another fantastic book on relationships from John & Julie Gottman. In it, they outline eight important dates every couple should explore to strengthen their relationship, learn more about each other, and spend time together. It's so easy to get stuck in a rut with your relationship when you're busy dealing with everything else in your life. This book asks you to tune back into your relationship and partner. The dates cover topics such as trust and commitment, addressing conflict, sex and intimacy, work and money, family, fun and adventure, growth and spirituality, and dreams.

They offer conversation starters, open-ended questions, ways to prepare, location recommendations, troubleshooting and affirmations for each date, as well as a summary. I loved the affirmations at the end of each chapter and appreciated reading about different couples and how they approached these topics. This book is appropriate for a couple at any stage in their relationship. The emphasis throughout the book is on making time together a priority, communicating, and growing as a couple.

I received an ARC via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

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## **Lorilin says**

John Gottman is basically a love guru. He has studied thousands of relationships, and after several decades of clinical observation and study, he can predict with 97% accuracy if a couple will stay together or divorce.

I read one of Gottman's earlier books called *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work* when my husband and I were having a rough time just after we were married. It absolutely changed the way I approached our relationship, and it helped us both better communicate so we could come together to work through our issues and move on.

I was expecting good things from *Eight Dates*, and boy did it deliver. The book is divided into eight sections, one for each date. The dates cover eight of the most meaningful, important, and, often, contentious topics that couples deal with: trust and commitment, conflict, sex, money, family, fun and adventure, growth and spirituality, and dreams. Before the dates are introduced, an intro gives characteristics of successful marriages, as well as advice on how to have an intimate conversation and how to listen.

There is SO MUCH interesting info in this book! I know not everyone is going to froth at the mouth over

learning how couples interact with each other, but I seriously couldn't get enough. It's all so interesting to me, discovering what is "normal" and what actually creates a lasting connection, especially when it doesn't necessarily match up with what I expected. Some of my favorite insights:

\*\*\* Successful marriages have 20 positive interactions for every 1 negative interaction.

\*\*\* Sixty-nine percent of conflicts in most marriages will never be solved. The trick is to fight about (or let go of) these issues effectively.

\*\*\* Eighty-percent of married couples have sex at least a few times a month. Of those, 32% have sex 2 to 3 times a week.

\*\*\* Studies have shown that dual-career couples with young children spend only 10% of their evenings together, with most of that time spent discussing errands. (In other words, they have to work extra hard to keep that romantic spark alive...)

\*\*\* **The five most common subjects that couples fight about are money, sex, in-laws, alcohol or drug use, and parenting.**

\*\*\* Arguments about the unpaid work in a relationship (chores and childcare) tend to cause the most conflict.

\*\*\* **The eight most important elements of a successful marriage are fidelity, good sex, division of chores, adequate income, good housing, shared religious beliefs, shared interests, and children.**

\*\*\* Stay at home parents do about \$90,000 worth of work per year. (#preach)

\*\*\* An early indicator of the future success of a marriage happens during pregnancy and the birth of a child. If a husband (the study only involved heterosexual couples) is involved during pregnancy and birth, the marriage will be happier later on. A father tends to stay involved with the children through the years if his marriage has low conflict and there is continued sex.

\*\*\* Play is a vital component of a relationship. Couples who play together, stay together. This includes experiencing laughter, excitement, anxiety, and curiosity, both separately and together.

\*\*\* Conflict is how our relationships grow.

\*\*\* It's important for couples to share their dreams with each other. Keeping your dreams from your partner leads to bitterness, resentment, loss of passion and desire, and distance.

\*\*\* **Every person has a dream or life purpose, and it should never be sacrificed for the relationship.** It's possible for both people to achieve their dreams, just typically not at the same time.

Is that too much to share? I seriously could go on and on. I just find this stuff fascinating.

Practically speaking, this book is very user-friendly. It talks about each topic, summarizes the chapter, then lays out a date night plan complete with suggestions for how to prepare, where to go, problems to look out for, questions to ask, and an affirmation to say together at the end of the date. It's intense but also very doable. My husband and I haven't gone through each of these dates yet, but the ones we've done have been really interesting and made us feel more connected.

In short, I'd recommend this book to any couple looking to take their relationship to the next level. Five enthusiastic stars!

Thank you to John Gottman, Workman Publishing, and Net Galley for the ARC!

**See more of my reviews at [www.bugbugbooks.com](http://www.bugbugbooks.com).**

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## **Lorena says**

This book shows couples how to get curious about each other and have intimate conversations that strengthen their relationship. It is appropriate for couples at any stage of relationship.

The book was easy to read with a nice mix of research-backed discussion (citations provided in the endnotes), personal stories and case studies, exercises, and suggestions for how to conduct each of the eight dates. I especially appreciated all of the examples from the authors' own relationships. I also liked the "Speed Dating" section of each chapter summarizing the important points—that will be helpful for later review. The URL mentioned in the ARC I reviewed did not lead to the correct website, but I found the referenced worksheets available to download (with no signup required) on the publisher's website at <https://www.workman.com/products/eigh...>

I recommend this book for anyone interested in improving their romantic relationships, although it seems best suited for those in a committed, monogamous relationship. Note that both members of a couple need to read the book for the dates to work as designed.

I was provided an unproofed ARC through NetGalley that I volunteered to review. Because I have not seen the final published version, I cannot comment on the final editing and formatting, but the ARC appeared to be well edited and neatly formatted.

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