



Overview

"Getting the Love You Want: A Guide for Couples" by Dr. Harville Hendrix is a transformative book that offers couples practical tools and insights to build stronger, more fulfilling relationships. Originally published in 1988, the book has since become a classic in the field of relationship therapy, helping millions of couples around the world to understand and improve their partnerships.

Core Concepts

At the heart of *"Getting the Love You Want"* is the idea that many of the challenges couples face in relationships stem from unconscious forces rooted in early childhood experiences. Dr. Hendrix introduces the concept of "Imago," a psychological blueprint that we unconsciously carry into our adult relationships, shaped by our interactions with our primary caregivers.

Key Ideas in "Getting the Love You Want"

- 1 **The Imago:** According to Dr. Hendrix, we all have an Imago—an internalized image of love that is based on the positive and negative traits of our caregivers. This Imago influences our choice of partners and the dynamics of our relationships. We are often unconsciously drawn to partners who mirror both the good and bad aspects of our caregivers, hoping to heal old wounds through our adult relationships.
- 2 **Unconscious Forces in Relationships:** Dr. Hendrix explains that much of the conflict in relationships arises from these unconscious forces. We seek out partners who can help us resolve unmet needs from childhood, but this often leads to power struggles, disappointment, and frustration when those needs are not met in the way we expect.
- 3 **Conscious Partnership:** The book encourages couples to move from unconscious to conscious relationships. A conscious partnership is one where both individuals are aware of their own emotional baggage and are committed to helping each other heal. This involves recognizing the role of the Imago and working together to meet each other's needs in a healthy, supportive way.
- 4 **The Dialogue Process:** One of the most practical tools Dr. Hendrix offers is the Dialogue Process, a structured form of communication that helps couples listen to each other with empathy and understanding. This process involves three steps: Mirroring (repeating back what the other person has said), Validation (acknowledging the logic of the other person's perspective), and Empathy (understanding and sharing the feelings of the other person).



5 Healing Old Wounds: Dr. Hendrix believes that by recognizing and addressing the unresolved issues from childhood, couples can heal old wounds and create a stronger, more loving bond. The book provides exercises and techniques to help couples identify these issues and work through them together.

Practical Applications

Throughout *"Getting the Love You Want,"* Dr. Hendrix includes numerous exercises, activities, and real-life examples to help couples apply the concepts to their own relationships. These practical tools are designed to improve communication, deepen emotional intimacy, and resolve conflicts in a way that strengthens the partnership.

Conclusion

"Getting the Love You Want" is a powerful guide for couples who want to transform their relationship by understanding and addressing the unconscious forces that shape their interactions. By moving from unconscious patterns to conscious partnership, couples can build a relationship that is not only more fulfilling but also more resilient in the face of challenges. Dr. Hendrix's insights offer a roadmap to creating the love and connection that every couple desires. Whether you're in a new relationship or have been together for years, this book provides the tools you need to get the love you truly want.



Blog

Transform Your Relationship: Insights from "Getting the Love You Want" by Dr. Harville Hendrix

Relationships are a source of deep joy and fulfillment, but they can also be a source of frustration and pain. Many of the challenges we face in our relationships are rooted in unconscious patterns that we carry from our past. In his groundbreaking book, *"Getting the Love You Want: A Guide for Couples,"* Dr. Harville Hendrix offers a powerful approach to understanding and transforming these patterns, helping couples create more loving, conscious relationships.

Understanding the Imago: Your Relationship Blueprint

At the heart of Dr. Hendrix's approach is the concept of the "Imago," a psychological blueprint we carry into our adult relationships. This Imago is formed in childhood, based on our early experiences with our caregivers. It's a mix of the positive and negative traits we observed in those who raised us, and it shapes the way we interact with our partners as adults.

The Imago is why we are often unconsciously drawn to partners who reflect both the good and bad aspects of our parents or primary caregivers. We seek out these partners in the hopes of healing the wounds of our past, but this can lead to disappointment when our partner fails to meet our needs in the way we expect.

Moving from Unconscious to Conscious Relationships

One of the key messages in *"Getting the Love You Want"* is the need to move from an unconscious relationship—where we are driven by our past wounds and unmet needs—to a conscious relationship. In a conscious relationship, both partners are aware of their emotional baggage and are committed to working together to heal and grow.

Dr. Hendrix encourages couples to recognize the role of the Imago in their relationship dynamics. By understanding how our past influences our present, we can begin to make more conscious choices in our interactions with our partner. This shift from unconscious to conscious interaction is the foundation of a more fulfilling and resilient partnership.

The Dialogue Process: Communicate with Empathy

Effective communication is essential for any relationship, but it's especially important when trying to move from unconscious patterns to conscious partnership. Dr. Hendrix introduces the Dialogue Process, a structured form of communication that fosters empathy, understanding, and connection between partners.



The Dialogue Process involves three key steps:

- 6 **Mirroring:** When your partner speaks, repeat back what they've said to ensure you've understood them correctly. This shows that you're actively listening and engaged in the conversation.
- 7 **Validation:** Acknowledge that your partner's perspective makes sense, even if you don't agree with it. Validation is about recognizing that your partner's feelings and thoughts are valid and deserving of respect.
- 8 **Empathy:** Try to understand and share the feelings your partner is expressing. Empathy goes beyond just hearing words; it's about connecting with the emotions behind them.

This process can help couples break out of negative communication patterns and create a space where both partners feel heard, understood, and valued.

Healing Old Wounds Together

Getting the Love You Want emphasizes that healing old wounds is a central part of creating a healthy, loving relationship. Many of the conflicts and frustrations in relationships stem from unresolved issues from our past. By bringing these issues into the light and working through them together, couples can build a stronger, more connected partnership.

Dr. Hendrix provides practical exercises to help couples identify these unresolved issues and begin the healing process. These exercises often involve exploring childhood experiences, understanding how they impact the present, and finding ways to support each other in healing.

Creating a Conscious Partnership

The ultimate goal of Dr. Hendrix's approach is to create a conscious partnership—a relationship where both partners are fully present, engaged, and committed to each other's growth and well-being. In a conscious partnership, conflicts are seen as opportunities for growth, and both partners actively work to support each other's emotional and psychological needs.

Creating a conscious partnership requires ongoing effort and commitment, but the rewards are well worth it. Couples who embrace this approach often find that their relationship becomes more resilient, more loving, and more fulfilling.



Final Thoughts: Transforming Your Relationship

Getting the Love You Want offers a roadmap for transforming your relationship by understanding and addressing the unconscious patterns that shape your interactions. By moving from unconscious to conscious partnership, practicing empathetic communication, and healing old wounds, you can create the love and connection you truly desire.

Whether you're in a new relationship or have been together for years, the insights and tools in this book can help you build a stronger, more fulfilling relationship. Remember, the journey to getting the love you want begins with understanding yourself and your partner on a deeper level—and making a conscious commitment to grow together.

For more tips and resources on building a strong, intimate relationship, visit [CoupleStrong](http://CoupleStrong.com).

Handout

Creating a Conscious Relationship: A Couple's Guide

Inspired by "Getting the Love You Want" by Dr. Harville Hendrix

Introduction This handout is designed to help you and your partner build a stronger, more fulfilling relationship by understanding and transforming unconscious patterns that influence your interactions. Based on Dr. Harville Hendrix's book "*Getting the Love You Want*," this guide offers practical tools to create a conscious partnership where both partners feel understood, valued, and loved.

1. Understanding Your Imago

Key Concept: The "Imago" is a psychological blueprint shaped by your early experiences with caregivers. It influences the types of partners you are attracted to and the dynamics of your relationships.

Action Steps:

- 9 Identify Your Imago:** Reflect on the traits (both positive and negative) of your primary caregivers. How do these traits show up in your partner?



- 10 **Discuss with Your Partner:** Share your reflections with your partner. Talk about how these patterns might influence your relationship, and identify any recurring dynamics that may stem from your Imago.

2. Moving from Unconscious to Conscious Relationship

Key Concept: A conscious relationship is one where both partners are aware of their emotional baggage and are committed to working together to heal and grow. It involves recognizing the unconscious patterns that drive behavior and making more deliberate, loving choices.

Action Steps:

- **Recognize Triggers:** Identify situations or behaviors that trigger strong emotional reactions. Discuss these triggers with your partner to bring them into conscious awareness.
- **Make Conscious Choices:** When you notice yourself falling into an old pattern, pause and choose a different, more loving response. Support each other in making these conscious choices.

3. The Dialogue Process: Communicate with Empathy

Key Concept: Effective communication is essential for a conscious partnership. The Dialogue Process fosters empathy, understanding, and connection by structuring conversations in a way that helps both partners feel heard and valued.

Steps in the Dialogue Process:

- 1 **Mirroring:** When your partner speaks, repeat back what they've said to ensure understanding. Use phrases like, "What I hear you saying is..."
- 2 **Validation:** Acknowledge that your partner's perspective makes sense. Even if you disagree, say something like, "I can see how you would feel that way."
- 3 **Empathy:** Try to understand and share your partner's feelings. Respond with empathy by saying, "I imagine that makes you feel..."



Practice Exercise:

- **Daily Dialogue:** Set aside time each day to practice the Dialogue Process. Discuss something meaningful, such as a recent experience or an ongoing concern, using the three steps outlined above.

4. Healing Old Wounds Together

Key Concept: Many conflicts in relationships are rooted in unresolved issues from childhood. By identifying and addressing these issues together, couples can heal old wounds and build a stronger bond.

Action Steps:

- **Explore Childhood Experiences:** Individually, reflect on significant events from your childhood that may still affect you today. How do these experiences show up in your relationship?
- **Support Each Other:** Share your reflections with your partner and discuss how you can support each other in healing. This might involve offering reassurance, practicing patience, or simply listening with empathy.

Healing Exercise:

- **Love Letter Exercise:** Write a letter to your partner expressing your appreciation for how they've supported you in healing old wounds. Share the letter with them, and discuss how you can continue to support each other's growth.

5. Creating a Conscious Partnership

Key Concept: A conscious partnership is a relationship where both partners are fully present, engaged, and committed to each other's growth and well-being. It's about moving beyond reactive patterns to create a relationship that is intentional, loving, and supportive.

Action Steps:

- **Set Intentions Together:** Discuss your goals and intentions for your relationship. What do you want to create together? How can you support each other in achieving these goals?



- **Regular Check-Ins:** Establish regular times to check in with each other about your relationship. Discuss what's working well and what could be improved. Use these check-ins to make adjustments and stay aligned with your intentions.

Exercise for Conscious Partnership:

- **Vision Board:** Create a vision board together that represents your shared goals and dreams for your relationship. Use this visual reminder to stay focused on creating the partnership you both desire.

Final Thoughts

Building a conscious relationship takes effort, but the rewards are worth it. By understanding your Imago, practicing empathetic communication, healing old wounds, and making conscious choices, you can create a partnership that is deeply fulfilling and resilient.

For more tips and resources on building a strong, intimate relationship, visit [CoupleStrong](http://CoupleStrong.com).

Prepared by CoupleStrong *Strengthening relationships, one connection at a time.*



Assessment

Getting the Love You Want Couples Assessment

Based on "Getting the Love You Want" by Dr. Harville Hendrix

Instructions:

This assessment is designed to help you and your partner evaluate your relationship based on the key concepts from *"Getting the Love You Want."* Each partner should complete the assessment separately, and then you can come together to discuss your responses.

For each statement, rate your agreement on a scale from 1 to 5:

- 11 **1 = Strongly Disagree**
- 12 **2 = Disagree**
- 13 **3 = Neutral**
- 14 **4 = Agree**
- 15 **5 = Strongly Agree**

Section 1: Understanding the Imago

- **I can identify the ways in which my early childhood experiences influence my relationship today.**

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

- **I recognize that I may be unconsciously drawn to my partner because they reflect both positive and negative traits of my caregivers.**

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

- **I understand how my partner's childhood experiences may affect their behavior in our relationship.**

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Section 2: Moving from Unconscious to Conscious Relationship



4 I am aware of the unconscious patterns that drive my reactions in our relationship.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

5 I make a conscious effort to choose loving and constructive responses rather than reacting out of habit.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

6 We discuss our triggers and how to support each other in managing them.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Section 3: The Dialogue Process

• We practice effective communication using the Dialogue Process or similar techniques.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

• When we communicate, I feel that my partner truly listens and understands my perspective.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

• We regularly use mirroring, validation, and empathy in our conversations.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Section 4: Healing Old Wounds

• I am aware of unresolved issues from my past that may affect our relationship.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

• My partner and I actively work together to heal old wounds that arise in our relationship.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5



- **I feel supported by my partner in addressing and healing past emotional pain.**

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Section 5: Creating a Conscious Partnership

- **We have set intentions together for the kind of relationship we want to build.**

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

- **We regularly check in with each other to discuss how our relationship is progressing.**

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

- **Our relationship feels like a conscious partnership where both of us are committed to each other's growth and well-being.**

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Scoring:

85-105: Your relationship is strong, with a high level of awareness, communication, and mutual support. You both seem committed to building a conscious partnership that is loving and resilient.

65-84: Your relationship is generally healthy, but there may be areas where more attention is needed. Focus on improving communication, addressing unresolved issues, and setting shared intentions for your partnership.

45-64: Your relationship could benefit from more intentional efforts to move from unconscious patterns to a more conscious partnership. Consider exploring the concepts in *"Getting the Love You Want"* more deeply together.

Below 45: It may be time to address significant issues in your relationship. Consider seeking additional resources or professional guidance to help move toward a more fulfilling and conscious partnership.

Discussion and Reflection:

After completing the assessment, come together with your partner to discuss your scores. Use these questions to guide your conversation:



- **What are our strengths according to this assessment?**
- **Which areas could use more attention or improvement?**
- **How can we better support each other in moving from unconscious patterns to a conscious partnership?**
- **What steps can we take to heal old wounds and build a stronger, more loving relationship?**

Final Thoughts: This assessment is a tool to help you and your partner understand and enhance your relationship based on the principles from *"Getting the Love You Want."* By focusing on conscious communication, healing old wounds, and setting shared intentions, you can create a relationship that is deeply fulfilling and resilient.

For more resources and support, visit [CoupleStrong](http://CoupleStrong.com).



7-Day Couples Challenge: Building a Conscious Relationship

Inspired by "Getting the Love You Want" by Dr. Harville Hendrix

Challenge Overview: This 7-day challenge is designed to help you and your partner deepen your connection, improve communication, and move from unconscious patterns to a more conscious, loving relationship. Each day focuses on key concepts from Dr. Harville Hendrix's *"Getting the Love You Want,"* providing practical activities and discussions that foster mutual understanding, healing, and growth.

Day 1: Discover Your Imago

Objective: Understand the concept of the Imago and how it influences your relationship.

Activity:

Individually, reflect on the traits of your primary caregivers (both positive and negative). Consider how these traits might influence your choice of partner and your relationship dynamics.

Share your reflections with your partner. Discuss how your Imago might be playing a role in your relationship and how understanding this can help you grow together.

Reflection: How did recognizing your Imago affect your understanding of your relationship dynamics? What insights did you gain from your partner's reflections?

Day 2: Identify Unconscious Patterns

Objective: Recognize the unconscious patterns that drive your reactions in your relationship.

Activity:

- Think about recent conflicts or recurring issues in your relationship. Reflect on whether these might be driven by unconscious patterns from your past.
- Discuss these patterns with your partner. Together, identify one or two specific behaviors or reactions that you'd like to become more conscious of and change.



Reflection: What unconscious patterns did you identify today? How can you support each other in becoming more aware of these patterns moving forward?

Day 3: Practice the Dialogue Process

Objective: Improve communication by practicing the Dialogue Process, which involves mirroring, validation, and empathy.

Activity:

7 Choose a topic to discuss—this could be something positive, like a recent achievement, or a minor issue that needs addressing.

8 Practice the Dialogue Process:

Mirroring: One partner speaks while the other repeats back what they've heard to ensure understanding.

Validation: The listener acknowledges that the speaker's perspective is valid

Empathy: The listener expresses understanding and shares in the speaker's feelings.

Reflection: How did the Dialogue Process change the way you communicate? Did it help you feel more understood and connected?

Day 4: Heal Old Wounds

Objective: Address unresolved issues from the past that may be affecting your relationship today.

Activity:

- Individually, think about a past experience that still causes you emotional pain. Consider how this might influence your current relationship.
- Share these experiences with each other. Discuss how you can support each other in healing these old wounds, whether through reassurance, understanding, or specific actions.



Reflection: How did sharing your past experiences with your partner affect your connection? What steps can you take to support each other's healing journey?

Day 5: Create a Shared Vision

Objective: Set shared intentions for the future of your relationship.

Activity:

- Spend some time discussing your goals and dreams for your relationship. What kind of partnership do you want to create? How do you want to grow together?
- Write down your shared vision. Include specific actions you both can take to move closer to this vision.

Reflection: How did creating a shared vision influence your sense of partnership? What steps will you take to keep this vision alive in your daily lives?

Day 6: Practice Gratitude

Objective: Strengthen your bond by expressing appreciation for each other.

Activity:

- Take turns sharing three things you appreciate about your partner. These can be qualities you admire, actions they've taken, or ways they've supported you.
- Make it a point to express gratitude for these things regularly, not just today, but as a habit moving forward.

Reflection: How did expressing and receiving appreciation affect your connection? How can you incorporate more gratitude into your relationship?



Day 7: Review and Reflect

Objective: Consolidate the progress made during the challenge and plan how to continue growing together.

Activity:

- Reflect together on the past week. Discuss what activities or conversations were most impactful and how they affected your relationship.
- Identify any areas where you'd like to continue focusing your efforts, and set a few goals for ongoing growth.

Reflection: What was the most valuable takeaway from this challenge? How will you continue to build on the progress you've made?

Final Thoughts:

Congratulations on completing the 7-Day Couples Challenge! By focusing on understanding your Imago, improving communication, healing old wounds, and creating a shared vision, you've taken significant steps toward building a more conscious, loving relationship. Remember, the journey doesn't end here—continue to apply the principles you've learned, and your partnership will continue to grow and thrive.

For more tips, resources, and support on your relationship journey, visit [CoupleStrong](http://CoupleStrong.com).



Getting the Love You Want Relationship Bundle

This comprehensive bundle is designed to help couples deepen their connection, improve communication, and build a more conscious, fulfilling relationship based on the principles from Dr. Harville Hendrix's book *"Getting the Love You Want."* The bundle includes:

Overview of the Book: A concise summary that introduces the key concepts from *"Getting the Love You Want,"* focusing on the Imago theory and how unconscious patterns influence relationships.

Blog Post: An insightful blog that explores practical ways couples can apply the principles of *"Getting the Love You Want"* to transform their relationship. The blog provides actionable advice on moving from unconscious patterns to a conscious, loving partnership.

Couple's Handout: A practical guide with exercises and tips designed to help couples understand their Imago, improve communication, heal old wounds, and create a conscious relationship. This handout serves as a valuable resource for couples looking to strengthen their bond.

Couple's Assessment: A self-assessment tool that allows couples to evaluate their relationship based on how well they are applying the principles from *"Getting the Love You Want."* This assessment helps couples identify strengths and areas for improvement.

7-Day Couples Challenge: A structured, week-long challenge that offers daily activities and discussions aimed at deepening emotional connection, improving communication, and fostering mutual understanding and growth.

This bundle provides the tools and insights needed to create a more conscious, loving, and resilient partnership, helping couples get the love they truly want.