



A General Theory of Love

Thomas Lewis, M.D., Fari 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*

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Drawing on new scientific discoveries and seventy years of collective clinical experience, three psychiatrists unravel life's most elemental mystery: the nature of love. A primordial area of the brain, far older than reason or thinking, creates both the capacity and the need for emotional intimacy that all humans share. *A General Theory of Love* describes the workings of this ancient, pivotal urge and reveals that our nervous systems are not self-contained. Instead, our brains link with those of the people close to us, in a silent rhythm that makes up the very life force of the body. These wordless and powerful ties determine our moods, stabilize and maintain our health and well-being, and change the structure of our brains. In consequence, who we are and who we become depend, in great part, on whom we love. *A General Theory of Love* applies these and other extraordinary insights to some of the most crucial issues we face in our lives. Its authors explain how relationships function and where love goes wrong, how parents shape a child's developing self, how psychotherapy really works, what curbs and what fosters violent aggression in our children, and how modern society regularly courts disaster by flouting emotional laws it does not yet recognize. A work of rare originality, passion, and eloquence, *A General Theory of Love* will forever change the way you think about human intimacy.