

Relationship Author Dr. Tara Fields' Love Advice: "The Happiest Couples Don't Necessarily Have More or Less Conflict"



By [Sarah Batcheller](#)

Unwanted conflict patterns in relationships are just that: unwanted. Often times, couples feel helpless and like their arguments are a curse instead of something they can navigate. Dr. Tara Fields, a licensed psychotherapist who specializes in relationships and love and the author of the upcoming [self-help relationship book](#) *The Love Fix: Repair and Restore Your Relationship Right Now*, teaches her readers how to grab the reins of their negative habits and bring their love to a better place. Knowing that no relationship is perfect, Dr. Fields provides more than just love advice; she also shares usable actions to help couples weather any storm together. In this exclusive author interview, she reveals her proven techniques for lovebirds in all stages of romance.

In the book, you discuss the ways that couples can manage their relationships. What are some benefits of the HEARTwork exercises and self-assessment quizzes?

Change comes with awareness, so until an individual or a couple can take ownership of things, they can't change. What you can do is look at your part in the conflict. I see miracles happen when even just one person starts looking at their part in the loop. One of the reasons that I created the

assessment is for people to self-diagnose and start becoming aware. The second reason is for people to say, “What can I do *now*?” So I came up with the three-minute fixes – people want help now, and they also want *hope* now.

Even if things don’t change immediately, it will make you feel better because, when you act in a loving way, it increases your sense of self and also makes you feel empowered. What happens with couples is that they start to feel powerless: “They’re never going to change,” or “They’re never going to forgive me for that thing that happened five years ago.” But this book lets people know there’s something they can do to change things, and from there, things just keep progressing.

One of the biggest pitfalls I’ve seen is people wondering whether they can get their partner on board. Just be hopeful. Many people think they need to refrain from conflict, but here’s something most people don’t know: The happiest couples don’t necessarily have more or less conflict. Instead, It’s about how you handle the conflict. That’s a big piece of the book – it teaches you to say, “We have an opportunity here.”

What is the most important thing that keeps a relationship healthy?

Outside forces like friends, in-laws, or money can be a big problem in relationships. What’s crucial, and what successful couples have, is that they’re a team. The beautiful thing about a loving relationship is that you’re better together. You should be able to surrender and trust and know that your partner has your back.

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Can you tell us your most crucial love advice for new couples?

In the media, and especially on reality TV, we see this attitude of, "Yay, I found it!" The biggest misconception is that your partner will guarantee that you're always going to be happy. It's so important for couples to realize that you're dealing with hormones and chemicals and the newness of romance.

In the book, I discuss coming together and growing apart, which happens when you start facing real-life issues. So many couples have a plan, but then, *life* happens. For example, all of a sudden you're laid off from that secure job, and the house can't be sold. I always say to couples that, even if you've already dealt with these issues, it's a good idea to do pre-marital counseling and make sure you're on the same page. Lots of people say things like, "We never really talked about finances" or "He's saying he doesn't want to have children, but that will change once we're married." It's so important for couples to articulate their expectations.

There's an erroneous belief that, "We're different from everybody else. The divorce rate is almost 50 percent, but nobody loves each other like we do. *We're different.*" That's what almost everybody thinks. The crazy thing is that people put so much planning and money into this one day, this one big party, but they don't plan for the rest of their lives.

What was one of the biggest issues you have had in a relationship, and how did you resolve it?

Well, I've been with my husband for seventeen years, and we've dealt with many challenges in terms of finance and health. Our marriage and our relationship is so much stronger because we stuck together. I've surrendered a lot of things that I thought only I was able to do and therefore have seen what a

champion my husband is. Because we both know that we're all in, we're able to overcome everything.

Furthermore, lots of couples ask if the passion is going to fade, and they're absolutely right that those things will go away. But when you build a history as a couple and go through things together, that kind of intimacy creates a passion that can only come with time.

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Relationship and Love Author Provides Readers with Quick, Realistic Solutions

What is a key thing that couples should do every day?

If you do nothing else, even if you can't think of anything positive to say about your mate, find a minimum of three things that you can express gratitude and appreciation for. Send a little text or e-mail. At the end of the day, instead of going into your room and opening up your laptop, wrap your arms around your partner and say, "Have I ever told you what a great mother I think you are?" Or, in the morning, say something like, "Honey, have I ever told you how much I admire that every day you go in to that job you hate?" I have every couple do this either at the beginning or the end of their counseling. Some couples say, "You've got to be kidding...I can't think of anything!" What happens is that they go from the honeymoon phase, where their partner is perfect, to only noticing what their partner does wrong – your brain gets rewired to only see the negative.

The key is to do this exercise with no expectations. If you do it just so that your mate does it back, you're not really doing it. Research shows that doing it without expectations

actually makes people feel better. Again, the one thing you can always do is make a choice to act lovingly.

The Love Fix: Repair and Restore Your Relationship Right Now *is available now on Amazon. To get the most out of your relationship-repairing experience, Dr. Fields recommends each partner have their own copy. For more from Dr. Tara Fields, visit her website and read her blog at www.tarafields.com.*