

Key Takeaways From "Hold Me Tight" by Sue Johnson

- Romantic love was all about attachment and emotional bonding
- Recognize and admit that you are emotionally attached to and dependent on your partner in much the same way that a child is on a parent for nurturing, soothing, and protection
- We need emotional attachments with a few irreplaceable others to be physically and mentally healthy
- Children have an absolute requirement for safe, on-going physical and emotional closeness
- Needing emotional closeness from their lover, wanting assurance that their lover would respond when they are upset, being distressed when they felt separate and distant from their loved one, and feeling more confident about exploring the world when they knew their lover had their back
- A sense of secure connection between romantic partners is key in positive loving relationships and a huge source of strength for the individuals in those relationships
- Openness to new experience and flexibility of belief seems to be easier when we feel safe and connected to others
- We are not only social animals, but animals who need a special kind of close connection with others
- Loneliness raises blood pressure to the point where the risk of heart attack and stroke is doubled
- Emotional isolation is a more dangerous health risk than smoking or high blood pressure
- Suffering is a given; suffering alone is intolerable
- Positive loving connections with others protect us from stress and help us cope better with life's challenges and traumas
- The people we love are the hidden regulators of our bodily processes and our emotional lives
- Love is not the icing on the cake of life. It is a basic primary need, like oxygen or water
- Attachment theory teaches us that our loved one is our shelter in life
- We don't think; we feel, we act
- No matter the exact words, what we're really saying in these reactions is "notice me. Be with me. I need you."
- Happy couples do not talk to each other in any more "skilled" or "insightful" ways than do unhappy couples

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Taken directly out of the book

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- When a relationship is in free fall, men typically talk of feeling rejected, inadequate, and a failure; women of feeling abandoned and unconnected
- When marriages fail, it is not increasing conflict that is the cause. It is decreasing affection and emotional responsiveness
- We are never more emotional than when our primary love relationship is threatened
- Once a couple grasped that they are both victims of the dialogue and were able to show more of themselves, to risk sharing deeper emotions, then the conflicts calmed down and they felt a little closer
- When more withdrawn partners were able to confess their fears of love and isolation, they could then talk about their longings for caring and connection
- Love is the best survival mechanism there is, and to feel suddenly emotionally cut off from a partner is terrifying
- Loving connection is the only safety nature ever offers us
- Once partners know how to speak their need and bring each other close, every trial they face together simply makes their love stronger
- If you know your loved one is there and will come when you call, you are more confident of your value
- Recognize and accept each other's attachment protests
- Understanding the bond between you and your partner, and sharing how you see it, is the first step to being able to create the connection you both want and need
- The person we love most in the world, the one who can send us soaring joyfully into space, is also the person who can send us crashing back to earth
- If our connection with our mate is safe and strong, we can deal with these moments of sensitivity
- She would really like him to be able to tell her when he needed emotional support
- Change starts with seeing the pattern, with focusing on the game rather than the ball
- We get stuck when we cannot connect safely with our partner
- When we are alarmed, we use anything that promises to give us back this control
- The more you attack, the more dangerous you appear to me, the more I watch your attack, the harder I hit back
- Stay in the present
- Attachment relationships are the only ties on earth where any response is better than none
- For most women sexual relations are not enough to fulfill their attachment needs
- We use the eyes of those we love to reflect back to us a sense of ourselves

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- Our past history with loved ones shape our present relationships. In moments of disconnection when we cannot safely engage with our lover, we naturally turn to the way of coping that we adopted as a child, the way of coping that allowed us to hold on to our parent, at least in some minimal way
- When you're ready to share your vulnerability, start slow. There's no need to bare your soul
- Once you feel comfortable, you can talk more openly about the sources of the hurt
- When you are balanced on your feet, tuned in to yourself, then you can listen to me and move with me
- Don't forget: we are all turkeys in the same emotional soup, trying to make sense of our emotional lives as they unfold, doing the best we can, and making mistakes
- It's fixing mistakes that matters-even just the willingness to try again
- To reconnect, lovers have to be able to de-escalate the conflict and actively create a basic emotional safety
- Injuries may be forgiven, but they never disappear. Instead they become integrated into couples' attachment stories as demonstrations of renewal and connection
- We waste time looking for the perfect lover. Instead of creating the perfect love
- Emotional connection creates great sex, and great sex creates deeper emotional connection. When partners are emotionally accessible, responsive, and engaged, sex becomes intimate play, a safe adventure
- Regular small gestures that convey the message "you matter to me" go a long way in keeping the relationship safe and sound