



Make Love Better: How to Own Your Story, Connect with Your Partner, and Deepen Your Relationship Practice

Jan Dworkin

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Jan Dworkin's *Make Love Better* is a heartfelt guide to deepening romantic and committed relationships—the kind that are healing, challenging, and encourage growth.

Lighthearted but informative, the book includes stories from couples that enliven its principles, like unmixing messages, maintaining independence, and reconciling communication styles. Short sections within each chapter break down ideas; a chapter on compulsive sexual behavior includes information on porn addiction, affairs, and self-harming sex, described as “like a nice hotel room: fluffy pillows and clean sheets for the short term, but not a real home.”

Narrated in a personable, warm tone, the text also includes examples from Dworkin's escapades, peppered with f-bombs and explicit, frequently funny descriptions of sexual encounters. But rather than being salacious, the book is helpful and nonjudgmental, with clear exercises to guide better understanding of relationship issues ranging from erectile dysfunction to nonmonogamy.

Three sections cover inner emotional worlds, outer worlds of conflict and communication, and “the world around.” Workbook sections in each area proffer guidance through relationship power dynamics. Dworkin's insights on privilege are especially exciting; they reframe “privilege” as “power” and help reveal the deeper structures that affect relationships.

The book's blend of memoir elements and sexpert guidance is sometimes dizzying, though. It eschews formality, making it accessible but also less authoritative, giving the impression that the lived experiences it's based on have biased its opinions, while its idea that relationships between people of marginalized classes, races, and genders might help to “enlighten” those with more privilege is problematic. Still, the work as a whole challenges existing power structures and forwards techniques for understanding how social and gender dynamics affect intimate relationships.

Make Love Better is a holistic guide for relationships of all kinds. Its deep examinations of the beliefs and behaviors that inform intimacy aim for kinder, more intentional connections and the reclamation of personal agency.

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