

## The Relationship Upgrade: Proven Strategies for a Healthier, Happier and Stronger Partnership in the Modern Digital World

**Aditi Jasra**

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*The Relationship Upgrade addresses common challenges to adult relationships with sensible recommendations for overcoming them.*

Registered clinical counselor Aditi Jasra's informative self-help book *The Relationship Upgrade* includes guidance for navigating challenging and complicated relationships.

Drawing upon a wide variety of sources, including academic books, peer-reviewed journals, personal training in the EFT model of couples therapy, and discussions with colleagues, supervisors, mentors, and a wide variety of clients, this is a concise guide to understanding contemporary relationship hurdles—both in romantic contexts and, to a lesser extent, when it comes to friendships and family relationships. Its insights and recommendations are practical and evidence based. They're also cushioned by a series of step-by-step scenarios for building trust, set within chapters that follow a formula: defining important concepts, touching upon supporting studies, and giving examples of partners using the concepts to learn more about themselves.

The book takes complicated topics and makes them accessible on a consistent basis, as with a section dedicated to coregulation and mirror neurons. Coregulation is how people help each other manage their emotions, thoughts, and actions (for example, if one person is upset, the other comforts and understands them, which then helps regulate and soothe their distress), and mirror neurons are introduced as specialized cells in the brain that fire when someone performs an action or when they observe someone else performing the same action, enabling empathy. These topics, while intriguing, represent specialized deviations in the book's self-help work.

The book's discussions of technology are distinguishing as well, with sections of the book dedicated to the positive and negative sides of relationships in a technological age. It points out that technology can provide channels for staying connected and bridging geographical distances to allow partners to express love in creative ways, but it also could provide an avenue for people to spam their partners at work or to seek indiscretions. Boundaries need to be set around the presence of technology in relationships, it says, and couples should prioritize face-to-face interactions and genuine connection. The book's examples are dated and unconvincing, though, as with a reference to a controversial celebrity couple, Will Smith and Jada Pinkett Smith. Unexplained stylistic choices further compromise the book's delivery, as with the chapter title "/Gen" and the spelling of "folks" as "folx."

A practical communication guide, *The Relationship Upgrade* addresses common challenges to adult relationships with recommendations for overcoming them.

STEPHANIE MARRIE (December 5, 2023)

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