



Mating in Captivity

By Esther Perel
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Introduction

One of the world's most respected voices on erotic intelligence, Esther Perel offers a bold, provocative new take on intimacy and sex. *Mating in Captivity* invites us to explore the paradoxical union of domesticity and sexual desire, and explains what it takes to bring lust home.

Drawing on more than twenty years of experience as a couples therapist, Perel examines the complexities of sustaining desire. Through case studies and lively discussion, Perel demonstrates how more exciting, playful, and even poetic sex is possible in long-term relationships. Wise, witty, and as revelatory as it is straightforward, *Mating in Captivity* is a sensational book that will transform the way you live and love.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why do you think so many couples have trouble keeping desire alive in long-term relationships or marriages, even when they are extremely loving?
2. Are long-term love and eroticism ever compatible? What does it take to sustain long-term love? What does it take to sustain eroticism?
3. In American culture there's sex all around us—in music, on TV, in film. What do you think the effects of such explicitly sexual images have on American cultural perceptions of the erotic? What are the effects of such images on couples in sexual relationships?
4. Perel claims that engaging in sexual play in the forms of role reversals, ambiguity in gestures and words, and seductive manipulations can help restore eroticism in long-term relationships. Do you think many of us are uncomfortable with fantasy and power plays in the modern conception of long-term relationships and marriage? Why or why not?
5. Perel believes that parenthood can have an effect on erotic desire. What are some of the ways in which having children changes the sexual dynamic between partners? How can parents recover eroticism?

About the Author

Esther Perel is a couples and family therapist with a private practice in New York City. She is on the faculty of the International Trauma Studies program at Columbia University, is a member of the American Family Therapy Academy, and has appeared on many television programs, including *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, *Good Day New York*, *CBS This Morning*, and HBO's *Women Aloud*. She lives in New York City with her husband and two children.