



# The Dance of Connection: How to Talk to Someone When You're Mad, Hurt, Scared, Frustrated, Insulted, Betrayed, or Desperate

By Harriet Lerner

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In her most affirming and life-changing book yet, Dr. Harriet Lerner teaches us how to restore love and connection with the people who matter the most. In *The Dance of Connection* we learn what to say (and *not* say) when:

- We need an apology, and the person who has harmed us won't apologize or be accountable.
- We don't know how to take a conversation to the next level when we feel desperate.
- We feel worn down by the other person's criticism, negativity, or irresponsible behavior.
- We have been rejected or cut off, and the other person won't show up for the conversation.
- We are struggling with staying or leaving, and we don't know our "bottom line."
- We are convinced that we've tried everything -- and nothing changes.

Filled with compelling personal stories and case examples, Lerner outlines bold new "voice lessons" that show us how to speak with honor and personal integrity, even when the other person behaves badly.

Whether we're dealing with a partner, parent, sister, or best friend, *The Dance of Connection* teaches us how to navigate our most important relationships with clarity, courage, and joyous conviction.

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## **Editorial Review**

### From Publishers Weekly

Psychotherapist and bestselling author Lerner has been teaching readers how to "dance" with difficult relationship issues throughout the past decade, and remains one of the most helpful writers on the topic. With her familiar mix of conversational language and profound empathy for people (primarily women) who are struggling with the most important relationships in their lives, she now tackles the verbal challenges of life's most painful conversations. Far from trite "communication skills" or "assertiveness training," her book offers lucid and concrete guidance on how to speak out in a wide variety of problem situations (e.g., when a wife suspects her husband is having an affair with a co-worker, or when friends jeopardize their relationship by becoming roommates). Lerner moves smoothly through the common obstacles to understanding how we feel, how we want to express ourselves and what we want to accomplish by talking about our feelings.

Recognizing that "your brain will turn to mush" when trying to explain yourself in an emotional state, she offers practical advice on sharing vulnerability; voicing concerns, complaints or requests; apologizing; listening and setting limits on how much one is willing to listen to others' complaints and negativity.

Accepting that we can never guarantee that others will hear us or respond as we'd like, Lerner focuses on the authentic expression of self, "maximiz[ing] the chance of being heard" and keeping the connection open, despite complex emotions, misunderstandings and silences. (Sept. 1) Forecast: The popularity of *The Dance of Anger*, *The Dance of Intimacy*, *The Dance of Deception* and *The Mother Dance* virtually assures an eager audience for Lerner's new work. She has recently added children's books to her repertoire (*Franny B. Kranny, There's a Bird in Your Hair*, PW, May 21), which may expand her readership even further.

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### From Library Journal

A columnist with *New Woman Magazine* as well as a staff psychologist and a psychotherapist at the Menninger Clinic, Lerner is also a world-renowned expert on women and family issues whose *Dance of Anger* is a pop psychology classic. Lerner's mass appeal results from her ability to break down difficult psychological concepts into plain language. Her new work is similar to her other titles (which include *Dance of Intimacy* and *Dance of Deception*) but follows the human life cycle sequentially. After a brief explanation of the concept of inborn/individual traits and the influence of families of origin, Lerner shares her private family-of-origin stories which gives the book a vulnerability and humanness that other self-help titles lack. Lerner then discusses problems that can surface in adult relationships, including how adult children may talk with their parents. She shows that criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and stonewalling all have the potential to cripple or destroy a marriage. Each chapter analyzes a specific problem with case histories and possible solutions or outcomes. What results is an accessible and well-organized work that, with its predecessors, belongs in all libraries. Highly recommended. Lisa Wise, Broome Cty. P.L., Binghamton, NY

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### Review

"Lerner's mass appeal results in...accessible and well-organized work that...belongs in all libraries Highly recommended."

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

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