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Rekindling Romance FOR DUMMIES[®]



Dr. Ruth K. Westheimer

Author of Sex For Dummies

with Pierre Lehu



A Reference for the Rest of Us!™

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***Rekindling Romance For
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**by Dr. Ruth K.
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Pierre Lehu**



Wiley Publishing, Inc.

Rekindling Romance For Dummies®

Published by

Wiley Publishing, Inc.

111 River St.

Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774

www.wiley.com

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Library of Congress Control Number: 00-108208

ISBN: 0-7645-5303-8

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

1B/TQ/RR/QQ/IN

Distributed in the United States by IDG Books
Worldwide, Inc.

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About the Authors

Dr. Ruth K. Westheimer: Dr. Ruth Westheimer is a psychosexual therapist who helped pioneer the field of media psychology with her radio program, Sexually Speaking, which first aired in New York in 1980. Within a few years, she had built a communications network to distribute her expertise that included television, books, newspapers, games, calendars, home videos, and computer software.

Dr. Westheimer received her Master's Degree in Sociology from the Graduate Faculty of the New School of Social Research and her Doctorate of Education (Ed.D) in the Interdisciplinary Study of the Family from Columbia University Teacher's College. Working at Planned Parenthood prompted her to further her education in human sexuality by studying under Dr. Helen Singer Kaplan at New York Hospital-Cornell University Medical Center. She later participated in the program for five years as an Adjunct Associate Professor. She has also taught at Lehman College, Brooklyn College, Adelphi University, Columbia University, and West Point. She is currently an Adjunct Professor at New York University.

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Pierre A. Lehu: Pierre Lehu has been Dr. Ruth Westheimer's "Minister of Communications" for 20 years. He is the co-author of *Dr. Ruth Talks About Grandparents: Advice for Kids Making the Most of a Special Relationship* and *Dr. Ruth's Guide to College Life: The Savvy Student's Handbook*. He lives in New York City with his wife and two children.

Dedication

*My beloved has gone down to his
garden to the beds of spices, to browse
in the gardens and to pick lilies.*

Song of Songs

To the memory of my entire family who perished during the Holocaust — I am thankful that they had the opportunity to instill in me the much cherished values of the Jewish Tradition before they were lost to me. And to the memory of my beloved late husband, Manfred Westheimer.

To my wonderful family of now: my daughter, Miriam Westheimer, Ed.D; my son-in-law, Joel Einleger; my grandson, Ari Einleger; my granddaughter, Leora Einleger; my son, Joel Westheimer, Ph.D.; my daughter-in-law, Barbara Leckie, Ph.D.; and my granddaughter, Michal Leckie!

Authors' Acknowledgments

From Dr. Ruth Westheimer: Pierre Lehu and I are now entering our twentieth year of working together! A special toast to Pierre and to many more years of cooperation.

I have so many people to thank it would require an additional chapter, so let me just mention a few: Martin Englisher; Richard Freese; Cynthia Fuchs Epstein, Ph.D. and Howard Epstein; Gabe Erem; Josh Gafni; Ellen Goldberg; David Goslin, Ph.D.; Amos Grunebaum, M.D.; Alfred Kaplan; Steve Kaplan, Ph.D.; Ronnie and Michael Kassan; Bonnie Kaye; John Kilcullen; Larry Kirshbaum; Marga and Bill Kunreuther; Rabbi and Mrs. William Lebeau; Lou Lieberman, Ph.D. and Mary Cuadrado, Ph.D.; John and Ginger Lollos; Sanford Lopater, Ph.D.; Jonathan Mark; Dale Ordes; Henry and Sydelle Ostberg; Bob Pinto; Fred and Ann Rosenberg; Cliff Rubin; Jonathan Sacks; Tim Satterfield; Rose and Simeon Schreiber; Daniel Schwartz; Amir Shaviv; Richard Stein; Hannah Strauss; Romie and Blanche Shapiro; John and Marianne Slade; Greg Willenborg; and Ben Yagoda.

To the IDG Books staff: What a terrific, hard working, competent, and expert group you are to work with! Thanks especially to Stacy Collins, Tracy Boggier, Joan Friedman, Ellen Considine, Rowena Rappaport, and Janet Withers.

From Pierre Lehu: Thanks to my wife Joanne, who rekindles our romance every single day. Thanks to my children, Peter and Gabrielle, my mother, Annette, and my in-laws, Joe and Anita Seminara, for their support. I join with Ruth in thanking everyone at IDG Books, though I must add my special thanks to Joan Friedman, who was my all-in-one lifeline, phone-a-friend, and ask the audience. And, of course, to Dr. Ruth Westheimer, for all she's done to rekindle romance in the entire universe.

Publisher's Acknowledgments

We're proud of this book; please register your comments through our IDG Books Worldwide Online Registration Form located at <http://my2cents.dummies.com>

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Introduction

Allow me to play fortuneteller for a moment. I'm going to gaze into my crystal ball and analyze the state of your relationship with your significant other. Here I go. At the moment the picture is a bit murky — hold on while I concentrate. Ah, there we are. Hmm, from what I can see, it looks like your relationship could use a bit of tweaking.

How did I know this? First, if everything were perfect, you probably wouldn't have picked up this book. But my crystal ball has another source of inside information. All I have to do is look out the window of my office and see all of the people hustling and bustling down the street. That vision tells me that stress and lack of time are negative influences wreaking havoc with everybody's relationships — be it with their spouses, their lovers, their children, or even their pets.

Seeking Solutions versus Throwing in the Towel

Most people who come to see me in my office have sexual problems, though I also see couples who have other marital problems. What I always tell them is that by calling to make an appointment, they've taken the most important step toward fixing the problem, whatever

it is. Sadly, most people don't reach out for help when their relationships turn sour; they either live with the problem or allow their relationships to deteriorate completely. They end up leading miserable lives because of it, or they eventually separate from people they once loved. But after you admit that you have a problem and begin the process of getting help, then you've already made an enormous stride in arriving at a solution.

If your romance is showing some signs of weakness, chances are good that you don't have a serious relationship issue to overcome. More likely, your brain, which is the seat of all emotions, is overwhelmed by other aspects of your life. If you're constantly putting out one fire after another, it's easy to understand why you might have trouble keeping your romantic flame from blowing out. It's easy to shove romance into a dark corner, rationalizing that you'll get to it next week. But all too often a week turns into a month and then a year, and at some point it might just be too late: Your romance will have grown so cold that it will be beyond help.

Some people just give up on their relationships. They feel that they can barely cope with everything else on their plates, so they cut the cord and watch the dinghy that holds the remnants of their romance float off toward the horizon. They figure at least it's one less thing to worry about, especially because the situation feels hopeless.

Using the Ingredients You Have

I'm here to tell you that your relationship struggles are not hopeless. Why am I so confident? Because of the title of this book. If you and your partner had a romance once upon a time, you don't have to start from scratch. All the ingredients are still there. With some directed effort, I feel very strongly that you can rekindle that romance of yours. And congratulations are in order because you've already taken that very important first step: You picked up this book.

Let me be clear: I'm not promising an easy fix; rekindling definitely takes some work. You're going to have to push romance higher up on your priority ladder. But I'm also not going to suggest that you push it all the way to the top. You have to be a realist; if you and your partner have been together for some time, it's natural for you not to feel the overwhelming rush of romantic emotion that you experienced when you first met. On the other hand, all relationships need some romance to survive, so it's vital that you find a happy medium.

In order to rekindle your romance, you and your partner must undergo a two-step process. First, you have to realize that you've let your romance slide, and then you have to go about purposefully putting it back into its rightful place. As you read through this book, focus in on the subjects that apply most directly to your life. Maybe

you want to underline or highlight suggestions you find particularly helpful or problems I define that seem to resonate with your relationship; that way, you can share your concerns or ideas with your partner by encouraging him or her to read those passages.

How This Book Is Organized

Rekindling Romance For Dummies can help you identify possible sources of stress in your relationship and offer you suggestions for ways to tackle those problems. Like all *For Dummies* books, this one is designed to let you pick and choose what you need to read; you don't need to read it cover-to-cover in order to glean lots of great advice. Use the table of contents, the index, or the headings in the chapters to hone in on the particular situations I describe that apply most directly to your circumstances.

Rekindling Romance For Dummies is divided into six parts. The chapters within each part cover specific topics in detail.