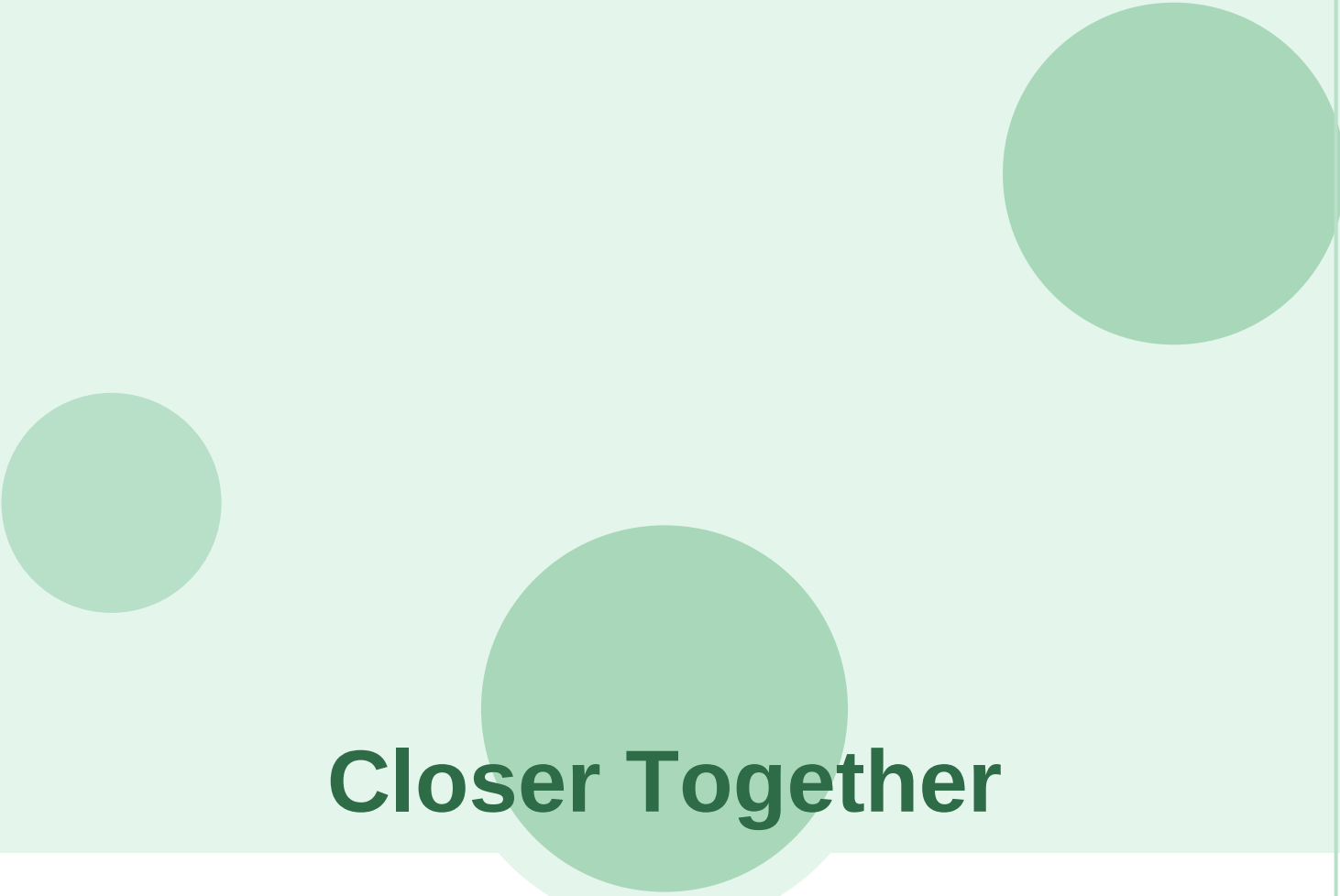




Closer Together

A Therapeutic Exercise Book for Couple Therapy

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Welcome

Every couple carries both wounds and wisdom. Couple therapy is not about fixing what is broken — it is about understanding the dance between two people and choosing new steps together. These 10 physical and 10 cognitive exercises are designed to deepen connection, repair ruptures, and help you and your partner build a relationship that feels truly safe and alive.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

- Work through the exercises in order, or choose what calls to you in this moment.
- There is no right or wrong way to engage — only your way.
- Complete exercises at your own pace. Revisit those that resonate deeply.
- Keep a dedicated journal alongside this book to capture insights.
- Share selected exercises with your therapist, partner, or trusted person.
- Be gentle with yourself. Healing is not linear — it is layered.

Book a Session with Dr. Arjumand Raza

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Physical Exercises

Body-Based Practices for Healing & Regulation

Take your time with each exercise. You deserve this space.

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1 Synchronised Breathing Exercise

Sit back-to-back with your partner. Close your eyes and feel each other's breath. Without speaking, try to match your breathing rhythm over 5 minutes. This builds co-regulation — the nervous-system foundation of intimacy.

2 The Hand-Hold Scan

Sit facing each other and hold hands. One partner closes their eyes while the other slowly traces the lines of their partner's hand with a fingertip. Switch after 3 minutes. Notice what this simple touch communicates beyond words.

3 The Walk of Intentions

Take a 20-minute walk in silence. Before you begin, each partner silently sets an intention: 'Today I walk with openness / curiosity / love.' Debrief afterward — what did the silence reveal?

4 Eye-Gazing Practice

Sit facing each other, 60 cm apart. Gently hold eye contact for 4 minutes without speaking. Allow whatever arises — laughter, tears, discomfort — without breaking the gaze. This activates deep limbic resonance between partners.

5 Tension-Release Partner Exercise

Sit back-to-back. One partner gently presses their back into the other while breathing out. The other provides steady resistance, then releases. Alternate for 5 minutes. This metaphor of support and release mirrors healthy relationship dynamics.

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6 The Shoulder Massage of Appreciation

Take turns giving a 5-minute shoulder and neck massage. While giving, silently appreciate three things about your partner. This combines physical touch with intentional gratitude — a powerful bonding practice.

7 Mirroring Movement

Stand facing each other. One leads slow, deliberate movements while the other mirrors exactly. Switch leader every 2 minutes. This builds attunement, empathy, and playful connection.

8 Grounding Together Walk

Walk side by side, matching your pace. Every few minutes, one partner names something they see, hear, or feel in the environment. The other validates it. This shared sensory awareness interrupts rumination and creates shared presence.

9 Progressive Relaxation Together

Lie side by side. One partner guides the other through a head-to-toe relaxation script, then switch. Hearing your partner's voice in a calming context creates new neural associations between their presence and safety.

10 The Dance of Repair

Choose a song that feels meaningful to your relationship. Dance together — no technique required. If you feel disconnected mid-dance, simply return to holding each other and swaying. The metaphor of returning after disconnection is the heart of repair.

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Cognitive Exercises

Mind-Based Practices for Insight & Transformation

Take your time with each exercise. You deserve this space.

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1 Our Relationship Story

Each partner independently writes the story of how you met and fell in love — every detail they remember. Share and compare. Differences reveal how each person experiences the relationship, and similarities remind you of your shared foundation.

2 The Four Horsemen Check

Research Gottman's Four Horsemen (criticism, contempt, defensiveness, stonewalling). Each partner honestly scores themselves 1–10 on each. Identify one horseman each will work on this month. Awareness is the first step to change.

3 Love Languages Mapping

Research the five love languages (words, acts, quality time, touch, gifts). Each partner ranks all five from most to least meaningful. Compare. Discuss one way you will 'speak' your partner's primary language this week.

4 The Unsent Letter

Each partner writes an honest letter to the other — expressing everything unspoken, without editing for kindness. Do NOT exchange these letters. Instead, each reads their own letter aloud to themselves and highlights the core unmet need. Share only that need with your partner.

5 Relationship Vision Board (Written)

Each partner writes a detailed description of their ideal relationship in 3 years: how you communicate, how you repair conflict, how you celebrate each other. Share and identify overlaps. Build a joint relationship vision from those overlaps.

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6 The Complaint vs. Criticism Reframe

List three recent complaints you have had about your partner. Rewrite each as a specific, non-blaming request: 'You never help with dinner' becomes 'I need help with dinner three times a week. Can we agree on which nights?' Practise delivery.

7 Bids for Connection Audit

For one week, keep a private log of every time your partner reached out for connection (a comment, a touch, a question). Note whether you 'turned toward' (responded), 'turned away' (ignored), or 'turned against' (dismissed). Review with curiosity, not judgment.

8 Shared Values Architecture

Together, list 20 values important to each of you. Negotiate and agree on your top 5 shared relationship values. Write them on a card and display it in your home. These become your relationship's decision-making compass.

9 The Forgiveness Letter

Each partner writes a forgiveness letter — not to be sent, but for personal processing. Write: what hurt you, how it affected you, what you needed instead, and your intention to begin releasing this wound. Forgiveness is for your peace, not permission.

10 Strengths-Based Partner Portrait

Each partner writes a detailed, honest 'portrait' of the other's strengths — as a person, a partner, a parent/friend. Include specific examples and memories. Read these aloud to each other. This rebuilds the positive perspective that erosion of conflict has worn away.

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You Have Done the Work.

Completing these exercises is an act of profound courage and self-respect. Healing is not a destination — it is a practice you return to every day. Be proud of the intention you have set by opening this book. Continue your journey with compassion for yourself and those around you.

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