



A COUPLET IDEA BOOK

Slow Burn

Anticipation, touch and the long way there. Ideas for couples
who want to want each other again.

83 IDEAS • 4 PARTS • 4 ESSAYS

Couplet

ABOUT THIS BOOK

Why slow

Most of us were taught one story about desire: it strikes, and then you act on it. That story is true for some people some of the time. For many people in long relationships it is barely true at all, and believing it makes them think something is broken.

In 2000 the Canadian sex researcher Rosemary Basson described a second, circular pathway. You start from neutral. Something pleasant happens: a touch, a look, a memory, an evening with nothing to do. Arousal builds, and desire follows it rather than leading. She called it responsive desire, and later work suggests it is the more common pattern in long-term couples, and for many women. Emily Nagoski's *Come As You Are* made the idea famous for a reason: once you know about it, waiting to feel like it stops being the plan.

This book is built for that pathway. Every idea in it is a way to give desire a runway: a slow morning, a sentence said out loud, a thread of messages through a working day, a hand that stays on skin for longer than usual. Nothing in these pages needs a bedroom, most of it happens with clothes on, and all of it was chosen because thousands of couples on *Couplet* said yes to it.

Read it in order or not. Mark your own row on every page in private, then compare. The comparing is where the book turns into an evening.

How this book works

01

Read it together, or alone

Open the book anywhere. Read an idea out loud, or leave it open on a page for the other to find. There is no order and no hurry.

02

Mark in private

Under every idea are two rows of three circles, one row each. Tap yes, maybe or no on your own row in your PDF reader, or print the page. No peeking, no explaining.

03

Compare

Two yeses is a match: plan it or do it tonight. A maybe is an invitation to talk. A no needs no reason, and gets none.

HOW TO MARK



Yes

I want this.



Maybe

Curious, but let's talk first.



No

Not for me. No reason needed.

Accelerators and brakes

In the late 1990s, John Bancroft and Erick Janssen at the Kinsey Institute proposed that sexual response runs on two systems rather than one. An accelerator notices everything that is sexually relevant and says go. A brake notices every reason not to and says stop. What you feel is the balance between the two.

This dual control model changed how clinicians think about low desire. Most people who say they have lost interest do not have a weak accelerator. They have a busy brake: tiredness, an unfinished argument, the sound of a child in the next room, a body they do not feel at home in, a day that never ended. Adding more stimulation to a system with the brake on does very little. Taking the foot off the brake does a lot.

The ideas in this part work on the brake. A slow morning with nothing scheduled removes the clock. Sleeping without clothes removes a layer of self-consciousness by habit rather than by decision. Saying a wish or a fantasy out loud removes the fear of being misread, because now it has been read correctly.

A useful exercise, from Nagoski's version of the model: each of you writes down three things that reliably put your brake on and three that ease it off. Not what should work. What actually does. Swap notes. Most couples find the lists are more different than they expected, and that half the brakes are things the other person can quietly remove.

01

Sunday Morning

Nowhere to be. Skin, sleep and a slow start.

FOR

Everyone. Long-term couples and new parents first.



Sleep together **naked**.

89% of women and 89% of men on Couplet said yes.

You

Your partner

☒	☒	☒
☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐



Watch a movie together in
just your **underwear.**



90% of women and 90% of men on Couplet said yes.

You

Your partner

☒	☒	☒
☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐



Hug each other tightly next
time one of you arrives
home.

91% of women and 87% of men on Couplet said yes.

You

Your partner

☒	☒	☒
☐	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐



THE END, FOR NOW

Thank you for reading it together.

Every idea in this book was said yes to by thousands of people on Couplet before it reached you. Some pages will have become plans. Others a good conversation. A few, a firm no from both of you, which counts too.

The app keeps going where the book stops: new ideas every week, voted on in private, shown only when you both say yes.

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