



## Communion: The Female Search for Love

By bell hooks

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**Communion: The Female Search for Love** By bell hooks

Renowned visionary and theorist bell hooks began her exploration of the meaning of love in American culture with the critically acclaimed *All About Love: New Visions*. She continued her national dialogue with the bestselling *Salvation: Black People and Love*. Now hooks culminates her triumphant trilogy of love with *Communion: The Female Search for Love*.

Intimate, revealing, provocative, *Communion* challenges every female to courageously claim the search for love as the heroic journey we must all choose to be truly free. In her trademark commanding and lucid language, hooks explores the ways ideas about women and love were changed by feminist movement, by women's full participation in the workforce, and by the culture of self-help.

*Communion* is the heart-to-heart talk every woman -- mother, daughter, friend, and lover -- needs to have.

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## Communion: The Female Search for Love By bell hooks Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #48832 in Books
- Published on: 2002-12-24
- Released on: 2002-12-24
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.00" h x .68" w x 5.31" l, .44 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 272 pages

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

While feminism may have changed boardrooms, it didn't make much headway in bedrooms, argues philosopher/writer hooks. Women have made progress in regard to social empowerment, but the quest for emotional density for love has remained elusive. Why are men still so emotionally unsatisfying? Because, hooks argues, "patriarchal thinking has socialized males to believe that their manhood is affirmed when they are emotionally withholding." Patriarchy valorizes power and assigns it to men, and devalues nurturing and labels it feminine. Thus, young postfeminist women find themselves with "nothing to show" from their newly won equality but a double shift of work: first the paid job, then the physical and emotional homework of their relationship with their man. Still, as feminists of hooks's generation reach midlife, they may find it easier to rethink these terms of engagement, to risk changing things. The first step, she says, is self-love accepting one's body and soul just the way it is. Without such acceptance, women cannot escape the domination-submission dynamic. Even then, in this patriarchal universe finding love with another person may require some creativity. Hooks explores romantic friendships, lesbian loves and "circles of love" (which allow for committed bonds that extend beyond one partnership). A life with no coupling, but "a more authentic relationship between self and world," may also be satisfying. Twenty-something women who've embraced the highly problematic "bitch persona" Elizabeth Wurtzel has written of may sneer at hooks's affirming style, but older women, particularly those raising girls themselves, will find much to ponder here. (Feb. 1) Forecast: This should satisfy those looking for an alternative Valentine's Day gift for the leftist/feminist woman in their life.

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From Library Journal

It's not true that you can love too much, social critic hooks warns women. Just let yourself go.

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From [Booklist](#)

Beginning with *All about Love* (2000), hooks, a courageous, incisive writer whose compassion is backed by vigorous intellectualism, embarked on a provocative, invaluable dissection of the myriad obstacles to love in a society shackled by racism, the subject of *Salvation: Black People and Love* [BKL F 15 01], and patriarchal assumptions, the focus of this blazing inquiry. Working from the premise that women of all backgrounds are still made to feel that their worth, or loveliness, is gauged not by inner qualities but by their appearance and how they serve others, especially men, hooks traces the dire effects of society's ongoing devaluation of women as she parses the dynamics of marriage, contrasts the experiences of different generations of women, analyzes women's collusion with patriarchal culture, and assesses feminism's achievements and failures. Digging deeply into the snarl of sexist habits of thought and being, hooks concludes that women can have true love and autonomy in their lives only if, starting with mothers and daughters, they genuinely support each other in confronting misogyny in all its insidious forms. *Donna Seaman*

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