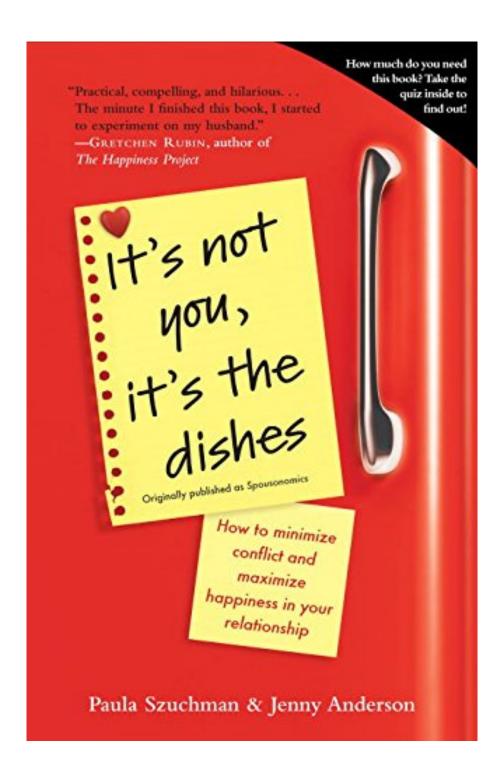


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Your marriage is fine, right? Sure, there are showdowns over who unloads more dishes, and some simmering discontent over who drives more car pools, cleans more dust bunnies, and keeps the social wheels of your existence greased. The sex is good, though you can't remember when you last had it. Come to think of it, you're plagued by a nagging sense that marriage used to be so much more fun. Marriage can be a mysterious, often irrational business. But the key, propose Paula Szuchman and Jenny Anderson in this incomparable and engaging book, is to think like an economist. We all have limited time, money, and energy, but we must allocate these resources efficiently. It's Not You, It's the Dishes is a clear-eyed, rational route to demystifying your disagreements and improving your relationship. Smart, funny, deeply researched, and refreshingly realistic, It's Not You, It's the Dishes cuts through the noise of emotions, egos, and tired relationship clichés to solve the age-old riddle of a happy, healthy marriage.

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55 of 57 people found the following review helpful.

Decent work, but with caveats

By Dave Schwartz

Spousonomics is another addition to the growing popular economics literature that makes concepts like division of labor, comparative advantage, and information asymmetry digestible for a lay audience. As such, its publication is a good thing: after all, the more people know about how societies handle scarcity, the better. This book's hook is that it attempts to apply economic theory to marital relations...and, as the authors repeatedly point out, that means ALL marital relations.

With ten chapters, each focused around a single idea from economics (to the three listed above, add also loss aversion, moral hazard, and several others), the authors show the reader how, by applying lessons learned from economists, they can have a better marriage-and, as they point out more than once, more sex. Each chapter has a similar format: the authors explain the concept using both textbook phraseology (although there's blessedly little of that) and examples from real life, then present several "case studies" that show how different couples actually confront the issue the chapter illuminates.

As an introduction to economic ideas it's not bad, and it might get you thinking about how you make decisions and relate to your spouse and children in a different way. Many of the couples profiled, however, were not easy to empathize with, to put it politely; some seemed downright annoying. Also, a lot of the spouses seemed...stereotypical, with the hubby obsessed by "the game" and loafing around, and the wife doing all the housework, or with one a workaholic and the other a free spirit. In the course of researching the book, the authors talked to more than two thousand people, so this might just be what they found. Maybe most people (or most people in their sample) really are that predictable.

But the general concepts the authors highlight are all valid, and it wouldn't hurt to give their approach a try. Like all advice books, though, this one has its limits. It's easy to tell people to be dispassionate when assessing their relationships; probably a lot harder to have that Vulcan reserve when you've just been vomited on, have heard nothing but crying for two hours, and your spouse is out doing pilates/pickup basketball/reviewing books/whatever.

Overall it's an interesting book that has several great concepts; whether its a truly useful one is likely up to

the reader....and his/her spouse.

22 of 24 people found the following review helpful.

Two excellent books in one

By Man in the Middle

I very much looked forward to reading "Spousonomics", as I have degrees and interest in both economics and counseling, plus have been married over 40 years.

As expected, the book achieves two good purposes: serving as an introduction to economics while also providing sound relationship advice.

Unexpectedly (considering economics is nicknamed "the dismal science"), the book is also quite funny and often sexy.

I was surprised how much I learned, and at the relevance of the advice. It's also an easy and pleasant read.

The chapter titles illustrate the pleasures in store for readers:

Division of Labor - or, why you should do the dishes

(I particularly appreciated the explanation of comparative advantage - why it's best to share household chores, even when one spouse is better at all of them.)

Loss Aversion - or, the upside of going to bed angry

(Their 24 hour rule to see if we still feel the same tomorrow is useful in the same way as Dave Ramsey's 30 day delay rule for desired purchases, to see if we still want the same thing.)

Supply and Demand - or, how to have more sex (It was here I finally noticed both authors are women.)

And so on for seven more delightful chapters on Moral Hazard, Incentives, Trade-offs, Asymmetric Information, Inter-temporal Choice. Bubbles, and Game Theory.

If you have any interest in either economics or improved relationships, you really can't go wrong with this excellent book.

Highly recommended.

20 of 25 people found the following review helpful.

Interesting and educational

By L.A.L.

As a fan of Freakonomics and Super Freakonomics, I was very excited when I saw this book. As it turned out, this book is very much in that same vein. Using a great deal of humor and a lot of diverse examples, the authors show us how you can apply the simple rules of economics to your most significant relationship and (hopefully) improve.

The examples are fun and sometimes a little silly, but they really get your attention. After well over a decade of marriage, there are many of these situations I have personally experienced, even if they were only for a short time. We have found our own ways around some of these issues and it is interesting to me that some of them mirror what is found in the book.

I enjoy getting my facts in fun ways and having a book I can read in bits and pieces. I could pick it up and put it down at will, but I found myself coming back quickly for more and more info. If you like that sort of

book, then this may be something you would also enjoy.

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