

Synopsis

Mathematics and sex may make odd bedfellows, but this fun, flirty look at the relationship between the two subjects shows that they are closely related. Revealing the ways in which math can help unlock the secrets of love, lust, and life's search for the ideal partner, this intriguing text covers topics such as dating services, dating as game theory, the mathematical logic of affairs, and the numbers behind orgasms. Math's answers to love's burning questions How much should one compromise in a relationship? Exactly what is it that is attractive in a lover? How many partners should one have before settling down? and What makes the infamous biological clock tick? are also revealed.

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Customer Reviews

I bought this book because of an earlier review that complained about no explanation of the formulae. I was hoping that what that really meant is that it was filled with good math and was in depth. Unfortunately, it isn't. There are some of the chapters that I found very interesting, such as the chapter on attraction cycles. There are other chapters that were really just fluff. Some quick references to some research, and some silly insinuations about the author's bar hopping

experiences or lack thereof. I liked that the book took a number of concepts and translated them to references to mathematics papers. I disliked that there was not enough math. Formulas are presented without defining any of the terms. So you might be told that an attraction cycle is represented by $f(x) = R(x) + a \cdot B(x)$. But there is no definition of the R function, how the a constant is derived, or the B function. Nor is there a discussion, usually, of the research that went on to define the function and alternatives examined. The book would benefit very much from going into a full definition of the functions, even if it were in an appendix. Instead, you get a little bit of a tease but not enough information to understand. Likewise, there are cases where the mathematical focus would benefit from a discussion of computer science or engineering techniques. For example, the author describes the complexity of how a dating service might perform similarity matches. She readily admits that she doesn't know what they actually do, so conjectures, makes some references to multidimensional analysis, and more or less leaves it at that.

Here is some math for customers considering this book. There are 7 reviews preceding mine. 5 are right. 2 are wrong. The reviews that are right have noticed that the book contains no math. The reviews that are wrong have noticed that the book is vaguely about sex. Actually it's not. It's about the difficulty some academics have in starting a sentence and completing it on the same topic. The trouble with invoking applied mathematics is that you have to support what you're saying. Therefore when offering an equation or formula you traditionally state what the variables stand for. I assume that the author has this information but finds it difficult to restate in common English. Almost every topic is concluded in this drift: "Well it would be much too time consuming to explain what this formula means but isn't it nice to know that it exists?" No. I mean it would be, but we don't know that the formula does exist (hapless readers that we are). To convince us, you have to explain it.

Explain: which means state clearly and describe how it works. Here's an example, misanthropically quoted by MSN this morning. If you are looking for a mate for life the correct formula is to go out with 12 people and then choose the next best one after that, which seems to mean better than number 11 but not necessarily as good as number 12. Yes, just ducky, but why is that true?: Sorry, explanation time is over. Exam will be at the sports bar on Saturday night. Don't blow it. Now look: does this "formula" stand up on its own two feet or is it also drunk and falling off its barstool? Does it still count if all 12 of them dumped YOU? Suppose they were all alcoholics, or verbally abusive?

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