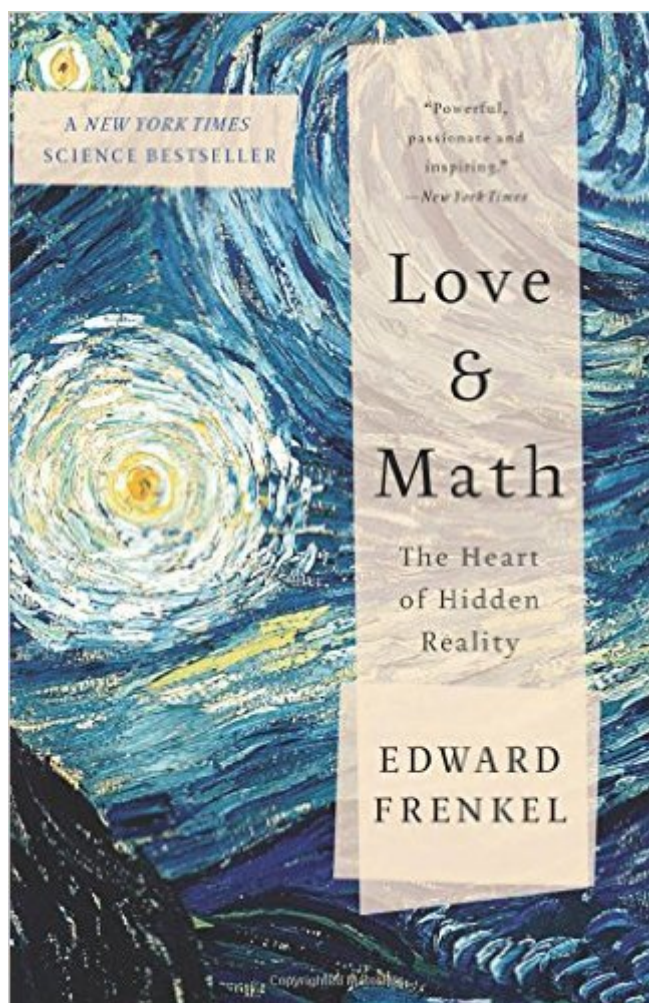


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Love And Math: The Heart Of Hidden Reality



Synopsis

A New York Times Science Bestseller What if you had to take an art class in which you were only taught how to paint a fence? What if you were never shown the paintings of van Gogh and Picasso, weren't even told they existed? Alas, this is how math is taught, and so for most of us it becomes the intellectual equivalent of watching paint dry. In *Love and Math*, renowned mathematician Edward Frenkel reveals a side of math we've never seen, suffused with all the beauty and elegance of a work of art. In this heartfelt and passionate book, Frenkel shows that mathematics, far from occupying a specialist niche, goes to the heart of all matter, uniting us across cultures, time, and space. *Love and Math* tells two intertwined stories: of the wonders of mathematics and of one young man's journey learning and living it. Having braved a discriminatory educational system to become one of the twenty-first century's leading mathematicians, Frenkel now works on one of the biggest ideas to come out of math in the last 50 years: the Langlands Program. Considered by many to be a Grand Unified Theory of mathematics, the Langlands Program enables researchers to translate findings from one field to another so that they can solve problems, such as Fermat's last theorem, that had seemed intractable before. At its core, *Love and Math* is a story about accessing a new way of thinking, which can enrich our lives and empower us to better understand the world and our place in it. It is an invitation to discover the magic hidden universe of mathematics.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

First of all, let's be honest and not mislead the general reader - this book covers a lot of highly advanced math. The author, Edward Frenkel, likely does as well as anyone could to outline the math in a way that a non-specialist audience can usefully grasp if they put in considerable effort and re-reading, but even then the reader needs to be comfortable with math at least at the undergrad level (calculus, differential equations, linear algebra, etc.). Don't expect to really 'understand' what Frenkel is talking about unless you have considerably greater math background, say grad school level and prior familiarity with the particular areas of math Frenkel covers. Being an engineer, I fall into the former category and came to this book already loving math, and I found the math in this book to often be quite tough going (especially in the second half of the book), though I did get a rough sense of what he was talking about (and I followed the advice to keep going in the tougher parts rather than getting bogged down). True, I could re-read the whole book to get a better understanding, but realistically it would make more sense to bone up on the prerequisite math using other books and then return to this book in a few years (yes, that long). Because I feel that the accessibility of this book for the general reader has been overstated by the book's endorsers and overestimated by the author, I'm deducting a star. That said, I did enjoy this book greatly and am glad that I read it.

Edward Frenkel is one of the great mathematicians in the world, and in this book he voices an ancient complaint: "Intelligent people would never say, 'I don't care about art, or music. But it is totally okay to say, 'I hate math.'" The usual antidote is to show people that math can be fun and useful as in *The Math Book: From Pythagoras to the 57th Dimension*, or even exciting and sexy as in *Numb3rs*. Another species of popular math books and movies (such as *Perfect Rigor*, *Pi*, *A Beautiful Mind* and *Good Will Hunting*) imply (in Frenkel's words), "a mathematician is on the verge of a mental illness." *Love and Math* takes a novel approach. The author loves math with a deep intensity that has animated an extraordinary life story, and he has the rare ability to explain why.

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