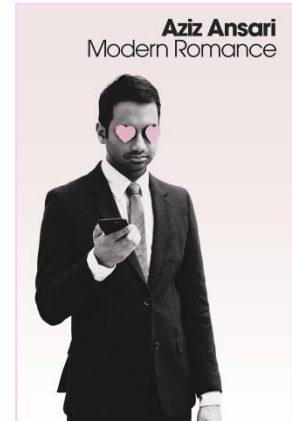


“Reader with a Cause” Discussion Questions for *Modern Romance* by Aziz Ansari

These discussion questions were prepared by the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) for [Reader with a Cause](#), an online book club (“Group”) on Goodreads.

If you like our questions please feel free to use them – and don’t forget to join the conversation online at: https://www.goodreads.com/topic/group_folder/323858



1. Overall Thoughts on *Modern Romance*?

What did you think of the book? Was it what you expected from Aziz Ansari on this topic?

It is described as a “*hilarious, thoughtful exploration of the rewards and perils of modern romance from one of this generation’s sharpest comedic voices*” (book flap). In your opinion, does it live up to this hype?

2. Audiobook vs. Regular Book

Do we have any audiobook aficionados out there? Aziz Ansari performs the audiobook version - if you listened, do you think his performance enhanced the content in any way?

3. Similarities to *Master of None* (Aziz Ansari’s popular Netflix show)

Many of the themes from *Modern Romance* play out on-screen in *Master of None*, Aziz Ansari’s wildly popular Netflix show. If you’ve seen the show, did these portrayals change the way you thought about the book’s content?

Are there any themes that didn’t make it into Season 1 that you’re hoping to see in Season 2 (coming out sometime in 2017)?

4. Traditional Love and Modern Love

In Chapter 1: Searching for Your Soul Mate, Aziz Ansari discusses how looking for love now is “*wildly different from what people did even just decades ago*” (13). In years past, individuals often married a partner from within the same neighborhood, on the same street, and even the same building! This is not usually the case today.

What are some of the differences between what is seen as nostalgic “old school” romance vs. *Modern Romance*? Do you think one way is better than the other? Why or why not?

5. Women, Dating, & Independence

In Chapter 1: Searching for Your Soul Mate, Aziz Ansari describes a focus group of older women in which *every single woman* nodded in agreement to the suggestion that they got married to get out of their family homes.

What do you think are some of the dangers of acquiring the basic freedoms of adulthood in this manner?

How do you think increased access to the labor market and the right to divorce have changed the dating experience for women?

6. The Impact of Technology on Dating & Romance [Initial Ask]

Aziz Ansari goes in-depth about the ways that technology has changed – for better or for worse – and the ways that we seek out romantic partners. From social media to texting to online dating, technology has become inextricably linked with romance for many in this day and age.

In Chapter 2: The Initial Ask, Ansari describes the conflicts that this can bring up - what if you use the wrong mode of communication and forever ruin your chances with a potential mate??

SO...are you a call first or text first person? Why?

7. The Dark Side of Technology on Dating & Romance

Aziz Ansari describes the onslaught of online “attention” that women disproportionately receive when engaging in online dating. He agrees that many men are “*straight up bozos*” (42) and encourages men to be more

thoughtful and respectful. Ansari mentions female celebrities' nude photos being leaked in Chapter 6, and even points out the victim-blaming rhetoric around these incidents. While the prevalence of revenge porn and online harassment toward women is staggering, Ansari doesn't go as far as condemning this invasion of privacy as harmful.

What do you wish Ansari had included on the topic of technology-facilitated harm that women experience online when it comes to dating or otherwise?

8. International Investigations of Love

Two of our favorite sections were: (1) Chapter 5: International Investigations of Love, where Aziz Ansari covered *Modern Romance* in Tokyo and Buenos Aires; and (2) Chapter 3: Online Dating, where Ansari covered the relative freedom that online dating afforded some communities in Qatar.

What did you think about the differences between American and Japanese, Argentinian, and Qatari cultures when it comes to modern romance? What was the same? What surprised you?

9. Dealing with Jealousy, Infidelity, and Sexual Intimacy in a New Format

In *Modern Romance*, Aziz Ansari argues that, due to reliance on technology as a primary form of communication, every interaction with someone creates a digital paper trail. In many of the in-person focus groups and sub-reddits for this book, many people discussed how they were secretly viewing their partner's emails and social media.

"The same technology that affords us the luxury and privacy to share these intimate moments is also, sadly, what allows us to betray our partner's trust on a massive scale." (183)

How do you think the increased ease of access to "snooping" on a partner affects relationships? Given its prevalence, how can we combat this broad acceptance of a risky practice? What are the dangers of this invasion of privacy?

10. In Conclusion... [Aziz Ansari's Findings from *Modern Romance*]

In the Conclusion to *Modern Romance*, Aziz Ansari collects his main findings from all of his research:

1. *"Finding someone today is probably more complicated and stressful than it was for previous generations - but you're also more likely to end up with someone you are really excited about."* (236)
2. *"Technology hasn't just changed how we find romance; it's also put a new spin on the timeless challenges we face once we're in a relationship."* (239)
3. *"Treat potential partners like actual people, not bubbles on a screen."* (240)
4. *"Don't think of online dating as dating - think of it as an online introduction service."* (245)
5. *"With so many romantic options, instead of trying to explore them all, make sure you properly invest in people and give them a fair chance before moving on to the next one."* (246)

Do you agree with his conclusions? Why or why not?

What was your "favorite" conclusion? Why?