

the seven principles for making marriage work by john gottman

the seven principles for making marriage work by john gottman is a transformative guide that distills decades of research into actionable strategies for building and sustaining a healthy, long-lasting marriage. John Gottman, a renowned relationship expert, developed these principles based on extensive scientific studies of couples, identifying key behaviors and attitudes that promote marital success. This article explores each of the seven principles in detail, highlighting their practical applications and the underlying psychological insights. Understanding and implementing these principles can help couples improve communication, deepen emotional connection, and resolve conflicts effectively. Whether newlyweds or long-term partners, couples can benefit from Gottman's evidence-based approach to making marriage work. The article also includes an overview of Gottman's research methodology and the impact of his work on modern relationship counseling.

- Understanding John Gottman's Research on Marriage
- Principle 1: Build Love Maps
- Principle 2: Share Fondness and Admiration
- Principle 3: Turn Towards Each Other Instead of Away
- Principle 4: Let Your Partner Influence You
- Principle 5: Solve Solvable Problems
- Principle 6: Overcome Gridlock
- Principle 7: Create Shared Meaning

Understanding John Gottman's Research on Marriage

John Gottman's work is grounded in over four decades of empirical research observing couples in various stages of their relationships. His unique methodology involves analyzing verbal and nonverbal communication patterns, physiological responses, and emotional interactions during conflict and everyday conversations. Gottman identified specific behaviors that predict marital stability or dissolution with remarkable accuracy. His research

distinguishes between “masters” of relationships, who thrive, and “disasters,” who struggle or divorce. The seven principles for making marriage work by John Gottman emerged from these findings, offering couples a roadmap to nurture intimacy, trust, and respect. These principles are not just theoretical concepts but practical tools applicable to real-life marital challenges.

Principle 1: Build Love Maps

Building love maps involves developing a detailed understanding of your partner’s inner world, including their dreams, fears, preferences, and experiences. According to Gottman, couples with detailed love maps possess a strong foundation for emotional connection and resilience. This principle emphasizes the importance of ongoing curiosity about each other’s lives beyond surface-level knowledge.

How to Build Love Maps

Couples can enhance their love maps by regularly asking open-ended questions and actively listening to each other. Examples include discussing childhood memories, current stresses, or future aspirations. Maintaining up-to-date love maps allows partners to anticipate and respond to each other’s needs effectively.

Benefits of Love Maps

Strong love maps contribute to increased empathy and reduce misunderstandings. They help partners navigate difficult times by fostering a sense of closeness and shared understanding. This principle lays the groundwork for all subsequent principles by establishing emotional intimacy.

Principle 2: Share Fondness and Admiration

This principle focuses on expressing appreciation and respect for one’s partner regularly. Gottman found that couples who maintain a culture of fondness and admiration are significantly less likely to divorce. Positive regard acts as an emotional buffer against conflicts and enhances overall relationship satisfaction.

Practicing Fondness and Admiration

Simple gestures such as verbal compliments, gratitude, and acknowledging positive qualities help build a reservoir of goodwill. It is essential to be sincere and specific to make these expressions meaningful. This practice

encourages partners to focus on strengths rather than faults.

Impact on Relationship Dynamics

Sharing fondness and admiration fosters a positive emotional climate. It counteracts negativity and deepens mutual respect, which is critical during stressful situations. This principle reinforces emotional safety and trust between spouses.

Principle 3: Turn Towards Each Other Instead of Away

Turning towards each other means responding to small bids for attention, affection, or support in daily interactions. Gottman's research shows that couples who consistently turn toward these bids strengthen their emotional connection and avoid drifting apart.

Recognizing and Responding to Bids

Bids can take many forms, such as a smile, a question, or a request for help. Responding positively to these bids, even if seemingly minor, builds intimacy and trust. Ignoring or turning away from bids can lead to disconnection and resentment.

Examples of Turning Towards

- Engaging in conversations initiated by your partner
- Offering physical affection when your partner seeks it
- Showing interest in your partner's daily activities

Consistent responsiveness reinforces the emotional bond and helps couples navigate challenges together.

Principle 4: Let Your Partner Influence You

Successful marriages involve mutual influence, where both partners respect and consider each other's opinions in decision-making. Gottman observed that couples who allow themselves to be influenced by one another experience greater harmony and cooperation.

Importance of Mutual Influence

This principle counters traditional gender roles that may discourage one partner, often men, from yielding influence. Embracing mutual influence promotes equality and shared responsibility within the relationship.

How to Foster Influence

Couples can practice this principle by:

- Listening openly to each other's perspectives
- Compromising on decisions affecting the couple or family
- Valuing the partner's input, even when opinions differ

Allowing influence reduces power struggles and increases relational satisfaction.

Principle 5: Solve Solvable Problems

Gottman distinguishes between solvable problems and perpetual issues within a marriage. This principle emphasizes the importance of addressing conflicts that have clear solutions through effective communication and problem-solving skills.

Strategies for Solving Problems

Effective problem-solving involves:

- Calmly discussing the issue without blame
- Identifying the root cause of the problem
- Generating and agreeing on practical solutions
- Compromising when necessary

Handling Conflict Constructively

Couples who master this principle avoid escalation and foster cooperation. They recognize when to engage and when to pause discussions to prevent emotional flooding. Resolution of solvable problems reduces tension and

builds confidence in the relationship.

Principle 6: Overcome Gridlock

Gridlock refers to chronic conflicts that appear unsolvable and cause frustration and emotional distance. Gottman's principle for overcoming gridlock involves understanding the underlying dreams and values that fuel these perpetual disagreements.

Identifying Underlying Issues

Often, gridlocked conflicts are tied to fundamental personal aspirations or fears. Partners must engage in deep, empathetic conversations to uncover these hidden meanings. Recognizing each other's core concerns creates opportunities for compromise or acceptance.

Approaches to Resolving Gridlock

Strategies include:

- Validating the partner's feelings and perspectives
- Exploring alternative ways to honor both partners' dreams
- Agreeing to disagree respectfully when necessary

Addressing gridlock nurtures emotional intimacy and prevents stagnation in the relationship.

Principle 7: Create Shared Meaning

The final principle centers on building a shared sense of purpose, values, and rituals that give the relationship depth and cohesion. Couples who create shared meaning develop a unique culture that strengthens their bond beyond daily routines.

Elements of Shared Meaning

Shared meaning includes:

- Joint goals and dreams for the future
- Family traditions and rituals

- Mutual roles and symbols that define the relationship

Benefits of Shared Meaning

Couples with a strong shared meaning experience greater fulfillment and resilience. This principle transforms the marriage into a source of identity and purpose, enriching both partners' lives.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the seven principles for making marriage work by John Gottman?

John Gottman's seven principles for making marriage work are: 1) Enhance your love maps, 2) Nurture your fondness and admiration, 3) Turn toward each other instead of away, 4) Let your partner influence you, 5) Solve your solvable problems, 6) Overcome gridlock, 7) Create shared meaning.

How does John Gottman define 'love maps' in his seven principles?

'Love maps' refer to the part of your brain where you store all the relevant information about your partner's life, such as their likes, dislikes, dreams, and worries. Enhancing love maps means deeply knowing your partner to strengthen your relationship.

Why is nurturing fondness and admiration important in Gottman's principles?

Nurturing fondness and admiration helps maintain a positive view of your partner, which is crucial for a lasting relationship. It builds emotional connection and counters negativity that can erode marriage over time.

What does 'turning toward each other instead of away' mean in the context of these principles?

This principle emphasizes responding to your partner's bids for attention, affection, and support instead of ignoring or rejecting them, thereby fostering emotional connection and intimacy.

How can couples 'let their partner influence them'

according to Gottman?

Letting your partner influence you means being open to their opinions, feelings, and needs, especially for men, as Gottman highlights that mutual influence leads to greater relationship satisfaction.

What strategies does Gottman suggest for solving solvable problems?

Gottman recommends using soft start-ups, making and receiving repair attempts, compromising, and accepting influence to effectively resolve solvable conflicts without damaging the relationship.

How do couples overcome gridlock as per the seven principles?

Overcoming gridlock involves understanding the underlying dreams and values behind persistent conflicts and working towards mutual respect and dialogue to find common ground or accept differences.

What is the significance of creating shared meaning in a marriage?

Creating shared meaning involves building a sense of purpose, rituals, goals, and stories together, which strengthens the couple's bond and fosters a deeper connection beyond daily routines.

Can John Gottman's seven principles improve marriages at any stage?

Yes, the principles are designed to help couples at any stage of their relationship, from newlyweds to long-term partners, by enhancing communication, understanding, and emotional connection.

Are John Gottman's seven principles supported by scientific research?

Yes, John Gottman's principles are based on decades of scientific research on couples' interactions, including observations and longitudinal studies, making them evidence-based methods for improving marriage.

Additional Resources

1. *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work* by John Gottman

This foundational book introduces Gottman's research-backed principles for building a strong and lasting marriage. It offers practical exercises and

insights aimed at improving communication, managing conflict, and deepening intimacy. The book is based on decades of scientific study, making it a trusted resource for couples seeking to strengthen their relationship.

2. *Why Marriages Succeed or Fail: And How You Can Make Yours Last* by John Gottman

In this book, Gottman explores the dynamics that can either destroy or sustain a marriage. He breaks down common destructive patterns and provides strategies for couples to avoid them. The book emphasizes emotional attunement and effective conflict resolution as keys to marital success.

3. *Hold Me Tight: Seven Conversations for a Lifetime of Love* by Dr. Sue Johnson

Focusing on Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT), this book helps couples create deeper emotional bonds through seven healing conversations. It complements Gottman's work by emphasizing attachment and emotional responsiveness. Readers learn how to foster trust, vulnerability, and connection.

4. *The Relationship Cure: A 5 Step Guide to Strengthening Your Marriage, Family, and Friendships* by John Gottman and Joan DeClaire

This guide provides practical tools to improve communication and emotional connection in all types of relationships. Gottman's five-step method helps couples recognize and respond to emotional bids effectively. It's a useful supplement for couples wanting to enhance everyday interactions.

5. *Getting the Love You Want: A Guide for Couples* by Harville Hendrix

Hendrix offers a therapeutic approach called Imago Relationship Therapy, focusing on understanding unconscious factors in romantic relationships. The book helps couples uncover and heal past wounds that affect their marriage. It provides meaningful exercises to foster empathy and mutual growth.

6. *The Five Love Languages: The Secret to Love that Lasts* by Gary Chapman

This popular book identifies five distinct ways people express and receive love. Understanding your partner's love language can improve communication and emotional connection. Chapman's framework aligns well with Gottman's emphasis on nurturing positive interactions.

7. *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High* by Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan, and Al Switzler

This book equips couples with communication skills to navigate difficult conversations calmly and effectively. It focuses on maintaining safety and respect, which are essential for resolving conflicts in a marriage. The techniques complement the conflict management strategies found in Gottman's work.

8. *Love Sense: The Revolutionary New Science of Romantic Relationships* by Dr. Sue Johnson

Love Sense delves into the science of attachment and bonding in adult relationships. Johnson explains how secure emotional connections are the foundation of lasting love. The book offers a fresh perspective on why relationships succeed and how to repair them when they falter.

9. *The New Rules of Marriage: What You Need to Know to Make Love Work* by Terrence Real

Real presents a contemporary approach to marriage that addresses power dynamics and emotional honesty. His strategies encourage couples to move beyond traditional roles and create partnerships based on mutual respect and authenticity. This book is a valuable resource for couples seeking deeper connection and balance.

[The Seven Principles For Making Marriage Work By John Gottman](#)

The Seven Principles For Making Marriage Work By John Gottman

Related Articles

- [the private history of a campaign that failed](#)
- [the of thoth aleister crowley](#)
- [the one and only ivan questions and answers](#)

[Back to Home](#)