

gottman 7 principles for making marriage work

The Gottman 7 Principles for Making Marriage Work is a renowned framework developed by Dr. John Gottman, a leading researcher in the field of relationships and marriage. Drawing from decades of extensive research with couples, Gottman has identified key principles that can foster a strong, lasting relationship. Understanding and applying these principles can help partners navigate challenges, enhance communication, and deepen their emotional connection. This article will explore the seven principles outlined by Gottman, providing insights into how couples can implement them in their lives.

1. Enhance Your Love Maps

The first principle, enhancing your love maps, emphasizes the importance of knowing your partner's inner world. A love map is a mental representation of your partner's life, including their history, dreams, and aspirations. Couples with detailed love maps tend to have a stronger emotional connection.

How to Enhance Your Love Maps

- Ask Open-Ended Questions: Engage your partner in conversations that delve into their feelings, thoughts, and experiences. Examples include:
 - What are your biggest dreams?
 - How do you feel about your job?
- Share Experiences: Spend quality time together doing activities that allow you to learn more about each other.
- Check-In Regularly: Periodically discuss each other's lives to keep updated on changes and developments.

2. Nurture Your Fondness and Admiration

This principle highlights the importance of cultivating admiration and respect for each other. A strong foundation of appreciation can help couples weather the storms of conflict and adversity.

Ways to Nurture Fondness and Admiration

- Express Appreciation: Regularly acknowledge and thank your partner for their contributions, both big and small.

- Celebrate Successes: Rejoice in each other's accomplishments, fostering a supportive environment.
- Focus on the Positive: Make a conscious effort to highlight the positive aspects of your partner, especially during conflicts.

3. Turn Toward Each Other Instead of Away

Turning toward your partner means responding positively to their bids for attention, affection, and support. This principle emphasizes the importance of emotional responsiveness in a relationship.

How to Turn Toward Each Other

- Be Attentive: Notice when your partner seeks connection and respond with interest.
- Engage in Small Talk: Simple conversations about daily events can strengthen your emotional bond.
- Respond with Interest: Show genuine curiosity about your partner's day, feelings, and experiences.

4. Let Your Partner Influence You

This principle speaks to the importance of respecting and valuing your partner's opinions and feelings. Couples who share power and decision-making tend to experience greater satisfaction.

Ways to Let Your Partner Influence You

- Practice Compromise: Be willing to find middle ground on issues that matter to both partners.
- Listen Actively: Show that you value your partner's perspective by listening without interrupting.
- Share Decision-Making: Involve your partner in decisions, whether large or small, to foster a sense of teamwork.

5. Solve Your Solvable Problems

Not all conflicts can be resolved, but many can be managed. This principle encourages couples to identify solvable problems and adopt strategies to address them effectively.

Steps to Solve Solvable Problems

- Identify the Issue: Clearly define what the problem is and what is at stake for both partners.
- Use "I" Statements: Communicate feelings and needs without blaming, e.g., "I feel overwhelmed when the chores pile up."
- Create a Plan: Work together to develop a practical solution that satisfies both partners.

6. Overcome Gridlock

Gridlock occurs when couples face perpetual problems that seem unsolvable. This principle encourages partners to understand the underlying dreams and values associated with these issues.

How to Overcome Gridlock

- Identify the Dream: Explore the dreams and values that lie beneath the conflict. For example, a disagreement about finances may stem from differing values around security and freedom.
- Communicate Openly: Discuss these underlying dreams with empathy and understanding.
- Find Common Ground: Work together to create solutions that honor both partners' dreams.

7. Create Shared Meaning

The final principle emphasizes the importance of building a shared sense of purpose and meaning in a relationship. Couples who create shared rituals, goals, and values tend to have a more fulfilling partnership.

Ways to Create Shared Meaning

- Establish Rituals of Connection: Develop daily or weekly traditions that strengthen your bond, such as date nights or family game nights.
- Set Goals Together: Collaborate on both short-term and long-term goals, whether related to family, career, or personal growth.
- Discuss Values: Regularly discuss your values and beliefs to ensure alignment and mutual understanding.

Conclusion

The Gottman 7 Principles for Making Marriage Work offer a comprehensive and practical framework for couples looking to strengthen their relationships. By enhancing love maps, nurturing fondness and admiration, turning toward each other, letting partners influence decisions, solving solvable problems, overcoming gridlock, and creating shared meaning, couples can build a resilient and enduring partnership.

Implementing these principles requires commitment, patience, and effort, but the rewards are profound—deeper intimacy, enhanced communication, and a stronger, more fulfilling marriage. Whether you are newlyweds or have been together for decades, these principles can guide you in navigating the complexities of partnership and fostering a lasting connection.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the Gottman 7 Principles for Making Marriage Work?

The Gottman 7 Principles 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, and 7) Create shared meaning.

How can couples enhance their love maps according to Gottman?

Couples can enhance their love maps by getting to know each other's inner world, including their dreams, hopes, and life experiences. This involves asking open-ended questions and actively listening to each other's responses.

What does it mean to nurture fondness and admiration in a marriage?

Nurturing fondness and admiration means building a culture of appreciation and respect in the relationship. Couples should regularly express gratitude and acknowledge each other's positive qualities to strengthen their bond.

What is the significance of turning toward each other instead of away?

Turning toward each other involves responding to bids for attention, affection, and support. This principle emphasizes the importance of being emotionally available and engaged, which fosters connection and intimacy.

How can couples effectively solve their solvable problems?

Couples can solve solvable problems by using soft start-ups, focusing on one issue at a time, avoiding blame, and actively listening to each other's perspectives while seeking compromise.

What strategies can help couples overcome gridlock in their relationship?

To overcome gridlock, couples should identify the dreams behind their conflicts, engage in open dialogue about these dreams, and work together to find common ground or create compromises that honor both partners' desires.

What does creating shared meaning entail in a marriage?

Creating shared meaning involves establishing a sense of purpose and shared goals within the relationship. This can include traditions, rituals, and shared values that foster a deeper emotional connection and a sense of partnership.

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