



LIVING WITH SIGNIFICANT OTHERS- LESSONS LEARNED

September 10, 2022

Tom Oldham

John Gottman-Relationship Therapist

<https://www.gottman.com>

He has found that, to have a satisfying intimate relationship, the positive interactions have to far outweigh the negative ones.

Take a moment to reflect on where do you think your relationship would be on that continuum?

Examples of Positive Behaviors

- Willing to engage in deep listening.
- Respectful communications even when angry
- Sharing with your partner about what is really going on, as well as hopes dreams and personal history.
- Willingness to negotiate individual differences
- Uses the Five Love Languages
 - Words of Affirmation
 - Quality Time
 - Acts of service
 - Physical Touch
 - Gifts
- [WHAT IS YOUR LOVE LANGUAGE? Talk at Saturday Morning Men's Café Oct 2017 audio](#)

Examples of Negative Behaviors

- Disparaging comments and criticisms.
- Non-verbal cynicism, such as eye rolling.
- Showing a lack of respect such as dominating the other in social settings.
- Excessive controlling behavior around every day situations.
- Lack of empathy.
- Interrupting and not fully listening.

Relationship Poll

How often do you express your love and appreciation to your partner?

How often does your partner express love and appreciation to you?

Stop Screen Share
and do poll

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR PARTNER?

This relationship quiz is all about how well you know your partner.

After doing extensive research for over four decades with thousands of couples, Gott found that one of the most important components of a successful relationship is the quality of friendship between partners. And that requires knowing your partner's likes, dislikes, needs, desires, beliefs, fears, and life dreams.

So, how well do you really know your partner?

[Take our free quiz below to find out.](#)

BREAK OUT

- Discuss insights from taking the first poll and the Gottman Quiz.
- What are the way you can improve your relationship with your partner through expressions of appreciation?
- Would you be willing to try for a week expressing more appreciation for your partner and see how that impacts your relationship?

Navigating Differences in A Relationship

Navigating Differences in A Relationship

- Religious/spiritual differences
- Money. Spending habits, tolerance for risk
- What money should be spent on [things, travel, charities. experiences)
- Power dynamics, earnings, gender roles
- Environmental clutter/neatness, home décor.
- Value differences including spiritual, societal, political and personal.
- Having children and approaches to raising children
- How much to interact with adult children or parents/extended family
- Frequency and kind of sex
- The amount of time spent alone
- Who will be responsible for various chores
- How decisions should be made-[which should be jointly made, what if there is an impasse?
- Food and cooking [healthy/unhealthy/vegan, etc.]
- When to retire and what to do then
- How many activities should be done together as a couple/ alone
- Sleep patterns

BREAKOUT

- Pick one difference that currently impacting your relationship?
- Group Discusses approaches to resolve it.
- New strategies to resolve ongoing differences.
- Share times where you successfully navigated a difference.
- Share times when you find it hard to talk about/resolve a difference.

Discussion Question

Are you coming away from this with the intention of doing anything differently and what is that?

RESOURCES

Gottman's Couples Weekly Check-In

[CLICK HERE](#)

Relationship Vision

A mutually drafted written document which highlights aspirations for your relationship and your life together.

It provides the context for everything.

Relationship Vision

- We are committed to growing/developing our relationship.
- We are physically and verbally affectionate with each other.
- We challenge each other to think through our denials, self-deceptions, projections and to grow personally, professionally, and spiritually
- We have intimate conversations by listening to each other, including using dialog.
- We have an enjoyable sexual relationship.
- We respect each others' need for time alone.
- We are best friends.
- We experience new things regularly.
- We honor the importance of each other's families.

Relationship Vision

- We experience new things regularly.
- We honor the importance of each other's families.
- We surround ourselves with beautiful things.
- We affirm our differences.
- We support each other in our work.
- We take vacations which are both relaxing and adventurous.
- We support each other in maintaining our health.
- We entertain as a couple and foster new friendships as a couple and as individuals.
- We laugh and play a lot and have fun together.
- We encourage each other to move out of our respective comfort zones.
- We are financially secure

FIVE LOVE LANGUAGES

[WHAT IS YOUR LOVE LANGUAGE? Talk at Saturday Morning Men's Café Oct 2017](#)

- 1. Words of affirmation** This language uses words to affirm other people. For those who prefer the words of affirmation language, hearing "I love you" and other compliments are what they value the most. Words hold real value within this language. Furthermore, negative or insulting comments cut deep — and won't be easily forgiven.
- 2. Quality time** This language is all about giving the other person your undivided attention. Unlike the words of affirmation language, talk is cheap and being a loved one's focus leaves quality timers feeling satisfied and comforted. Distractions, postponed dates, or the failure to listen can be especially hurtful to these individuals. Being there for them is crucial.
- 3. Receiving gifts** What makes the other person feel most loved is to receive a tangible gift. This doesn't necessarily mean the person is materialistic, but a thoughtful present makes them feel appreciated.

4. Acts of service For these people, actions speak louder than words. People who speak the language of service want their partner to recognize that their life is rough and help them out in any way possible. Lending a helping hand shows you really care. People who thrive on this language do not deal well with broken promises — or perceived laziness — and have very little tolerance for people who make more work for them. Basically, if you're not willing to show your appreciation by doing them a favor, you're saying you don't value them.

5. Physical touch To this person, nothing speaks more deeply than appropriate touch. That doesn't mean only in the bedroom — everyday physical connections, like handholding, kissing, or any type of reaffirming physical contact is greatly appreciated. A person who speaks the language of physical touch isn't necessarily an over-the-top public displays of affection, but getting a little touchy-feely does make them feel safe and loved. Any instance of physical abuse is a total deal breaker.