

WHY COUPLE-RELATIONSHIPS FLOURISH OR FAIL

After years of research, Drs John M, and Julie Gottman are able to predict whether a couple will stay happily together after listening for as little as three hours to a conflict conversation and observing interactions in their Love Lab. Their accuracy rate averages 91 percent.

However the biggest predictors of divorce are whether or not couples:

3. TURN TOWARD EACH OTHER

In marriage people periodically make "bids" for their partner's attention, affection, humor, or support. People either turn toward one another after these bids or they turn away. Turning toward is the basis of emotional connection, romance, passion, and a good sex life.

4. LET YOUR PARTNER INFLUENCE YOU

The happiest, most stable marriages are those in which the husband treats his wife with respect and does not resist power sharing and decision making with her. When the couple disagrees, these husbands actively search for common ground rather than insisting on getting their way. It's just as important for wives to treat their husbands with honour and respect. But our data indicate that the vast majority of wives—even in unstable marriages—already do that. Too often men do not return the favour.

But you can't do these two important things if you are in the poorer version of yourself. You can only do these things when you are open to each other.

If you aren't open to each other, then it means that something has been triggered within you. Don't settle for anything less than being able to turn towards each other and to let your partner influence you and you to influence them.

You may need to use your negotiation skills and you may also need to use CPR if you can't snap out of your withdrawn or angry state.

Use a circuit-breaker with yourself first and reflect on your negative self-talk and see it as a clue to an emotional need or issue that you need to raise with your partner.

Put the better version of you in place and solve the angry or withdrawn moment with your partner. Reach out to them and explain what's been going on for you. Then return to the better version of yourselves where you will be respectful and responsive to each other's 'bids' for connection and allow each other's influence

Think about setting a standard of behaviour for your couple-relationship, where disrespect isn't acceptable – it's not a crime either – but it's much less than you deserve from each other and an acknowledgement that you are both capable of so much more, knowing that y maintaining this standard you are enjoying a high-quality of relationship.