

In as much as all of us want to live in perfect relationships, some of us are in a totally stress-free set-up with no stress, conflict or issues. As a matter of fact, if you're married or if you are in a relationship, probabilities are it can get better.

Enter relationships expert John M. Gottman. For several years, he's been working with and researching couples and has made a list of the basic issues that all marriages experience— and their answers. These book chapters describe each one of his seven important principles and talk about manners in which you can evade becoming another sad statistic.

Principle One: Couples that are functioning have a richly comprehensive love map.

If you are married, you'll probably be wise to a lot of special, private or sensitive details about them. However, are you aware that this detail is really stored in our minds in a love map?

The more advanced your love map, the stronger your love will be.

In numerous recorded cases of divorce, partners weren't really that conversant with one other; they didn't commit adequate space in their brain for the marriage. Without a love map, you can't completely understand your partner, and without actually understanding your partner, how can you love them truly?

Consider the case of Rory, a pediatrician who managed an intensive care unit for babies. He usually slept at the hospital overnight since he's a workaholic. He got along really well at his work; however, it was another story at home. He didn't know the name of his family dog or where the back door of his house was. As a matter of fact, he had become really involved in work that his emotional bond to his wife as well as his children had worsened. His love map left so much to be desired.

It's significant to know your love map since it has your own and your partner's goals and life viewpoints. However, that can change. Giving birth can extremely change a woman's life goal or direction, and hence alter her love map.

Consider Maggie and Ken, who had been together just a small while before they decided to marry and begin a family. They knew of each others' beliefs, hopes, and fears; Ken knew that Maggie was committed to her career as a computer scientist. But, when Maggie delivered their daughter, she set her career apart just to remain at home and take care of the baby. Ken realized that Maggie had changed.

This is not rare; becoming a parent transforms your values and identity. Maggie's love map had altered to suit her new priorities, and Ken had to readjust his own love map for that reason.

Principle Two: A couple is salvageable if it has a fondness and admiration system.

If your marriage is falling apart, how can you tell if it's salvageable? The crucial thing is to assess your feelings when both of you remember the things you've shared together in the past.

To determine if a couple still possesses what is called fondness and admiration system – where both of the partners share a sense of respect and appreciation toward each other—question them how they view their past.

If there are still some positive feelings left in the marriage, partners will talk emphatically about how they first saw each other, their first date, and so forth. But, if a marriage is struggling a lot, remembering beautiful instants with your partner will feel as if you are attempting to obtain blood from a stone.

The manner you view your shared past is important: 96% of couples who view their marriage history in a positive way are likely to relish a happy future.

Do you recall Rory the pediatrician in the former chapter? In one counseling session, he remembered the past early days with his wife with respect, admiration, and love. This assisted

him to recognize how much he wished to feel those feelings over again. To solve the habit he'd fallen into, he fixed his work schedule, taught a person to help him at the hospital, and now, he goes home for dinner each night.

Also, Rory's fondness and admiration for his wife were solutions to falling apart. If you do not have any fondness or admiration system and don't think that your spouse warrants your honor and respect, this makes having a successful marriage not possible.

Therefore, how can you measure your fondness and admiration system? One method is to answer true or false to these words:

When we're not together, I think of my spouse positively.

I can mention three things I like about my partner very easily.

My partner is glad to see me when I enter the room.

If the answers to these are true, your fondness and admiration system is very strong!

Principle Three: During short and apparently small chitchats, couples turn toward each other.

This is an interesting reality about marriage –regardless of how dull they look; the significant instants in a marriage are the day-to-day discussions you have with your family.

In marriage, partners often make “bids” for their spouse's attention, assistance, humor, and affection.

During your workday, when you take a short pause to give some attention to your spouse and his or her concerns, you turn toward one another, which means you reinforce your marriage and sustain romance.

For instance, one morning, when your wife confides in you that she had a terrible nightmare and you respond with, “I need to go the office; however, talk to me about it now and we can talk

about it tonight,” rather than brushing her off with “I don’t have time now,” you enhance your marriage with romance. Romance sustains when you indicate that your partner is appreciated during the monotony of day-to-day life.

This is the meaning of turning toward your spouse. In order to do this appropriately, you need to be familiar with how significant these banal moments in daily discussions are.

A lot of couples can basically enhance stability and romance by understanding that they have to evade taking their daily communications for granted; it’s very likely that you’re the emotional needs of your partners are ignored out of mindlessness instead of spite.

If your partner is really thoughtful to call you on one morning to ask about how your meeting went, you have to be aware not to take this for granted, even if it turns into a day-to-day routine. Keep these thoughtful moments in mind and practice some appreciation for the focus your spouse gives you.

You can turn toward your partner at any time; therefore, when next you’re talking with them, concentrate on relishing it instead of considering it as mindless chitchat.

Principle Four: Partners need to allow each other to influence their choices by taking into account each others’ views and feelings.

In society, all of us value fairness and equality, and marriage is the same too. These abilities extremely influence the conflicts and conversations you have with your partner.

For example, if husbands don’t show respect and honor to their wives, other gender conflicts can be aggravated.

Although wives can get exacerbated by their husbands, they rarely react by increasing negativity. On the other hand, husbands have the tendency to react in a manner that increases their wives’ negativity.

Say a husband shouts “You’re not paying attention!” the wife usually responds with “Sorry, I’m listening now,” so as to avoid a fight. However, if a wife begins with “You’re not listening to me!” the husband will probably either disregard her, becomes defensive (“Yes, I am!”), gets critical (“I don’t listen since you never make sense.”) or shows contempt (“This is just an absolute waste of my time.”). These whole reactions intensify a trivial conflict and show that the husband couldn’t be concerned about the wife’s thought.

It’s important to bear in mind that the majority of the long-term, stable marriages are the marriages where the husband treats his wife with respect. A 130-couple study that was conducted by the author revealed that in the long term marriages where the husbands let their wives influence them are happier and very less likely to result in divorce than the marriages where husbands don’t allow their wives influence them.

Certainly, there’s an 81% probability his marriage will crumble when a man doesn’t allow to share any power with his spouse.

For instance, Jack wished to purchase a used Honda, from Phil. However, Jack assured his wife that he wouldn’t proceed until a mechanic had examined it. Phil laughed at Jack for allowing his wife to give him advice about cars. However, Jack fulfilled his promise, and that is a good thing he did: the mechanic really discovered a defect with the transmission. All thanks to wife’s influence, Jack didn’t waste his case on Phil’s Honda nevertheless.

Principle Five: There are two types of marital conflicts which are solvable and perpetual issues.

It is not a new thing that conflicts occur in all marriages. However, even if they occur regularly, you can still clear them up very easily and save yourself some stress.

Solvable issues in a marriage are small issues that can lead to extreme tension and pain.

Only because the issue is solvable doesn’t entail it really become resolved. The reason is that couples usually haven’t learned how to handle them. At times, the only thing it needs is for each partner to start a conversation more calmly and observe one other as it goes on, keeping

conscious for alarm bells like emotional flooding –meaning when we get overwhelmed by feelings.

To observe yourself, take note of signs, facial expressions, and vocal tone– don't yell at your wife when you notice that she's already in tears!

Consider the examples of Rachel, who believes that her husband Jason drives really fast. He says speeding is important since she takes forever to get prepared for work. Rachel claims that it takes her really long since he takes forever in the shower each morning. If they only took a wider view here, they'd realize that this conflict is solvable: waking up a just ten minutes earlier every day could solve it.

Different from solvable issues, which can be short-lived, most marital issues are perpetual, this means they continuing happening all the time again.

69% of couples have a conflict that they have been fighting on for several years. Although there usually is no actual solution, they have to keep identifying the issue and discussing it so they could to deal with it. Bear in mind, perpetual problems don't essentially mean a terrible marriage!

Some perpetual issues can mean more serious problems; however, there are ways around them. For instance, Tony desires to have his children raised Catholic; still, his Jewish wife Jessica wishes for their children to practice her faith. How do they deal with this perpetual conflict? About this issue, they have a sense of humor and don't allow their religious preferences to ruin their love for each other.

Principle Six: When you feel gridlocked due to an issue that can't be solved, you need to learn to deal with it.

Now you understand what types of conflicts can get into their way into your marriage; however, what do you do if you believe that they're not solvable and you feel stuck?

In these situations, you have to leave the gridlock zone, which means the feeling of being caged by the same issues that arise all the time. The goal of this is not to eliminate the issue; however, to change it into a discussion.

Even though the problem looks unsolvable, you have to continue working at it and attempt to target what is really fueling the conflict.

If you put the blame on him for doing something that is not right or her for being demanding, you have to accept that you are adding to the conflict as well.

For example, Laura believed that Mike was a slob and she had ceaseless housework to do since he never did his part, leaving rooms in total disorder. Ultimately, she chose to bring up the matter with Mike and it turned out that he never really knew Laura cleaned up after him – he would have assisted or done it by himself if he had known about it. By having a discussion, Laura released herself from gridlock instantly.

Going through gridlock is an indication that you have hopes for your marriage that your partner isn't respecting. These hopes can be anything such as attaining a specific pay at work or having a spiritual revival. Your spouse needs to learn how to deal with your desires and respect that those desires are a part of you.

For instance, Sunday evenings, John and Amy, fight about where to eat. While John wishes for Amy to cook and eat at home, just like how his mother did while he was a kid, Amy likes to go to a restaurant to feel special. In this situation, the conflict is representative of what makes them feel loved. To resolve their conflict, they have to respect each other wishes and take turns.

Principle Seven: You don't need to approve of what is significant about your lives collectively.

"Birds of the same feather flock together." Hmmm, not really! You can get happiness in a long-lasting marriage even if you and your spouse don't view life in the same manner; however, you still have to share things with each other.

There is a spiritual aspect to marriage, and for that aspect to grow you have to form a sense of shared meaning. It's very hard to live harmoniously together without being conversant with one another values.

At times, young couples want to have a comfortable relationship; however, most times time they run the risk of not understanding so much about each other's values and ambitions.

Consider the case of Kevin and Helen, who wished for marriage with their own independent professions, interests and social circle. However, a problem emerged when Helen realized that she didn't feel connected to Kevin. In their relationship, there was no actual family feeling; therefore, they sat down together and shared their history, childhood and family values with each other. Only then were they able to connect in a manner they hadn't before and find some common interest.

You don't need to be two peas in a pod for you to have a stable marriage; however, the more shared meaning you can find, the deeper and more satisfying your relationship will be.

Your marriage will deepen more when you and your spouse decide on the part you play in the relationship.

We all have a certain knowledge of who we want to become and which part we want to play in a marriage. For you to make this work in the long term, it needs communication and agreement. For example, Ian and Hilary had the notion that the husband has to be the protector and provider, whereas the wife should do the nurturer part. On the other hand, Chloe and Evan wanted an egalitarian marriage, where they could support one another both emotionally and financially.

Anyone each couple wants to be, the most significant thing is that the couples decide on their parts, and relish happy and long-lasting marriages, as the couples mentioned above did.

There are numerous indications that show divorce is possible.

Have you ever had an uncomfortable suspicion that the marriage of your friend was doomed? Could you identify the reason you had this feeling? There are a lot of elements that can show that a marriage is going in the direction of crumbling.

Four of the biggest signs, which the author tags as “the four horsemen of the apocalypse,” are criticism, contempt, defensiveness and stonewalling.

Let’s begin with criticism, frequently the first one of the four horsemen to show in a marriage. In all relationships, there will be complaints about faults, chores that are not done or forgotten anniversaries. However, a warning indication of a shaky marriage is when these complaints change to criticism. On the other hand, a complaint concentrates on a certain failure, for instance, “You didn’t remember to take out the bin again!”, criticism emphasizes a mistake in your partner’s personality, like “The bin was left again – you’re really lazy!”

In a marriage, mild criticism is normal; however, if it is left unchecked, it can bring about the next, more risky, horseman: contempt.

Contempt is threatening or mocking actions intended to demoralize your spouse and make them feel as though they are small and useless. Contempt is toxic since it causes more conflict. Nevertheless, if your partner tells you all the time that you’re useless, in return, you’ll feel forced to become belligerent and hostile.

This is the point when defensiveness, the third horseman, normally comes to the stage.

Encountered with a scornful partner, you react by becoming defensive and arguing that your attitude isn’t as bad as they believe it is. For instance, if your partner sneers at the way you spend, your reaction will most likely be something like “I don’t spend a lot! I know so many people that spend much more than I do.”

Definitely, being defensive won’t ease any issues, it will just cause more contempt and defensiveness.

Now, we move to the horseman, stonewalling. When a person has gone through enough contempt and criticism from his partner, he’ll detach from the discussion. Instead of becoming defensive, he’ll reach to an attack with an “Uh-uh,” or “Sure,” or by evading direct interaction.

Observing the approach of each horseman is an indication that a marriage is at risk. Therefore, watch for them.

Normal marital issues that can be fixed are in-laws or a newborn baby.

There are a lot of naysayers when we talk about the idea of a lasting marriage. However, let's look at the two most common conflicts that marriages experience, which are thankfully resolvable.

The first conflict is true for a lot of people: the relationship you have with in-laws can cause great damage to your relationship since both parties look to fight for the love of the exact same person.

At times, parents-in-law find it hard to share their child with another person. This is particularly difficult when they believe they understand what is best for a newborn baby, how and where you should live, and so forth.

In order to handle this, the son or daughter has to emphasize to his or her parents that they now have their own family, and it's their new priority.

Think of David. When the parents of David came for a visit and Janie his wife made a reservation at her best Italian restaurant. She was happy about it since her parents-in-law were Italian. But, David's mother came with his best food, saying she didn't remember the reservation. To deal with this, David placed the food in the fridge and they went to the restaurant as planned. This revealed to David's mom that now, Janie was his priority and that his mother has to get used to it.

Also, huge challenges come with a newborn baby. Whether or not a marriage survives this relies on if the husband goes through the change to parenthood with his wife or not.

Getting a baby changes the new mother. Her love grows deeper and selfless and her life takes on a new purpose. However, usually, the connection between her and her partner can fall to the

wayside. For instance, when Lucy became a mother she was also made a supervisor. John, her husband wanted to be a good father; however, he couldn't seem to do anything correctly; Lucy condemned all the things he did. This signified that he did less and less and started to feel left out.

In order to prevent this, mothers have to remember that the baby is the father's child as well and that it will gain from numerous parenting methods.

The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work: A Practical Guide from the Country's Foremost Relationship Expert by John M. Gottman, Nan Silver Book Review

It is possible to have a long-lasting marriage! The only thing it needs is to become aware of how you think about and respond to your partner and your actions toward them not only in daily life, however, also in conflicts. By abiding by some direct healthy practices, you can relish a pleasant relationship with your partner.

Test your love map with these true/false words.

I can mention my partner's best friends.

I know my partner's present biggest concerns.

I know about my partner's viewpoint on life.

I can name my partner's best music.

Respect your stress reaction.

A body that is stressed hugely impairs your skill to fix an issue; therefore take a few minutes break till your body has clearly calmed down before trying to solve a conflict with your spouse.

<https://goodbooksummary.com/the-seven-principles-for-making-marriage-work-by-john-gottman-book-summary/>