



# The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work

By John Gottman

# Book summary & main ideas

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## Summary:

The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work by John Gottman is a book that provides couples with practical advice on how to strengthen their relationships. The book is based on Gottman's research on couples and his decades of experience as a marriage therapist. Gottman's research has identified seven key principles that are essential for a successful marriage. These principles are: enhance your love maps, nurture your fondness and admiration, turn towards each other instead of away, let your partner influence you, solve your solvable problems, overcome gridlock, and create shared meaning.

The first principle, enhance your love

maps, is about getting to know your partner deeply. This includes understanding their likes, dislikes, hopes, dreams, and fears. Gottman encourages couples to ask each other questions and to make an effort to stay up to date on each other's lives.

The second principle, nurture your fondness and admiration, is about expressing appreciation and admiration for your partner. Gottman encourages couples to express their positive feelings for each other and to make an effort to recognize and appreciate the good things their partner does.

The third principle, turn towards each other instead of away, is about responding to your partner's bids for connection. Gottman encourages couples to make an effort to be responsive to each other's needs and to make an effort to connect

with each other.

The fourth principle, let your partner influence you, is about being open to your partner's influence. Gottman encourages couples to be open to each other's opinions and to be willing to compromise and negotiate.

The fifth principle, solve your solvable problems, is about addressing the issues that arise in a relationship. Gottman encourages couples to identify the issues that are causing conflict and to work together to find solutions.

The sixth principle, overcome gridlock, is about resolving conflicts that seem unresolvable. Gottman encourages couples to be willing to compromise and to be open to different perspectives.

The seventh principle, create shared

meaning, is about creating a shared vision for the future. Gottman encourages couples to talk about their hopes and dreams for the future and to work together to create a shared vision for their relationship.

The *Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work* by John Gottman is a book that provides couples with practical advice on how to strengthen their relationships. The book is based on Gottman's research on couples and his decades of experience as a marriage therapist. Gottman's research has identified seven key principles that are essential for a successful marriage. These principles are: enhance your love maps, nurture your fondness and admiration, turn towards each other instead of away, let your partner influence you, solve your solvable problems, overcome gridlock, and create shared meaning. By following these principles, couples can strengthen their

relationships and create a lasting and fulfilling marriage.

Main ideas:

***#1. Enhance your love maps: Know your partner's inner world, including their hopes, dreams, and fears. This will help you to better understand and empathize with them.***

Enhancing your love maps is an important part of creating a strong and lasting relationship. Love maps are the mental maps we have of our partner's inner world, including their hopes, dreams, and fears. Knowing these things can help us to better understand and empathize with our partner. It can also help us to better anticipate their needs and respond to them in a way that is supportive and loving.

To enhance your love maps, take the time to ask your partner questions about their

hopes, dreams, and fears. Listen to their answers and take note of the things that are important to them. Make sure to ask follow-up questions to get a better understanding of their inner world. Show your partner that you are interested in what they have to say and that you care about their feelings.

It is also important to pay attention to your partner's nonverbal cues. Notice their body language and facial expressions. These can tell you a lot about how they are feeling and what they are thinking. Pay attention to the things that make them happy and the things that make them sad. This will help you to better understand their inner world and to be more supportive and loving.

Enhancing your love maps is an important part of creating a strong and lasting relationship. Taking the time to get to know

your partner's inner world will help you to better understand and empathize with them. It will also help you to better anticipate their needs and respond to them in a way that is supportive and loving.

***#2. Nurture fondness and admiration: Make sure to express your appreciation for your partner and recognize the positive qualities they bring to the relationship.***

Nurturing fondness and admiration in a relationship is essential for a healthy and happy marriage. Expressing appreciation for your partner and recognizing the positive qualities they bring to the relationship is a great way to show your love and admiration. This can be done through verbal compliments, small gifts, or simply taking the time to listen and understand your partners feelings. Showing your partner that you appreciate



them and recognize their positive qualities can help to strengthen your bond and create a deeper connection.

It is also important to be mindful of how you communicate with your partner. Avoiding criticism and contempt is key to maintaining a healthy relationship. Instead, focus on expressing your feelings in a respectful and understanding way. This will help to foster a sense of mutual respect and admiration between you and your partner.

By nurturing fondness and admiration in your relationship, you can create a strong and lasting bond with your partner. Showing your appreciation and recognizing the positive qualities your partner brings to the relationship can help to create a deeper connection and a more fulfilling marriage.

***#3. Turn towards each other: Make an effort to be emotionally available and responsive to your partner's bids for connection.***

Turning towards each other is an important part of creating a strong and healthy relationship. It means making an effort to be emotionally available and responsive to your partner's bids for connection. This could be something as simple as responding to a text message or a more meaningful gesture such as taking the time to listen to your partner's worries and concerns. It is important to remember that even small gestures can make a big difference in how your partner feels. When you turn towards each other, it shows that you care and are willing to invest in the relationship. It also helps to build trust and intimacy, which are essential for a successful marriage.

Turning towards each other also means being willing to compromise and work together to find solutions to problems. This could involve having difficult conversations about topics such as finances or parenting. It is important to remember that these conversations should be done in a respectful and non-judgmental way. It is also important to be open to hearing your partner's point of view and to be willing to make changes if necessary. By turning towards each other, you can create a strong foundation for your marriage and ensure that it will last for many years to come.

***#4. Accept influence: Be open to your partner's influence and be willing to compromise.***

Accepting influence from your partner is an important part of a successful marriage. It means being open to their ideas and

opinions, and being willing to compromise when necessary. It also means being willing to listen to your partner and take their feelings into consideration when making decisions. This can be difficult, especially if you have different opinions or values, but it is essential for a healthy relationship. When both partners are willing to accept influence from each other, it creates a sense of mutual respect and understanding that can help strengthen the bond between them. It also helps to create a sense of equality in the relationship, which is essential for a successful marriage.

Accepting influence from your partner also means being willing to make sacrifices for the sake of the relationship. This could mean giving up something that you want in order to make your partner happy, or compromising on an issue that you feel strongly about. It is important to remember

that compromise is not a sign of weakness, but rather a sign of strength and maturity. When both partners are willing to accept influence from each other, it can help to create a stronger bond between them and can help to ensure that the marriage is successful.

***#5. Solve your solvable problems: Identify and address the issues that are causing conflict in your relationship.***

The idea of solving solvable problems in a relationship is an important one. In his book, *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work*, John Gottman outlines a process for identifying and addressing issues that are causing conflict in a relationship. He suggests that couples should first identify the issues that are causing conflict and then work together to come up with solutions. This process involves both partners being open and

honest about their feelings and needs, and being willing to compromise and work together to find a solution. Gottman also emphasizes the importance of communication and understanding in order to resolve conflicts. He suggests that couples should take the time to listen to each other and try to understand each others perspectives. This can help to create a more positive and productive environment for resolving conflicts. Additionally, Gottman suggests that couples should focus on the positive aspects of their relationship and work to build on those strengths. This can help to create a more positive and supportive environment for resolving conflicts.

Overall, the idea of solving solvable problems in a relationship is an important one. By taking the time to identify and address the issues that are causing conflict, couples can work together to

come up with solutions that are beneficial for both partners. Additionally, by focusing on the positive aspects of the relationship and working to build on those strengths, couples can create a more positive and supportive environment for resolving conflicts. By following these steps, couples can work together to create a healthier and more fulfilling relationship.

***#6. Overcome gridlock: Learn how to effectively communicate and negotiate when you and your partner have different opinions.***

Gridlock is a common problem in relationships, and it can be difficult to overcome. The key to overcoming gridlock is learning how to effectively communicate and negotiate when you and your partner have different opinions. In his book *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work*, John Gottman suggests that

couples should focus on understanding each other's point of view, rather than trying to win an argument. He suggests that couples should take the time to listen to each other's feelings and needs, and then work together to find a solution that meets both of their needs. This can be done by brainstorming ideas, compromising, and negotiating. It is important to remember that both partners should be willing to give and take in order to reach a mutually beneficial solution. By learning how to effectively communicate and negotiate, couples can overcome gridlock and create a stronger, more fulfilling relationship.

***#7. Create shared meaning: Develop a shared vision for your relationship and work together to make it a reality.***

Creating shared meaning in a relationship is essential for a successful marriage. It



involves developing a shared vision for the relationship and working together to make it a reality. This shared vision should be based on mutual respect, understanding, and appreciation for each other. It should also include a commitment to communication, compromise, and problem-solving.

When creating a shared vision, it is important to consider both partners' needs and wants. Each partner should be open to hearing the other's ideas and be willing to make compromises. It is also important to be honest and open about expectations and goals. This will help ensure that both partners are on the same page and that the shared vision is realistic and achievable.

Once the shared vision is established, it is important to take action to make it a reality. This may involve setting goals,

making plans, and taking steps to achieve those goals. It is also important to be flexible and willing to adjust the vision as needed. This will help ensure that the relationship continues to grow and evolve over time.

Creating shared meaning in a relationship is essential for a successful marriage. It requires both partners to be open and honest with each other, to be willing to compromise, and to take action to make the shared vision a reality. With effort and dedication, couples can create a shared vision that will help them build a strong and lasting relationship.

***#8. Trust: Build trust in your relationship by being honest and reliable.***

Trust is an essential part of any successful relationship. When trust is broken, it can

be difficult to repair. To build trust in your relationship, it is important to be honest and reliable. Honesty means being open and truthful with your partner, even when it is difficult. It also means being willing to admit when you are wrong and apologize. Reliability means following through on your promises and commitments. It also means being consistent in your words and actions. When you are honest and reliable, your partner will be more likely to trust you and your relationship will be stronger.

Trust is not something that can be built overnight. It takes time and effort to build trust in a relationship. It is important to be patient and understanding with your partner as you work to build trust. Show your partner that you are trustworthy by being honest and reliable. Be willing to listen to their concerns and take their feelings into consideration. Show them that you are committed to the relationship

and that you are willing to work together to build a strong foundation of trust.

### ***#9. Manage conflict: Learn how to effectively manage conflict and disagreements.***

Conflict is an inevitable part of any relationship, and learning how to effectively manage it is essential for a healthy marriage. In *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work*, John Gottman outlines a number of strategies for managing conflict in a constructive way. He suggests that couples should learn to express their feelings in a respectful way, listen to each other without judgment, and work together to find solutions that are mutually beneficial. He also recommends that couples take time to cool off before discussing a disagreement, and that they focus on the issue at hand rather than attacking each others character. By

following these principles, couples can learn to manage conflict in a way that strengthens their relationship rather than tearing it apart.

Gottman also emphasizes the importance of understanding each others needs and perspectives. He suggests that couples should take the time to really listen to each other and try to understand where the other person is coming from. This can help couples to resolve conflicts more quickly and effectively, as they can come to a mutual understanding of the issue and work together to find a solution. By taking the time to really listen to each other, couples can learn to manage conflict in a way that is respectful and productive.

**#10.     *Make life dreams come true:  
Support each other in achieving your  
individual goals and dreams.***

Making life dreams come true is an important part of any successful marriage. When couples support each other in achieving their individual goals and dreams, they create a strong foundation for a lasting relationship. It is important to recognize that each partner has their own unique dreams and aspirations, and that it is important to support each other in achieving them. This could mean providing emotional support, offering practical help, or simply being there to listen and provide encouragement. When couples work together to make each others dreams come true, they create a strong bond that will last a lifetime.

It is also important to remember that it is not always possible to make all of your dreams come true. Life can be unpredictable and sometimes dreams have to be adjusted or put on hold. In these cases, it is important to be

understanding and supportive of each other. It is also important to remember that it is okay to have different dreams and goals, and that it is important to respect each others individual aspirations. By supporting each other in achieving their individual goals and dreams, couples can create a strong foundation for a lasting relationship.

***#11. Keep conflict discussions calm: Make sure to stay calm and respectful when discussing difficult topics.***

When discussing difficult topics with your partner, it is important to remain calm and respectful. Conflict discussions can quickly become heated and unproductive if either party becomes angry or disrespectful. It is important to remember that your partner is not the enemy, and that you both have the same goal of finding a resolution to the issue.

When discussing a difficult topic, it is important to take a step back and assess the situation objectively. Try to identify the underlying issue and focus on finding a solution that works for both of you. Avoid making assumptions or jumping to conclusions, and instead focus on understanding each other's point of view.

It is also important to be mindful of your body language and tone of voice. Make sure to maintain eye contact and use a calm, respectful tone. This will help to ensure that the conversation remains productive and that both parties feel heard and respected.

By keeping conflict discussions calm and respectful, you can ensure that the conversation remains productive and that both parties feel heard and respected. This will help to ensure that the issue is



resolved in a way that works for both of you.

**#12. *Make repair attempts: Make an effort to repair the relationship after a conflict.***

Making repair attempts is an important part of resolving conflicts in a marriage. Repair attempts are attempts to de-escalate a conflict and restore a sense of connection and goodwill between partners. Repair attempts can be verbal or nonverbal, and can include humor, compliments, apologies, or simply expressing understanding and empathy. Repair attempts can help to reduce the intensity of a conflict and create a more positive atmosphere for resolving the issue.

When making repair attempts, it is important to be genuine and sincere. Repair attempts should not be used as a

way to avoid taking responsibility for one's actions or to manipulate the other person. Instead, they should be used to show understanding and to express a desire to move forward in a positive direction. Repair attempts can help to create a sense of safety and trust in the relationship, which can make it easier to resolve conflicts in the future.

Making repair attempts is an important part of maintaining a healthy marriage. It can help to reduce the intensity of conflicts and create a more positive atmosphere for resolving issues. Repair attempts should be genuine and sincere, and should be used to show understanding and to express a desire to move forward in a positive direction.

***#13. Forgive: Learn how to forgive your partner and move on from past hurts.***

Forgiveness is an essential part of any healthy relationship. When we forgive our partner, we are able to move on from past hurts and create a stronger bond. In his book, *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work*, John Gottman explains that forgiveness is a process that requires both partners to be willing to work together. He suggests that couples should take the time to talk about the hurtful incident, express their feelings, and then work together to come up with a plan to move forward. This plan should include both partners taking responsibility for their part in the incident and making a commitment to not repeat the same mistake. Additionally, Gottman recommends that couples practice empathy and understanding, and that they should be willing to forgive and forget. By doing this, couples can create a stronger bond and a healthier relationship.

Forgiveness is not always easy, but it is essential for a healthy relationship. It is important to remember that forgiveness does not mean that the hurtful incident is forgotten or that it is okay for it to happen again. Instead, it is a way to move on from the hurt and create a stronger bond. By taking the time to talk about the incident, express feelings, and come up with a plan to move forward, couples can learn to forgive and create a healthier relationship.

***#14. Identify your own contribution to the conflict: Take responsibility for your own actions and be willing to make changes.***

When it comes to resolving conflicts in a marriage, it is important to identify your own contribution to the conflict. This means taking responsibility for your own actions and being willing to make changes. It is important to recognize that both

partners have a role to play in the conflict and that both need to be willing to make changes in order to resolve the issue.

Taking responsibility for your own actions and being willing to make changes can help to create a more positive and productive environment for resolving the conflict.

When taking responsibility for your own actions, it is important to be honest with yourself and your partner about what you have done wrong. This can be difficult, but it is essential for resolving the conflict. It is also important to be willing to listen to your partner and to understand their perspective. This can help to create a more open and understanding environment for resolving the conflict.

Finally, it is important to be willing to make changes in order to resolve the conflict. This could mean changing your behavior,

your attitude, or your approach to the issue. It is important to be willing to compromise and to work together to find a solution that works for both of you. Taking responsibility for your own actions and being willing to make changes can help to create a more positive and productive environment for resolving the conflict.

**#15. *Respect: Show respect for your partner's™ opinions and feelings.***

Respect is an essential part of any successful relationship. It is important to show respect for your partner's opinions and feelings, even if you don't agree with them. This means listening to your partner without judgment and being open to their perspective. Respect also means being honest and direct in your communication, and not using sarcasm or criticism to make your point. Respect also means being willing to compromise and work together to

find solutions that work for both of you. Respect is a two-way street, and it is important to remember that your partner deserves the same respect that you do. When you show respect for your partner, it can help to build trust and strengthen your relationship.

**#16. *Compromise: Be willing to compromise and make concessions in order to reach a resolution.***

Compromise is an essential part of any successful marriage. It is important to be willing to make concessions and compromise in order to reach a resolution. This means that both partners must be willing to give and take in order to reach a mutually beneficial outcome. It is important to remember that compromise does not mean that one partner has to give up their beliefs or values, but rather that both partners must be willing to work together

to find a solution that works for both of them. Compromise is not about one partner winning and the other losing, but rather about both partners finding a way to meet in the middle and come to an agreement that works for both of them.

Compromise is not always easy, and it can take time and effort to reach a resolution. It is important to be patient and understanding with each other, and to be willing to listen to each other's point of view. It is also important to be willing to make compromises that are fair and equitable for both partners. This means that both partners should be willing to give up something in order to reach a resolution that works for both of them. Compromise is an essential part of any successful marriage, and it is important to be willing to make concessions and compromise in order to reach a resolution.



**#17. *Let your partner influence you:  
Be open to your partner's influence  
and be willing to change your opinion.***

Letting your partner influence you is an important part of a healthy relationship. It means being open to their ideas and opinions, and being willing to change your own opinion if it is warranted. It also means being willing to compromise and work together to find solutions that work for both of you. This can be difficult, especially if you have strong opinions, but it is essential for a successful relationship. When you are open to your partner's influence, it shows that you value their opinion and that you are willing to work together to find a solution that works for both of you. It also shows that you are willing to grow and learn from each other, which is essential for a healthy relationship.

When you are open to your partner's influence, it can help you to see things from a different perspective. It can help you to understand their point of view and to come up with creative solutions to problems. It can also help you to learn more about yourself and your partner, and to grow together as a couple. Being open to your partner's influence can also help to strengthen your relationship, as it shows that you are willing to listen to each other and to work together to find solutions.

Letting your partner influence you is an important part of a healthy relationship. It can help you to understand each other better, to come up with creative solutions to problems, and to strengthen your relationship. So, be open to your partner's influence and be willing to change your opinion if it is warranted.

**#18.      *Develop shared rituals: Create***

## ***rituals that bring you closer together and strengthen your bond.***

Developing shared rituals is an important part of strengthening the bond between two people in a marriage. Rituals can be as simple as a daily hug or kiss, or as elaborate as a weekly date night.

Whatever the ritual, it should be something that both partners look forward to and enjoy. Rituals can be a great way to show your partner that you care and that you are committed to the relationship. They can also be a way to create a sense of connection and intimacy.

When creating rituals, it is important to make sure that both partners are comfortable with them. It is also important to make sure that the rituals are meaningful and enjoyable for both partners. For example, if one partner loves to cook, they could make a ritual of

cooking dinner together once a week. Or if one partner loves to go for walks, they could make a ritual of taking a walk together every day. Whatever the ritual, it should be something that both partners look forward to and enjoy.

Creating shared rituals can be a great way to strengthen the bond between two people in a marriage. It can be a way to show your partner that you care and that you are committed to the relationship. It can also be a way to create a sense of connection and intimacy. So take the time to create rituals that bring you closer together and strengthen your bond.

***#19. Develop shared goals: Work together to create shared goals and dreams for your relationship.***

Developing shared goals is an important part of any successful relationship. It helps

to create a sense of purpose and direction, and can provide a sense of security and stability. When couples have shared goals, they are more likely to work together to achieve them. This can help to strengthen the bond between them and create a sense of unity.

When creating shared goals, it is important to be realistic and to consider both partners' needs and desires. It is also important to be open and honest with each other about what each of you wants to achieve. This will help to ensure that the goals are achievable and that both partners are committed to achieving them.

It is also important to remember that shared goals should be flexible and open to change. As life changes, so too should the goals. This will help to ensure that the goals remain relevant and that both partners remain committed to achieving

them.

Finally, it is important to remember that shared goals should be fun and rewarding. This will help to ensure that both partners remain motivated and that the goals are something that both partners can look forward to achieving.

***#20. Share your vulnerabilities: Be open and honest about your feelings and fears.***

Sharing your vulnerabilities with your partner is an important part of creating a strong and lasting relationship. It can be difficult to open up and be honest about your feelings and fears, but it is essential for building trust and intimacy. When you share your vulnerabilities, you are showing your partner that you trust them enough to be vulnerable with them. This can help to create a deeper connection and

understanding between the two of you. It also allows your partner to better understand your needs and feelings, which can help to strengthen your relationship.

When you share your vulnerabilities, it is important to be open and honest. Don't be afraid to express your feelings and fears, even if they are difficult to talk about. It is also important to be respectful of your partner's feelings and to listen to their perspective. This can help to create a safe and supportive environment where both of you can feel comfortable expressing yourselves.

Sharing your vulnerabilities can be a difficult but rewarding experience. It can help to create a stronger bond between you and your partner and can help to deepen your understanding of each other. So don't be afraid to open up and share your vulnerabilities with your partner. It can

be a powerful way to strengthen your relationship.

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