

# Shalom Bayis: Gottman Method Part I



Rabbi Efrem Goldberg  
Oct./Nov. 2015

# Wrong Definitions of Shalom Bayis:

## MEN

Shalom...  
Bayit!



## WOMEN

If you  
want  
Shalom...  
Buy it!

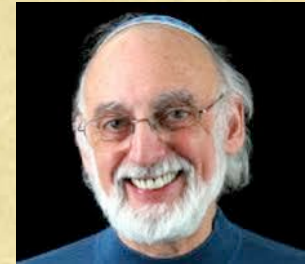




# Disclaimer!

- ♦ I am not an expert
- ♦ I am not a trained therapist
- ♦ I have counseled dozens of couples in a supplemental role always referring to a trained therapist.
- ♦ This presentation represents insights from a two day training I attended with Drs. John and Julie Gottman combined with my informal, but somewhat extensive experience.

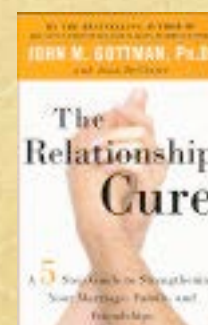
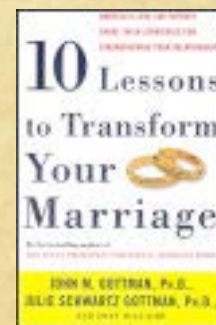
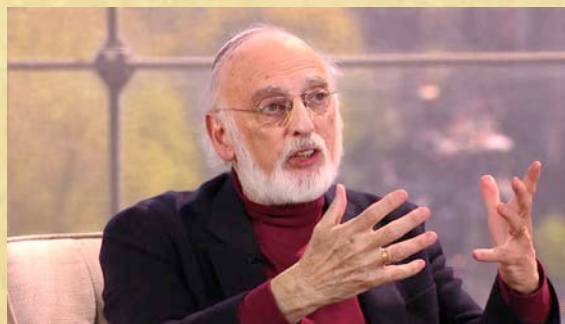
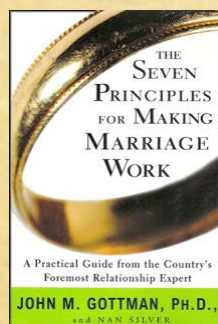
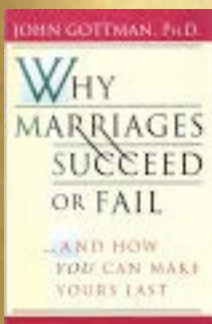
# Dr. John Gottman



- ♦ World renowned for his work on marital stability and divorce prediction, John Gottman has conducted 40 years of breakthrough research with thousands of couples. His work on marriage and parenting has earned him numerous major awards, including:
  - ♦ Four National Institute of Mental Health Research Scientist Awards
  - ♦ The American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Distinguished Research Scientist Award
  - ♦ The American Family Therapy Academy Award for Most Distinguished Contributor to Family Systems Research
  - ♦ The American Psychological Association Division of Family Psychology, Presidential Citation for Outstanding Lifetime Research Contribution
  - ♦ The National Council of Family Relations, 1994 Burgess Award for Outstanding Career in Theory and Research
- ♦ He is the author of 190 published academic articles and author or co-author of 40 books including several best sellers.



# Dr. John Gottman



- Longitudinal study of 677 couples for 15 years
- Video interviews and video observations of couples
- Studied healthy and thriving marriages, not just failing ones
- Identified indicators of successful marriages and those that are failing
- Can predict with 90+% accuracy if a couple is going to get divorced within four years

# Conflict in Marriage

- ♦ Should an ideal marriage have no conflict?
- ♦ Research revealed that 69% of conflict in relationships is perpetual and by definition has no resolution.
- ♦ Is that a sign of an unhealthy marriage?
- ♦ Absolutely NOT!





# Marriage = Unity, Not Uniformity

- ♦ Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz: “Can only have unity if you have diversity. If you have no diversity, you have uniformity, not unity.”

ב. (כו, טו"ט) 'וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל ה' וַיִּפְקֹד ה'  
וַיֹּאמֶר ה' הִלָּכָה (תוספתא ברכות ו, ה) אִם רָאָה הַרְבֵּה אוֹכְלוֹסִין  
שֶׁל בְּנֵי אָדָם אוֹמְרִים בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
חֲכָם הָרָזִים כְּשֵׁם שֶׁאֵין פְּרָצוּפוּתֵיהֶן דּוֹמִין זֶה לָזֶה כִּי אֵין  
דַּעְתָּן שׁוֹיִן זֶה לָזֶה אֶלָּא כֹּל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד יֵשׁ לוֹ דַּעַה בִּפְנֵי  
עַצְמוֹ וְכֵן הוּא אוֹמֵר (איו"ב כח, כה) 'לַעֲשׂוֹת לְרוּחַ מִשְׁקָל'

# God Designed the World to be Diverse

By it [the sight of the colours of the rainbow] our attention would repeatedly be directed to the fact that, in spite of all differences in the degree of human development, G-d would never again decree the downfall of the whole human race, but that *its future education to its godly purpose was to be founded just on these differences and varieties of humanity.*

For is the rainbow anything else but the one pure ray of light, broken up into seven degrees of seven colours . . . and from the one to the other, are they not all rays of light, and combined all together, do they not form one complete pure white ray? Could not this perhaps be meant to say: the whole manifold variety of all living creatures . . . above all, the whole variety of shades in which henceforth the purely "human" would show itself in the races of mankind . . . G-d unites them all together in one common bond of peace, all fragments of one life, all refracted rays of the one spirit of G-d, even the lowest, darkest, most distant one, still a son of the light?<sup>136</sup>



R' Samson Raphael Hirsch  
1808-1888

Rabbi Efrem Goldberg  
Boca Raton Synagogue 5776/2015

The Tower of  
Bavel needed to  
be dispersed

אמנם יש להבין מה חששו אם יצאו כמה  
לארץ אחרת. ומובן<sup>16</sup> שזה היה שייך  
ל"דברים אחדים" שהיה ביניהם, ובאשר אין  
דעות בני אדם שוות חששו שלא יצאו  
בני אדם מדעה זו ויהיו במחשבה אחרת,  
על כן היו משגיחים שלא יצא איש  
מישוב שלהם, ומי שסר מ"דברים אחדים"  
שביניהם היה משפטו לשריפה כאשר עשו  
לאברהם אבינו<sup>17</sup>. נמצא שהיו "דברים  
אחדים" שביניהם לרועץ שהחליטו להרוג  
את מי שלא יחשוב כדעתם. ויבואר עוד  
להלן פסוק ו'.

Netziv – R' Naftali Tzvi  
Yehuda Berlin 1816-1893





# Conflict is Healthy

- ♦ Diversity, and therefore, 'conflict' in marriage is not only OK, but expected and positive.
- ♦ If no diversity and never conflict of opinion and perspective, it is likely that...
  - ♦ One party is suppressing their individual opinions and needs
  - ♦ Bottling up their feelings
  - ♦ Living with fear of the
  - ♦ consequences of disagreeing



Rabbah bar bar Chanah – אמר רבה בר בר חנה אמר רבי יוחנן  
 said in the name of R' Yochanan: – וקשין לזווגן כקריעת ים סוף  
 And it is as difficult for the Omnipresent to match up [a man  
 and woman]<sup>[131]</sup> for marriage as it was to accomplish the splitting  
 of the Reed Sea,<sup>[132]</sup> – שנאמר.. אלהים מושיב יחידים ביהמה  
 מוציא – as it is stated:<sup>[133]</sup> God gathers individuals to a house,<sup>[134]</sup> מוציא  
 – אסירים בבושורות – He releases prisoners at suitable mo-  
 ments.<sup>[135]</sup>

## Talmud – Sota 2a



אין מזווגין לאדם אשה  
 אלא לפי מעשיו. דבר  
 זה פשוט. כי האיש והאשה  
 בשר אחד. ולפיכך אין  
 מזווגין לאדם אלא לפי  
 מעשיו. וקאמר וקשה  
 לזווגם כקריעת ים סוף.  
 ר"ל כשם שהוא פלא  
 גדול לקרוע דבר שהוא  
 אחד כמו הים שהוא  
 אחד. וקשה הוא לחלק  
 ולהפרידו לשנים. וכך  
 הוא פלא גדול לחבר שני  
 דברים שהם בעצמם  
 מחולקים. כדכתיב מושיב  
 יחידים ביהמה. כלומר  
 יחידים שהם מחולקים  
 ומפרידים להושיב אותם  
 לחבר אותם. הוא כמו  
 קריעת ים שהוא חלוק דבר שהוא אחד (כזה). כי  
 חלוק דבר שהוא אחד לגמרי הוא קשה כמו לחבר  
 ולעשות אחד דבר שהוא מחולק בעצמו כמו איש  
 ואשה.

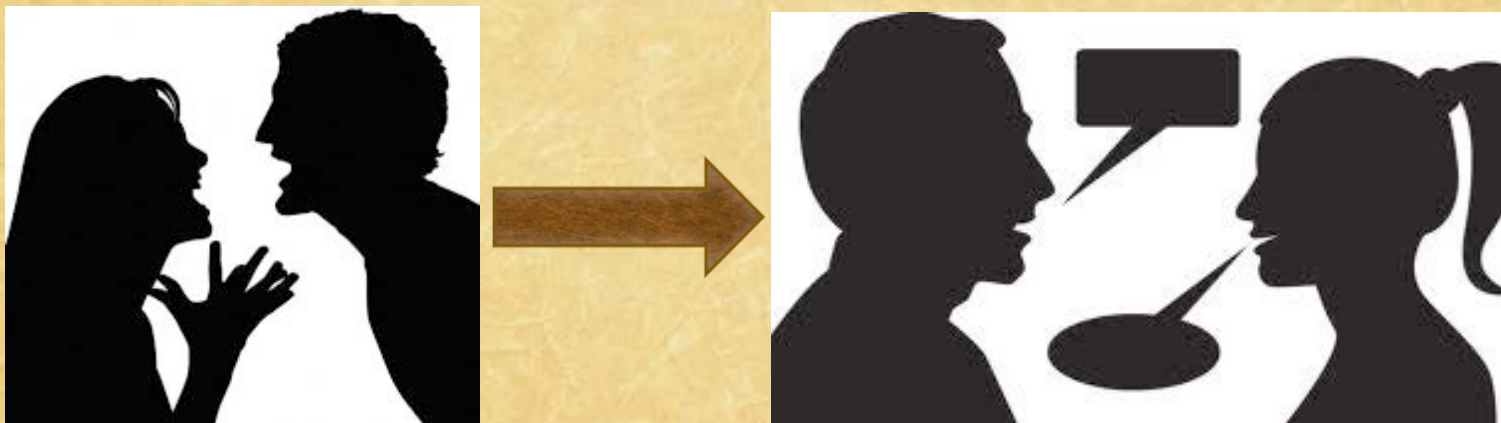
## Maharal – Chiddushei Agados

- It is not supposed to be easy...
- By definition there will be conflict in trying to become one, despite naturally being two
- Being in a happy marriage is nothing short of a miracle on par with splitting the sea



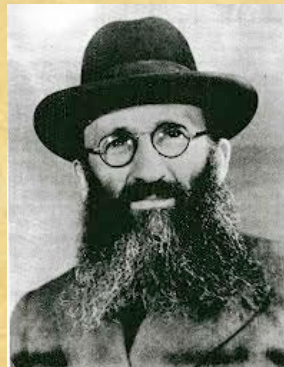
# Resolution

- ♦ Question is how is the perpetual conflict navigated?
- ♦ Couples can either identify fundamental differences and successfully dialogue and navigate them...
- ♦ Or, they can live in a perpetual state of gridlock and revisit the conflicts over and over again.
- ♦ In every conflict there was a conversation that needed to happen, but the fight occurred instead.



# Resolution

- ♦ Story of couple who fought over money and Gottman turned to class of young kids who easily found solution.
- ♦ Key is to both be prepared to “give” in relationship and know when it is time to stand ground and when to give-in.
- ♦ Rav Dessler: Love from giving, not taking. Ahavah=hav=to give



Rabbi Efraim Goldberg  
Boca Raton Synagogue 5776/2015

We must rather say that this love arises between husband and wife because they complement each other. This fact flows from the nature with which the Almighty has endowed them. Alone, every person is defective and unable to carry out his proper function; as our Rabbis say, "He who has no wife... is not a complete human being."<sup>17</sup> Together, they complement each other, and by giving each other this completion they come to love each other, on the principle we have already established: the one who gives, loves.



# Dysfunctional Marriage

- ♦ Is anger the root of unhappiness in marriage?
- ♦ Gottman says anger is not the problem, nor is conflict. Problem is particular types of conflict.
- ♦ Dysfunction in Marriage comes from the presence of what he calls the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse.
  1. Criticism
  2. Defensiveness
  3. Contempt
  4. Stonewalling



# Criticism



## 1. Criticism:

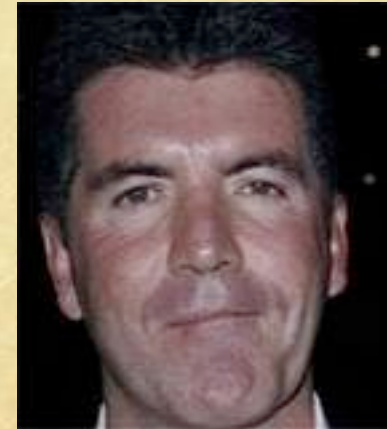
- ♦ Attacking your partner's personality or character, usually with the intent of making someone right and someone wrong:
- ♦ *Generalizations*: "you always..." "you never..." "you're the type of person who ..." "why are you so ..."

There were evil people in R. Meir's area who used to bother him a lot. He prayed that they should die. Bruriyah (his wife): It says, "Yitamu Chata'im (sins) Min ha'Aretz," not 'Chot'im' (sinners)! Rather, you should pray for mercy that Hashem help them to repent! R. Meir did so, and they repented.

Ta'anis 23b



# Contempt



## 2. Contempt:

- ♦ Attacking your partner's sense of self with the intention to insult:
- ♦ Insults and name-calling: "Jerk, idiot, wimp, fat, stupid, ugly, slob, lazy..."
  - Hostile humor, sarcasm or mockery
  - Body language & tone of voice: sneering, rolling your eyes, curling your upper lip

# Defensiveness



## 3. Defensiveness:

- ♦ Seeing self as the victim, warding off a perceived attack
- ♦ Making excuses (e.g., external circumstances beyond your control forced you to act in a certain way) “It’s not my fault...”, “I didn’t...”
- ♦ Cross-complaining: meeting your partner’s complaint, or criticism with a complaint of your own, ignoring what your partner said
- ♦ Disagreeing and then cross-complaining “That’s not true, you’re the one who ...” “I did this because you did that...”
- ♦ Yes-butting: start off agreeing but end up disagreeing  
Repeating yourself without paying attention to what the other person is saying - Whining “It’s not fair.”

relations, and similar things. But sins against other people such as injuring, cursing or stealing are never atoned for until he has paid what he owes the person and appeased him. Even though he has returned any money he owes he still has to appease him and ask for forgiveness. Even if one only made fun of someone else he has to appease him and entreat him until he forgives him. If the

בהן. אבל עבירות שבין אדם לחברו, כגון חובל חברו או המקלל את חברו או גוזלו וכיוצא בהן אינו נמחל לו לעולם, עד שייתן לחברו מה שהוא חייב לו וירצהו. אף על פי שהחזיר לו ממון שהוא חייב לו, צריך לרצותו ולשאול ממנו שימחול לו; ואפילו לא הקניט את חברו אלא בדברים, צריך לפייסו ולפגוע בו עד שימחול לו. לא רצה חברו למחול לו מביא לו שורה של שלוש<sup>16</sup>



# Stonewalling

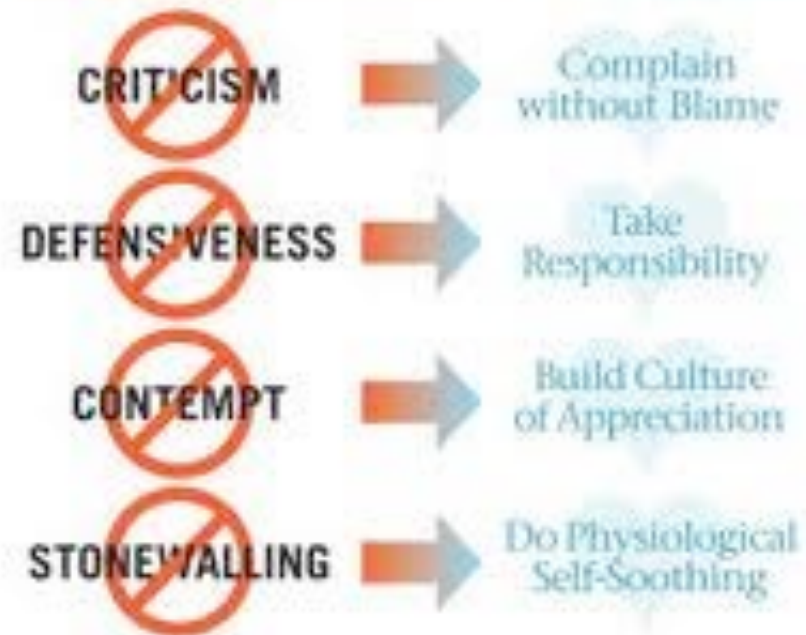
## 4) Stonewalling:

- ♦ Withdrawing from the relationship as a way to avoid conflict. Partners may think they are trying to be “neutral” but stonewalling conveys disapproval, icy distance, separation, disconnection, and/or smugness:

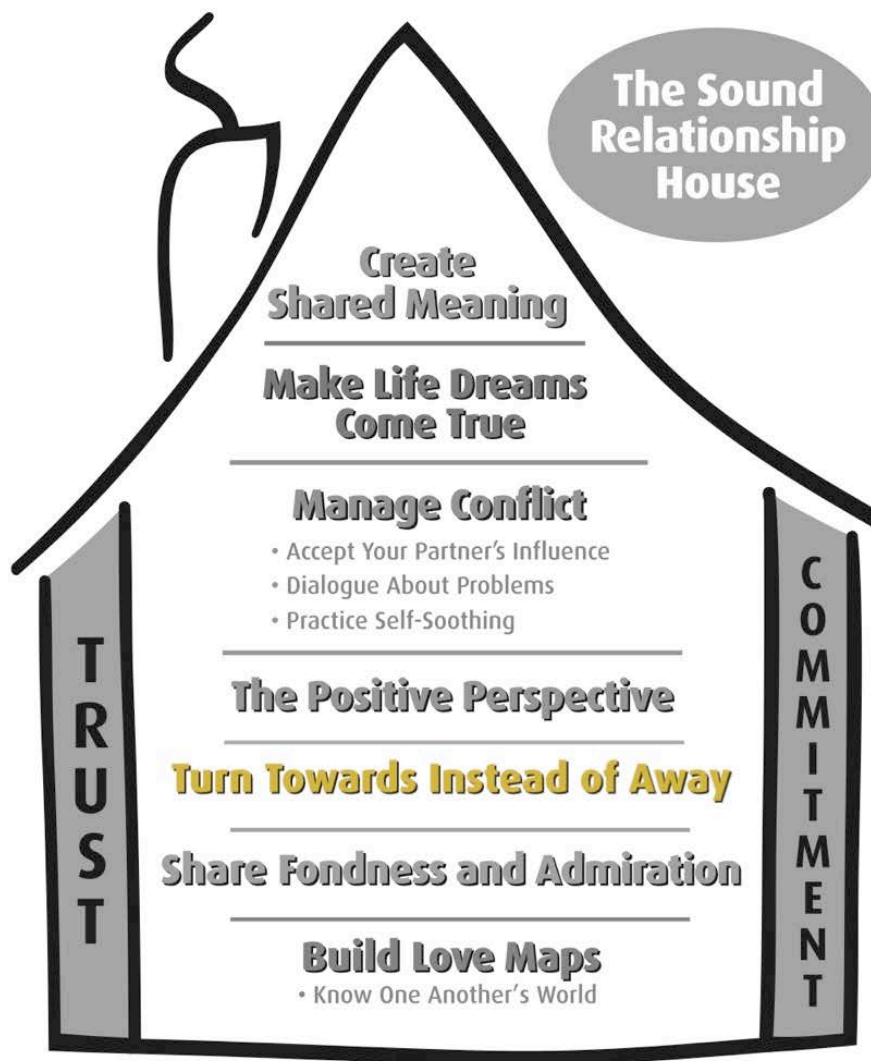
- Stony silence
- Monosyllabic mutterings
- Changing the subject
- Removing yourself physically
- Silent Treatment



Stop the Four Horsemen with their Antidotes







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# Friendship

- ♦ The first three levels of the house describe essential components of the couple's friendship

ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר ברא ששון ושמחה, חתן וכלה, גילה רינה, דיצה וחדווה, אהבה ואחוה, ושלום **ורעות**, מהרה ה' אלקינו ישמע בערי יהודה ובחוצות ירושלים, קול ששון וקול שמחה, קול חתן וקול כלה, קול מזהלות חתנים מחופתם, ונערים ממשתה נגינתם. ברוך אתה ה', משמח חתן עם הכלה.

"Blessed are You, LORD, our God, sovereign of the universe, who created joy and gladness, groom and bride, mirth, song, delight and rejoicing, love and harmony and peace and **friendship**. Soon, LORD our God, may there ever be heard in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem voices of joy and gladness, voices of groom and bride, the jubilant voices of those joined in marriage under the bridal canopy, the voices of young people feasting and singing. Blessed are You, LORD, who causes the groom to rejoice with his bride."

- Why is friendship the culmination of the beracha?
- Our hope is that the couple not only love one another, but that they continue to like one another.



# LOVE MAP

“Emotionally intelligent couples are intimately familiar with each other’s world. I call this having a richly detailed **love map**.”

John Gottman, PhD



The Gottman Institute

# Love Maps

- ♦ Couple knowing one another and periodically updating that knowledge.
- ♦ Love = Knowledge = admiration/respect
- ♦ See handouts with exercise for creating Love Maps



ב והיאך היא הדרך לאהבתו ויראתו?  
בשעה שיתבונן האדם במעשיו וברואיו הנפלאים, הגדולים, ויראה מהן  
חכמתו, שאין לה ערך ולא קץ — מיד הוא אוהב ומשבח ומפאָר ומתאווה  
תאוה גדולה לידע השם הגדול.  
כמו שאמר דוד: "צמאה נפשי לאלהים לאל חי".

2. What is the path [to attain] love and fear of Him? When a person contemplates His wondrous and great deeds and creations and appreciates His infinite wisdom that surpasses all comparison, he will immediately love, praise, and glorify [Him], yearning with tremendous desire to know [God's] great name, as David stated: "My soul thirsts for the Lord, for the living God" [Psalms 42:3].

Rambam – Hilchos Yesodei Ha'Torah 2:2



## Sample Love Map Questions

For more, search  
Gottman love  
maps

1. Name my two closest friends. (2)
2. What is my favorite musical group, composer, or instrument? (2)
3. What was I wearing when we first met? (2)
4. Name one of my hobbies. (3)
5. Where was I born? (1)
6. What stresses am I facing right now? (4)
7. Describe in detail what I did today, or yesterday. (4)
8. When is my birthday? (1)
9. What is the date of our anniversary (or engagement)? (1)
10. Who is my favorite relative? (2)
11. What is my fondest unrealized dream? (5)
12. What is my favorite flower? (2)
13. What is one of my greatest fears or disaster scenarios? (3)
14. What is my favorite time of day? (3)
15. What makes me feel most complete? (4)
16. What turns me on? (3)
17. What is my favorite meal? (2)
18. What is my favorite way to spend the evening? (2)
19. What is my favorite color? (1)
20. What personal improvements do I want to make in my life? (4)
21. What kind of present would I like best? (2)
22. What was one of my best childhood experiences? (2)
23. What was my favorite vacation? (2)

# Share Fondness and Admiration



- ♦ Antidote to contempt, one of the predictors of divorce.
- ♦ Changing a habit of mind from looking for people's mistakes to scanning for what partner is doing right and building a culture of appreciation, fondness, affection and respect.
- ♦ Acknowledge and say thank you even for little things that are expected – dinner, bringing home salary, picking up dry cleaning, taking out garbage, etc.
- ♦ Abarbanel – Modim Derabonon only part of Chazaras Ha'Shatz said by all because can't outsource gratitude



## Fondness and Admiration Questionnaire

(1) Answer the following true false questions.

- |     |                                                                                 |        |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| 1.  | I can easily list the three things I most admire about my partner.              | T or F |
| 2.  | When we are apart, I often think fondly of my partner.                          | T or F |
| 3.  | I will often find some way to tell my partner "I love you."                     | T or F |
| 4.  | I often touch or kiss my partner affectionately.                                | T or F |
| 5.  | My partner really respects me.                                                  | T or F |
| 6.  | I feel loved and cared for in this relationship                                 | T or F |
| 7.  | I feel accepted and like by my partner.                                         | T or F |
| 8.  | My partner finds me sexy and attractive.                                        | T or F |
| 9.  | My partner turns me on sexually.                                                | T or F |
| 10. | There is a fire and passion in this relationship.                               | T or F |
| 11. | Romance is definitely still a part of our relationship.                         | T or F |
| 12. | I am really proud of my partner.                                                | T or F |
| 13. | My partner really enjoys my achievements and accomplishments.                   | T or F |
| 14. | I can easily tell you why I want to marry my partner.                           | T or F |
| 15. | If I had it all to do over again, I would.                                      | T or F |
| 16. | We rarely part from each other without showing some sign of love and affection. | T or F |
| 17. | When I come into a room, my partner is glad to see me.                          | T or F |
| 18. | My partner appreciates the things I do in this relationship.                    | T or F |
| 19. | My spouse generally likes my personality.                                       | T or F |
| 20. | Our life is generally satisfying.                                               | T or F |

(2) Scoring: 10 and above is good while 10 and below shows room for improvements.

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Gottman, John and Nan Silver: **The Seven Principles For Making Marriage Work: A Practical Guide**

**From the Country's Foremost Relationship Expert** (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1999).

## “I Appreciate...”

(1) Circle three items that you think are characteristics of your partner. Circle just three. (You can do the exercise over again with a different three if you want to).

- |                  |                     |                   |                    |
|------------------|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Loving        | 2. Sensitive        | 3. Brave          | 4. Intelligent     |
| 5. Thoughtful    | 6. Generous         | 7. Loyal          | 8. Truthful        |
| 9. Strong        | 10. Energetic       | 11. Sexy          | 12. Decisive       |
| 13. Creative     | 14. Imaginative     | 15. Fun           | 16. Attractive     |
| 17. Interesting  | 18. Supportive      | 19. Funny         | 20. Considerate    |
| 21. Affectionate | 22. Organized       | 23. Resourceful   | 24. Athletic       |
| 25. Cheerful     | 26. Coordinated     | 27. Graceful      | 28. Elegant        |
| 29. Gracious     | 30. Playful         | 31. Caring        | 32. A Great Friend |
| 33. Exciting     | 34. Thrifty         | 35. Full Of Plans | 36. Shy            |
| 37. Vulnerable   | 38. Committed       | 39. Involved      | 40. Expressive     |
| 41. Active       | 42. Careful         | 43. Reserved      | 44. Adventurous    |
| 45. Receptive    | 46. Reliable        | 47. Responsible   | 48. Dependable     |
| 49. Nurturing    | 50. Warm            | 51. Virile        | 52. Kind           |
| 53. Gentle       | 54. Practical       | 55. Healthy       | 56. Witty          |
| 57. Relaxed      | 58. Beautiful       | 59. Handsome      | 60. Rich           |
| 61. Calm         | 62. A Great Partner | 63. Lively        | 64. A Great Parent |
| 65. Assertive    | 66. Protective      | 67. Sweet         | 68. Tender         |
| 69. Powerful     | 70. Understanding   | 71. Flexible      | 72. Totally Silly  |
| 73. Prayerful    | 74. Holy            | 75. Loving        | 76. Humble         |
| 77. Forgiving    | 78. Thinker         | 79. Patient       | 80. Hopeful        |

(2) For each item you checked please briefly think of an actual incident that illustrates this characteristic of your partner.