

Shalom Bayis: Gottman Method Part IV

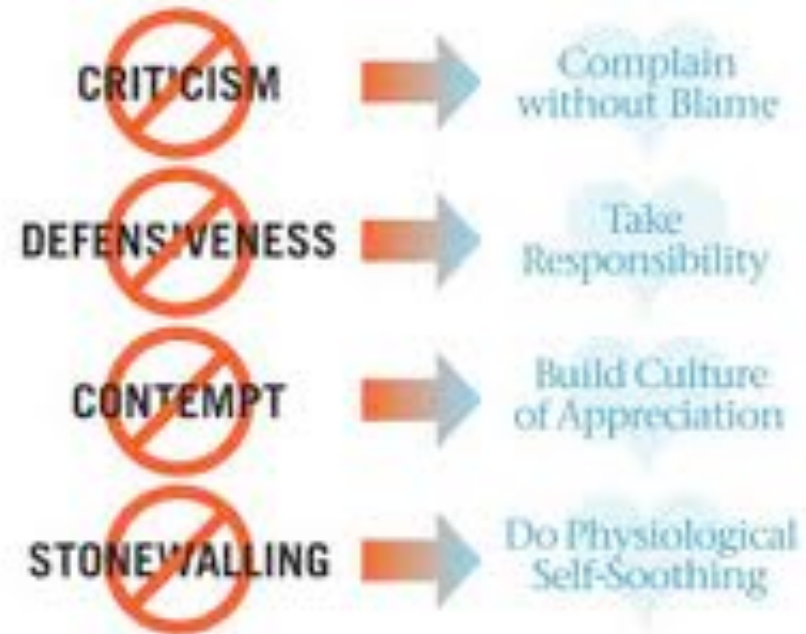


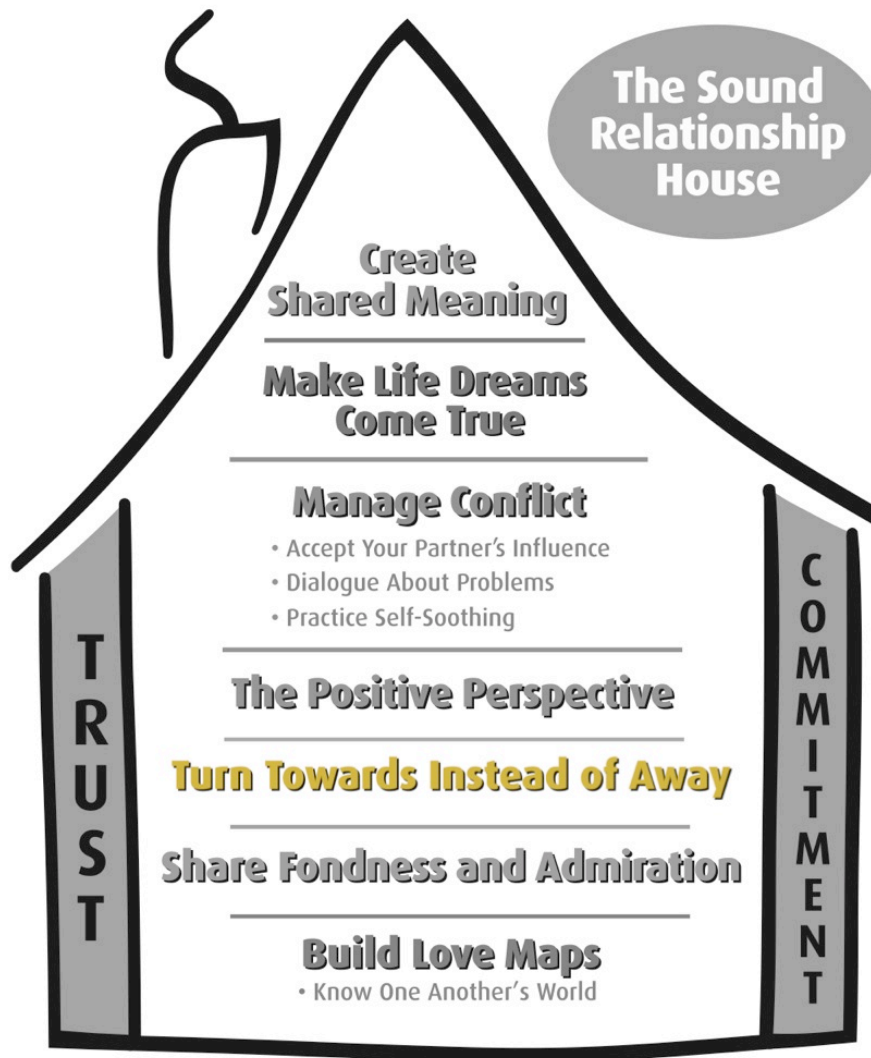
Rabbi Efrem Goldberg
Nov. 2015

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.

Stop the Four Horsemen with their Antidotes





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Manage Conflict

- ◆ We already spoke about conflict being inevitable. Key to healthy marriage is learning how to manage it effectively
- ◆ What are the core issues? What are pressure points?
- ◆ What triggers escalation?
 - ◆ Defensiveness
 - ◆ Criticism
 - ◆ Contempt
 - ◆ Belligerence



Carolyn Hax

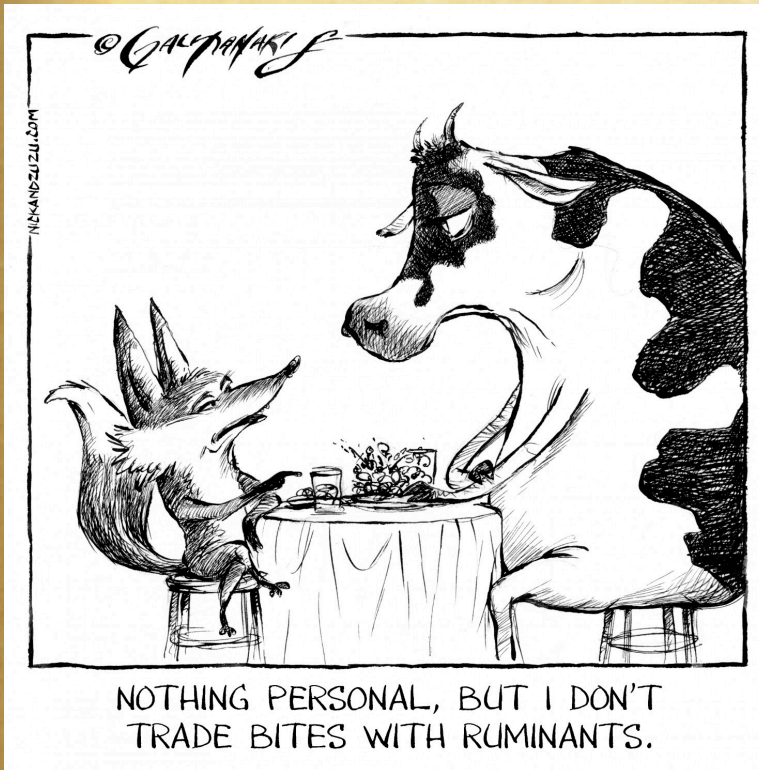
The Washington Post

Dear Carolyn: My wife has a habit that totally annoys me. Whenever we go to a restaurant, she always asks for a bite from my plate. I tell her that if she wanted that dish, she should have ordered it.

She insists that people share food samples all the time and I am being selfish.

Background: My mother did the same thing to me growing up and I resented it, but I have told my wife about this and she still insists on asking for “a bite.” What is the etiquette on this? Is it proper to ask for a sample? Help!!!!





Off My Plate: This is a marriage, so if we're bringing etiquette in to referee it, you've both already lost.

Strictly speaking, your wife is wrong to keep pressing the issue. Recurring arguments are a failure to take no for an answer. And, while couples ideally are both generous with each other and careful not to burden present coexistence with past emotional baggage, we're all entitled to mulligans from our partners for a peeve we can't seem to master.

You're clearly all bunched up about this, and so the pragmatic move for her was drop it already, years ago ...

However. Your honking at her that “if she wanted that dish, she should have ordered it!” not only belongs in the killjoy hall of fame, but it also fails to hold up logically.

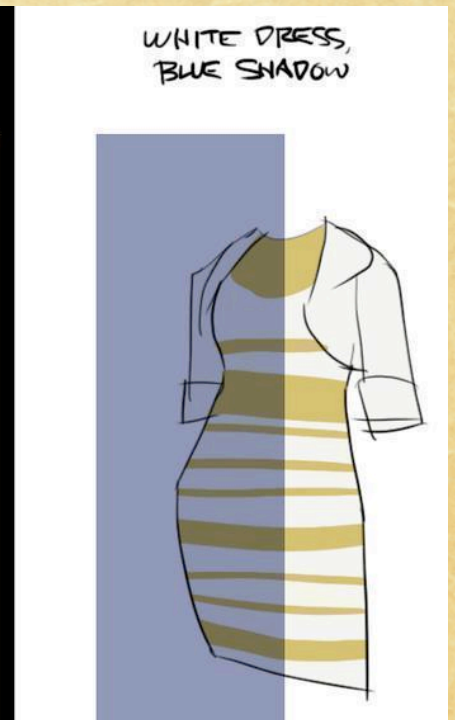
It feels weird to have to spell this out: I can order the chicken, be glad I ordered the chicken, enjoy the chicken and still be curious about the fish. So while I suppose I could order both dishes for myself at excessive cost to my wallet and waistline, what I'd really like is to enjoy my chicken and have just a taste of the fish my companion ordered. I don't see how this violates any rules of entree ownership — especially since I will happily give you a bite of my chicken. Do you taste the rosemary in it? And what's that other flavor? I can't quite make it out ...

Oh, wait. You don't want this to be a shared sensory experience. See what I mean?

She's your wife. You love her. You chose her over all others. Maybe if you trade a bite of each other's dinner, you'll both have a teensy something new to talk about, a better idea of what to order next time and, best of all, that little warm glow you get from choosing to be open where you could — out of cantankerous habit — just insist on staying closed.

Your plate, your call, but from where I sit, this call makes itself.

Perspective

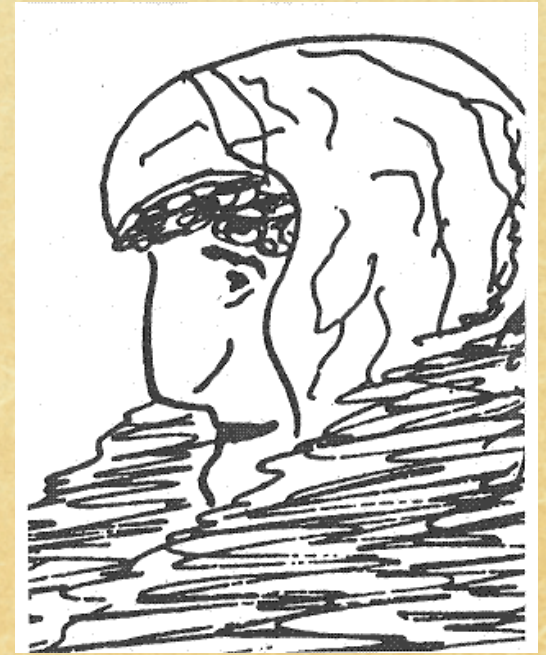


Perspective



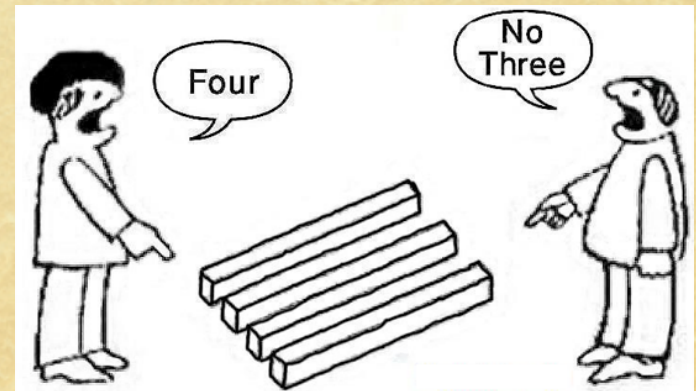
Young woman
Or
Old woman?

Both – depends on perspective

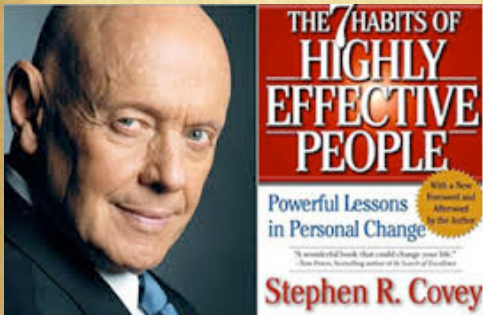


Perspective

- ◆ Couple must agree that in every interaction there are at least two valid realities, not just one.
- ◆ Therefore, focus is not on facts, but on perception.
- ◆ Goal is not to be right, goal is to be productive.
- ◆ Must try to understand partner's reality, their perspective with agreeable frame of reference.
- ◆ Must validate partner that they have been heard and understood. Heard does not mean able to repeat back word for word.
- ◆ It means able to repeat back to partner's satisfaction.



Stephen Covey - Habit #5



*“Seek First to Understand,
Then to Be Understood”*

~ Stephen Covey (“Habit 5”)

Stephen Covey – Habit #5

Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply.

--Stephen R. Covey



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someecards.com

Eliminate criticism

- ◆ No blaming, no “you” statements.
- ◆ Talk about your feelings, not the other persons
- ◆ State a positive need. Within every complaint is a longing, and likely a recipe.
 - ◆ Negative need: You talked about yourself all of dinner
 - ◆ Positive need: I need you to ask me about my day



Today on The Gottman Relationship Blog: Criticism and Self Care

Research shows that 96% of the time, discussions invariably end on the same note that they begin. The antidote to criticism is to complain without blame by using I statements (“*I feel...*”) and stating a positive need (“*I need...*”).

Complaint

vs.

Criticism

“I feel like I’m not being heard. Can we talk about my day?”

vs.

“You always talk about yourself. Do you even care about my day?”

“I feel exhausted. I need you to pick up the kids from school this afternoon.”

vs.

“You never pick up the kids from school. Why is it always my responsibility?”

“I feel like I have been missing you lately. Can we schedule a date night?”

vs.

“You are so emotionally unavailable lately.”

Defensiveness

- ♦ Don't react defensively with righteous indignation or victimhood to ward off an attack.
- ♦ Accept responsibility for at least part of the problem.
 - ♦ Modeh b'miktzas
 - ♦ “Fair enough,” “good point”
 - ♦ Example:
 - ♦ It's not my fault that we're always late, it's your fault.
 - ♦ Antidote – Well, part of this is my problem, I need to think more about time.



Defensiveness

Today on The Gottman Relationship Blog:
The Four Horsemen: Defensiveness

Do not say...

"Yes, but..."

"You always..."

"What about when you..."

"At least I'm not..."

"You are overreacting..."

Say...

"Yes, and..."

"I am listening...tell me more..."

"The part I agree with is..."

"I never thought of it that way..."

"I see what you are saying..."

Today on The Gottman Relationship Blog: The Four Horsemen: Defensiveness Part II

Defensiveness

VS.

Accepting Responsibility

He: You always work so late.

She: I have a project to do for work, we've got a deadline.

He: You ALWAYS have a project to do for work. There is ALWAYS a deadline!

She: That's not true. Stop overreacting.

He: Why don't you just move into the office?!

He: You always work so late.

She: I know, I'm sorry. I've got so much to do. What's the matter?

He: You haven't noticed that we never spend any time together anymore?

She: I know it's been hard. I miss you. I'll try to talk to my boss about these deadlines.

He: I would really appreciate that.

She: I'll try to take Friday off – maybe we can go to a show or something.

He: Sounds great!

Contempt

- ◆ Statements that come from position of superiority
- ◆ Antidote: Build culture of respect and appreciation.
- ◆ Contempt is biggest obstacle to intimacy
- ◆ Tzelem Elokim – all equal, nobody greater than another.

Contempt

- ♦ Have what to learn, allow influence and become better
- ♦ Gemara and Midrash replete with statements about being incomplete without marriage...
 - ♦ Half and half equal a whole, that is why Adom separated in half
 - ♦ “Any man who has no wife lives without joy, without blessing, and without goodness.” (Yevamos 62b)
 - ♦ That's why Chazal say (Brachos 8a) Matza Isha Matza Tov (one who finds a woman finds good)
 - ♦ Kal Hasharuy B'lo Isha Sharuy Bli Simcha (Yalkut Shimoni Breishis Remez 22)

FONDNESS AND
ADMIRATION

ARE TWO OF THE MOST CRUCIAL ELEMENTS
IN A REWARDING AND LONG-LASTING
ROMANCE. ALTHOUGH HAPPILY MARRIED
COUPLES MAY FEEL DRIVEN TO DISTRACTION
AT TIMES BY THEIR PARTNER'S PERSONALITY
FLAWS, THEY STILL FEEL THAT THE
PERSON THEY MARRIED IS WORTHY OF

HONOR AND
RESPECT.

-Dr. John Gottman

#staymarried

Stonewalling

- ◆ Emotional withdrawal from interaction. Looking away, continuing to text, being unresponsive.
- ◆ Stonewalling can be worse than actually having a fight
- ◆ Antidote is to self soothe in order to stay emotionally connected and carry on a healthy conversation.
 - ◆ Example of Achashveirosh who needs to take a walk after hearing about Esther's identity



Today on The Gottman Relationship Blog:

The Four Horsemen: Stonewalling

Flooding Questionnaire

To discover whether flooding is a significant problem in your relationship, answer the following questions: Read each statement and select **T** for "true" or **F** for "false."

1. Our discussions get too heated. **T F**
2. I have a hard time calming down. **T F**
3. One of us is going to say something we will regret. **T F**
4. My partner gets too upset. **T F**
5. After a fight, I want to keep my distance. **T F**
6. My partner yells unnecessarily. **T F**
7. I feel overwhelmed by our arguments. **T F**
8. I can't think straight when my partner gets hostile. **T F**
9. Why can't we talk more logically? **T F**
10. My partner's negativity comes out of nowhere. **T F**
11. There's often no stopping my partner's temper. **T F**
12. I feel like running away during our arguments. **T F**
13. Small issues suddenly become big ones. **T F**
14. I can't calm down very easily during an argument. **T F**
15. My partner has a long list of unreasonable demands. **T F**

Perspective Content or Contentious?

♦ אִוְיֵהִי הָעָם כְּמִתְאַנְנִים, רַע בְּאָזְנֵי יְהוָה; וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה, וַיַּחַר אַפּוֹ, וַתִּבְעַר-בָּם אֵשׁ יְהוָה, וַתֹּאכַל בְּקִצָּה הַמַּחֲנֶה. בַּיֶּצֶק הָעָם, אֶל-מֹשֶׁה; וַיִּתְּפִל מֹשֶׁה אֶל-יְהוָה, וַתִּשְׁקַע הָאֵשׁ.

- ♦ 11:1 And when the people **complained**, it displeased the LORD: and the LORD heard it; and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the LORD burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp.
11:2 And the people cried unto Moses; and when Moses prayed unto the LORD, the fire was quenched.

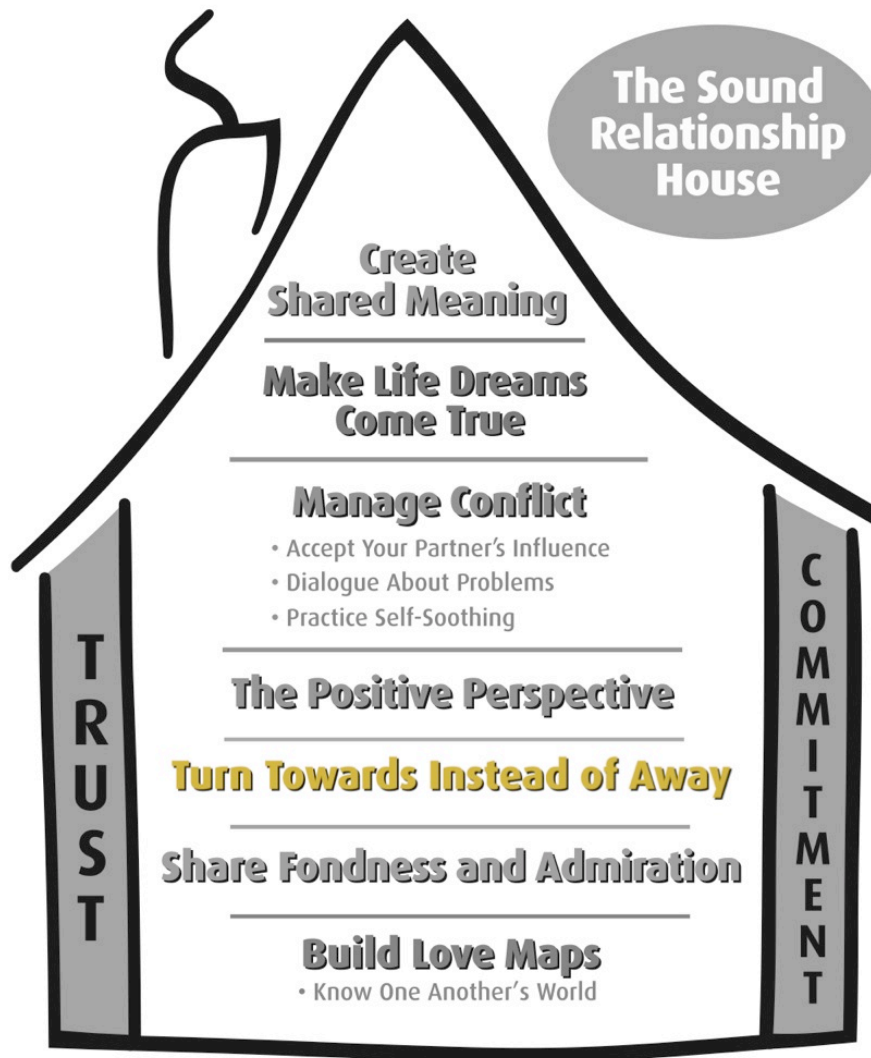
♦ דעת זקנים מבעלי התוספות

(א) ויהי העם כמתאוננים. כאוננים על המת ומתאבלים על מה שהיה הקב"ה רוצה להכניסן לארץ כי היו קטני אמנה ודואגין מן המלחמה:

R. Paysach Krohn story about “Zeh lo chashuv”

Resolving Conflict

- ◆ Softened Startup –
 - ◆ “In every conflict there is a conversation the couple needed to have, but the fight occurred instead.”
 - ◆ How and in what context do we begin the conversation?
 - ◆ Is it personal or is it issue based?
 - ◆ Focus on how your behavior makes me feel not projecting motivation or other’s emotions.
 - ◆ Goal is to move from gridlock to dialogue on the issue.



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Life Dreams

- ◆ Therapists used to believe if conflict resolved, positive affects would storm into couple's world by themselves.
- ◆ Not true! Positive affect systems need to be built intentionally and with awareness.
- ◆ Dr. Gottman's research has helped him to discover something counter-intuitive: many of the seemingly pointless and frustrating issues that you find yourself constantly arguing about with your partner are anything but insignificant. In truth, they are rooted in your deepest and most meaningful dreams, hopes, and desires for your own life, as well as the life that you share together.

Life Dreams

- ◆ Play, fun, exploration, adventure, helping realize dreams.
- ◆ Listen to one another and validate dreams and aspirations
- ◆ Dream could be run a marathon, recover from previous trauma, give a public talk, become social, do daf yomi, drive a certain car, be a parent
- ◆ Support
 - ◆ Listen and validate
 - ◆ Financial
 - ◆ Moral and emotional
 - ◆ Be active participant
 - ◆ Logistical support

Potential Conflict

Husband: My wife is constantly trying to persuade me to accompany her to parties, to go out dancing, try new restaurants and bars, travel, go camping, hike. She's driving me nuts. It's crazy. I can't live this way.

Wife: My husband's lifestyle is stifling me. He just wants to stay in and watch movies. I can barely get him off the couch. He doesn't understand life. He doesn't know how to live! I'm living in a cage! I want to be free.

Possible dreams within the conflict:

Husband: My parents were in the military and we moved around a lot. I've never been able to have any sense of stability. I've never been able to relax. I've always been whisked about, from one town to another, living in what I guess must have been a permanent state of anxiety. Now that we've settled down in the city, and have steady jobs and a really good life, I feel so lucky... all I want to do is cuddle up in the living room with a book, make breakfast together, walk around our beautiful neighborhood, talk about anything and everything deep into the night with the woman I love.

Wife: I was raised in an incredibly stifling home. My parents worked all the time, and my siblings and I had to invent games to keep ourselves from drowning in boredom. We were lonely and isolated, and not allowed to go out and see our friends or play with the neighbors very often. When I got into high school, I finally had an escape. I got a car, had a boyfriend, we would go out to the one club in our small town at night and camp in the woods with our friends. It was wonderful. Now that I live in a big city, I want to live life the way I've always wanted.

Create Shared Meaning

- ◆ Attic of the house – create shared meaning in a life together that is full of meaning.
- ◆ Prioritize time, resources,
- ◆ Build family narrative of what life is about and what family values.
- ◆ Build formal and informal rituals of connection and for family.

Shared Meaning

- ◆ Examples:
 - ◆ Charity
 - ◆ Chesed
 - ◆ Learning
 - ◆ Athletics
 - ◆ Academics
 - ◆ Israel
 - ◆ Community
 - ◆ Ivy League

FAMILY:

WE MAY NOT
HAVE IT ALL
TOGETHER, BUT
TOGETHER WE
HAVE IT ALL.

The Gottman Institute
gottman.com

Shared Meaning – Family Narrative



- ◆ NY Times article called “The Family Stories That Bind Us,”
- ◆ Dr. Marshall Duke, a psychologist at Emory University – “Do You Know”
- ◆ Family narrative
 - ◆ Ascending
 - ◆ Descending
 - ◆ Oscillating
- ◆ Duke’s bottom line is this - if you want a happier family, create, refine and retell the story of your family’s positive moments and your collective ability to bounce back from difficult ones.
- ◆ Create family rituals

Love & Marriage

וַיָּבֵא אִשָּׁה יִצְחָק הָאֵלֶּלֶה שָׂרָה אִמּוֹ וַיִּקַּח אֶת
רִבְקָה וַתְּהִי לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה וַיֶּאֱהָבָהּ וַיִּנָּחֵם יִצְחָק
אֶחָרֵי אִמּוֹ:

67. And Isaac brought her to the tent of Sarah his mother, and he took Rebecca, and she became his wife, and he loved her. And Isaac was comforted for [the loss of] his mother.

Love & Marriage

וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֶת־רַחֵל וַיֹּאמֶר
אֶעֱבֹדָךְ שִׁבְעַ שָׁנִים בְּרַחֵל בְּתוּךְ הַקִּטְנָה: וַיֹּאמֶר לְבֵן
טוֹב תִּתֵּי אֹתָהּ לָךְ מִתִּתֵּי אֹתָהּ לְאִישׁ אַחֵר שָׁבָה עִמָּדִי:
וַיַּעֲבֹד יַעֲקֹב בְּרַחֵל שִׁבְעַ שָׁנִים וַיִּהְיוּ בְּעֵינָיו כִּיָּמִים
אֲחֻדִים בְּאַהֲבָתוֹ אֹתָהּ: וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֶל־לְבֵן הַבָּהָה
אֶת־אִשְׁתִּי כִּי מָלְאוּ יָמַי וְאִבּוֹאָה אֵלֶיךָ: וַיֹּאסֶף לְבֵן
אֶת־כָּל־אֲנָשֵׁי הַמָּקוֹם וַיַּעַשׂ מִשְׁתָּהּ: וַיְהִי בְּעָרֵב וַיִּקַּח
אֶת־לֵאָה בָתּוֹ וַיָּבֵא אֹתָהּ אֵלָיו וַיָּבֵא אֵלֶיךָ: וַיִּתֵּן
לְבֵן לָהּ אֶת־זִלְפָּה שִׁפְחָתוֹ לְלֵאָה בָתּוֹ שִׁפְחָהּ: וַיְהִי
בְּבִקְרֹ וְהִנֵּה־הוּא לֵאָה וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־לְבֵן מַה־זֹּאת
עָשִׂיתָ לִּי הֲלֹא בְרַחֵל עֲבַדְתִּי עִמּוֹ וְלָמָּה רַמִּיתָנִי:

¹⁹ Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you than that I give her to another man; remain with me." ²⁰ So Jacob worked seven years for Rachel and they seemed to him a few days because of his love for her.

Mezuzah Approach

הגה מ' וכן (ז) נהגו (ב"י) [יג] אבל י"א (ח) שפסולה בזקופה אלא
לריכה להיות שכובה לרכה לרוחב מזוזת הפתח (טור והפוסקים
בשם ר"ח) [יד] והמקדקים יוצאים ידי שניהם (ט) ומיחיים אחיה בשפוע ובאלכסון (טור והגהות מיימוני
ומהרי"ל ור"ה סי' ק"ב) וכן ראוי לנהוג וכן נוהגין במדינות אלו ויכוין שיהא ראש המזוזה דהייט (י) שמע ללד
פנים ושיטה אחרונה ללד חוץ :

Rama 169:6



May We Be Blessed We Fantastic Shalom Bayis!

