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The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work: A Practical Guide from the Country's Foremost Relationship Expert

By John Gottman, Nan Silver



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Just as Masters and Johnson were pioneers in the study of human sexuality, so Dr. John Gottman has revolutionized the study of marriage. As a professor of psychology at the University of Washington and the founder and director of the Seattle Marital and Family Institute, he has studied the habits of married couples in unprecedented detail over the course of many years. His findings, and his heavily attended workshops, have already turned around thousands of faltering marriages.

This book is the culmination of his life's work: the seven principles that guide couples on the path toward a harmonious and long-lasting relationship. Straightforward in their approach, yet profound in their effect, these principles teach partners new and startling strategies for making their marriage work. Gottman helps couples focus on each other, on paying attention to the small day-to-day moments that, strung together, make up the heart and soul of any relationship. Being thoughtful about ordinary matters provides spouses with a solid foundation for resolving conflict when it does occur and finding strategies for living with those issues that cannot be resolved.

Packed with questionnaires and exercises whose effectiveness has been proven in Dr. Gottman's workshops, **The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work** is the definitive guide for anyone who wants their relationship to attain its highest potential.

The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work is the result of Dr. John Gottman's many years of closely observing thousands of marriages. This kind of longitudinal research has never been done before. Based on his findings, he has culled seven principles essential to the success of any marriage.

Maintain a love map.

Foster fondness and admiration.

Turn toward instead of away.

Accept influence.

Solve solvable conflicts.

Cope with conflicts you can't resolve.

Create shared meaning.

Dr. Gottman's unique questionnaires and exercises will guide couples on the road

to revitalizing their marriage, or making a strong one even better.

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Editorial Review

Review

"An eminently practical guide to an emotionally intelligent -- and long-lasting -- marriage."
-- Daniel Goleman, author of *Emotional Intelligence*

"Gottman stays refreshingly down to earth, rather than on Mars and Venus."
-- Bill Marvel and Geoffrey Norman, *American Way*

"Gottman comes to this endeavor with the best of qualifications: he's got the spirit of a scientist and the soul of a romantic."
-- Newsweek

"Twenty-five years of landmark marital research."
-- USA Today

"Offers something every relationship can benefit from."
-- Seattle Post-Intelligencer

"Astonishing new research!"
-- Woman's World

"Debunks many myths about divorce . . . reveals surprising facts . . . enlightening!"
-- Amazon.com

About the Author

JOHN GOTTMAN, a leading research scientist on marriage and family, is emeritus professor of psychology at the University of Washington; executive director of his laboratory, the Relationship Research Institute; and cofounder of the Gottman Institute. He held an NIMH research scientist career award for twenty years. Dr. Gottman is the author of more than two hundred professional journal articles and forty-two books, as well as the recipient of numerous prestigious awards for his extensive contributions to marriage and family research.

NAN SILVER is a former editor in chief of *Health* magazine and coauthor, with Dr. Gottman, of *What Makes Love Last: and Why Marriages Succeed or Fail*.

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Chapter 1

Inside the Seattle Love Lab: The Truth about Happy Marriages

It's a surprisingly cloudless Seattle morning as newlyweds Mark and Janice Gordon sit down to breakfast. Outside the apartment's picture window, the waters of Montlake cut a deep-blue swath, while runners jog and geese waddle along the lakeside park. Mark and Janice are enjoying the view as they munch on their French

toast and share the Sunday paper. Later Mark will probably switch on the football game while Janice chats over the phone with her mom in St. Louis.

All seems ordinary enough inside this studio apartment--until you notice the three video cameras bolted to the wall, the microphones clipped talk-show style to Mark's and Janice's collars, and the Holter monitors strapped around their chests. Mark and Janice's lovely studio with a view is really not their apartment at all. It's a laboratory at the University of Washington in Seattle, where for sixteen years I have spearheaded the most extensive and innovative research ever into marriage and divorce.

As part of one of these studies, Mark and Janice (as well as forty-nine other randomly selected couples) volunteered to stay overnight in our fabricated apartment, affectionately known as the Love Lab. Their instructions were to act as naturally as possible, despite my team of scientists observing them from behind the one-way kitchen mirror, the cameras recording their every word and facial expression, and the sensors tracking bodily signs of stress or relaxation, such as how quickly their hearts pound. (To preserve basic privacy, the couples were monitored only from nine a.m. to nine p.m. and never while in the bathroom.) The apartment comes equipped with a fold-out sofa, a working kitchen, a phone, TV, VCR, and CD player. Couples were told to bring their groceries, their newspapers, their laptops, needlepoint, hand weights, even their pets--whatever they would need to experience a typical weekend.

My goal has been nothing more ambitious than to uncover the truth about marriage--to finally answer the questions that have puzzled people for so long: Why is marriage so tough at times? Why do some lifelong relationships click, while others just tick away like a time bomb? And how can you prevent a marriage from going bad--or rescue one that already has?

Predicting Divorce with 91 Percent Accuracy

After years of research I can finally answer these questions. In fact, I am now able to predict whether a couple will stay happily together or lose their way. I can make this prediction after listening to the couple interact in our Love Lab for as little as five minutes! My accuracy rate in these predictions averages 91 percent over three separate studies. In other words, in 91 percent of the cases where I have predicted that a couple's marriage would eventually fail or succeed, time has proven me right. These predictions are not based on my intuition or preconceived notions of what marriage "should" be, but on the data I've accumulated over years of study.

At first you might be tempted to shrug off my research results as just another in a long line of newfangled theories. It's certainly easy to be cynical when someone tells you they've figured out what really makes marriages last and can show you how to rescue or divorce-proof your own. Plenty of people consider themselves to be experts on marriage--and are more than happy to give you their opinion of how to form a more perfect union.

But that's the key word--opinion. Before the breakthroughs my research provided, point of view was pretty much all that anyone trying to help couples had to go on. And that includes just about every qualified, talented, and well-trained marriage counselor out there. Usually a responsible therapist's approach to helping couples is based on his or her professional training and experience, intuition, family history, perhaps even religious conviction. But the one thing it's not based on is hard scientific evidence. Because until now there really hasn't been any rigorous scientific data about why some marriages succeed and others flop.

For all of the attention my ability to predict divorce has earned me, the most rewarding findings to come out of my studies are the Seven Principles that will prevent a marriage from breaking up.

Emotionally Intelligent Marriages

What can make a marriage work is surprisingly simple. Happily married couples aren't smarter, richer, or more psychologically astute than others. But in their day-to-day lives, they have hit upon a dynamic that keeps their negative thoughts and feelings about each other (which all couples have) from overwhelming their positive ones. They have what I call an emotionally intelligent marriage.

I can predict whether a couple will divorce after watching and listening to them for just five minutes.

Recently, emotional intelligence has become widely recognized as an important predictor of a child's success later in life. The more in touch with emotions and the better able a child is to understand and get along with others, the sunnier that child's future, whatever his or her academic IQ. The same is true for relationships between spouses. The more emotionally intelligent a couple--the better able they are to understand, honor, and respect each other and their marriage--the more likely that they will indeed live happily ever after. Just as parents can teach their children emotional intelligence, this is also a skill that a couple can be taught. As simple as it sounds, it can keep husband and wife on the positive side of the divorce odds.

Why Save Your Marriage?

Speaking of those odds, the divorce statistics remain dire. The chance of a first marriage ending in divorce over a forty-year period is 67 percent. Half of all divorces will occur in the first seven years. Some studies find the divorce rate for second marriages is as much as 10 percent higher than for first-timers. The chance of getting divorced remains so high that it makes sense for all married couples--including those who are currently satisfied with their relationship--to put extra effort into their marriages to keep them strong.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Clarence Riley:

Have you spare time for just a day? What do you do when you have more or little spare time? Yes, you can choose the suitable activity with regard to spend your time. Any person spent all their spare time to take a walk, shopping, or went to typically the Mall. How about open or maybe read a book called The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work: A Practical Guide from the Country's Foremost Relationship Expert? Maybe it is being best activity for you. You recognize beside you can spend your time along with your favorite's book, you can better than before. Do you agree with it is opinion or you have other opinion?

Kyle Guthrie:

This book untitled The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work: A Practical Guide from the Country's Foremost Relationship Expert to be one of several books which best seller in this year, honestly, that is because when you read this publication you can get a lot of benefit into it. You will easily to buy this book in the book shop or you can order it by means of online. The publisher with this book sells the e-book too. It makes you more readily to read this book, since you can read this book in your Mobile phone. So there is no reason for your requirements to past this book from your list.

Aaron Eldred:

Playing with family in the park, coming to see the coastal world or hanging out with friends is thing that usually you may have done when you have spare time, subsequently why you don't try issue that really opposite from that. One particular activity that make you not sense tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you already been ride on and with addition of information. Even you love The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work: A Practical Guide from the Country's Foremost Relationship Expert, you could enjoy both. It is excellent combination right, you still would like to miss it? What kind of hangout type is it? Oh can happen its mind hangout men. What? Still don't understand it, oh come on its known as reading friends.

Roberta Anglin:

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