

## RELATIONSHIP ENHANCEMENT FOR PARENTS OF MULTIPLES

Presented by:  
Marina Voron and Meredith Silversmith  
Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists

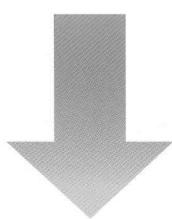
The goal of this presentation is for you to walk away with a deeper understanding of simple, yet impactful, steps you can take to strengthen and protect your partnership. We will achieve this by covering the following:

- **WHY RELATIONSHIP DECLINE POST-BABIES IS TOTALLY NORMAL**
  - Overwhelm
  - Less time and energy
  - Change in routines
  - Exhaustion
  - Intimacy and physical affection
- **HOW TO ENHANCE YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH 5 MINUTES A DAY**
  - Self-care
    - What do you do when you have 5 minutes to yourself?
    - KEY: 5 Mindful Minutes
  - Effectively having your needs heard
    - 4 Horsemen of the Apocalypse
    - KEY: Communication skills
  - KEY: The Connection Master List
    - Day 1: Write list
    - Day 2: Swap and circle
    - Day 3: Schedule
    - Day 4-29: Implement
    - Day 30: Refresh and continue
  - Rituals of Connection that take less than 5 minutes
    - KEY: 6-Second Kiss
    - KEY: Hugging Until Relaxed
    - KEY: 7-Week Guide to Creating Fondness and Admiration
    - KEY: Relationship Gratitude Journal
  - Intimacy enhancement
    - What is intimacy?
    - Why relationship enhancement *is* intimacy enhancement
      - “Every positive thing you do in your relationship is foreplay” – Dr. John Gottman
    - “Buffet” sex
- **Q+A**

# Stop the Four Horsemen with their Antidotes

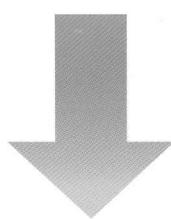
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**CRITICISM**



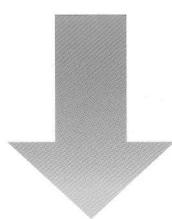
Use Gentle  
Start Up

**DEFENSIVENESS**



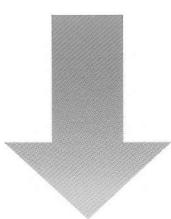
Take  
Responsibility

**CONTempt**



Describe Your Own  
Feelings and Needs  
*Don't Describe Your Partner*

**STONEWALLING**



Do Physiological  
Self-Soothing



# Gottman Repair Checklist

## I Feel

1. I'm getting scared.
2. Please say that more gently.
3. Did I do something wrong?
4. That hurt my feelings.
5. That felt like an insult.
6. I'm feeling sad.
7. I feel blamed. Can you rephrase that?
8. I'm feeling unappreciated.
9. I feel defensive. Can you rephrase that?
10. Please don't lecture me.
11. I don't feel like you understand me right now.
12. Sounds like it's all my fault.
13. I feel criticized. Can you rephrase that?
14. I'm getting worried.
15. Please don't withdraw.

## Sorry

1. My reactions were too extreme. Sorry.
2. I really blew that one.
3. Let me try again.
4. I want to be gentler to you right now and I don't know how.
5. Tell me what you hear me saying.
6. I can see my part in all this.
7. How can I make things better?
8. Let's try that one over again.
9. What you are saying is...
10. Let me start again in a softer way.
11. I'm sorry. Please forgive me.

## Get to Yes

1. You're starting to convince me.
2. I agree with part of what you're saying.
3. Let's compromise here.
4. Let's find our common ground.
5. I never thought of things that way.
6. This problem is not very serious in the big picture.
7. I think your point of view makes sense.
8. Let's agree to include both our views in a solution.
9. What are your concerns?

## I Need to Calm Down

1. Can you make things safer for me?
2. I need things to be calmer right now.
3. I need your support right now.
4. Just listen to me right now and try to understand.
5. Tell me you love me.
6. Can I have a kiss?
7. Can I take that back?
8. Please be gentler with me.
9. Please help me calm down.
10. Please be quiet and listen to me.
11. This is important to me. Please listen.
12. I need to finish what I was saying.
13. I am starting to feel flooded.
14. Can we take a break?
15. Can we talk about something else for a while?

## Stop Action!

1. I might be wrong here.
2. Please let's stop for a while.
3. Let's take a break.
4. Give me a moment. I'll be back.
5. I'm feeling flooded.
6. Please stop.
7. Let's agree to disagree here.
8. Let's start all over again.
9. Hang in there. Don't withdraw.
10. I want to change the topic.
11. We are getting off track.

## I Appreciate

1. I know this isn't your fault.
2. My part of this problem is....
3. I see your point.
4. Thank you for...
5. That's a good point.
6. We are both saying...
7. I understand.
8. I love you.
9. I am thankful for...
10. One thing I admire about you is...
11. I see what you're talking about.
12. This is not your problem, it's OUR problem.





## The Connection Master List

**Let's keep doing this:**

**Let's start doing this:**

**Let's not do this right now:**

► **Exercise:** **7-Week Guide for Creating Fondness & Admiration**

**Instructions:** The following checklist contains items that are relationship-enhancing thoughts that can replace the distress-maintaining thoughts that lead to the distance and isolation cascade. Take this checklist to work with you and do the tasks suggested below. Do one a day. Try to genuinely think and rehearse these positive thoughts about your partner and your relationship.

**Week 1:**

- I am genuinely fond of my partner. *List one characteristic you find endearing or lovable.*
- I can easily speak of the good times in our relationship. *Pick one good time and write a paragraph about it.*
- I can easily remember romantic, special times in our relationship. *Pick one such time and think about it.*
- I am physically attracted to my partner. *Think of one physical attribute you like.*
- My partner has specific qualities that make me proud. *Write down one characteristic that makes you proud.*

**Week 2:**

- I feel a genuine sense of “we” as opposed to “I” in this relationship. *Think of one thing that you both have in common.*
- We have the same general beliefs and values. *Describe one belief you both have.*
- We have common goals. *List two such goals.*
- My partner is my best friend. *What secret about you does your partner know?*
- I get lots of support in this relationship. *Think of a time that you got really good support.*

**Week 3:**

- My home is a place to come to get support and reduce stress. *List a time when your partner helped you reduce stress.*
- I can easily recall the time we first met. *Describe it on paper.*
- I remember many details about deciding to get married. *Describe it in a paragraph.*
- I can recall our wedding and honeymoon. *Describe one thing about them you enjoyed.*
- We divide up household chores in a fair way. *Describe one way that you do this on a regular basis.*

**Week 4:**

We have planned things and have a sense of control over our lives together. *Describe one thing you both planned together.*

I am proud of this relationship. *What are you proud of?*

I am proud of my family. *Be specific about a time you felt this pride.*

There are some things I don't like about my partner but I can live with them. *What are these minor faults?*

This relationship is a lot better than most I have seen. *Think of a relationship you know that's awful.*

**Week 5:**

I was lucky to meet my partner. *List one benefit being with your partner conveys to you.*

Relationships are sometimes a struggle, but it's worth it. *Think of one difficult time you weathered together.*

There is a lot of affection between us. *Plan a surprise gift for your partner for tonight.*

We are genuinely interested in one another. *Think of something to do or to talk about together that would be interesting.*

We find one another to be good companions. *Plan an outing together.*

**Week 6:**

There is lots of good loving in my relationship. *Think of a special trip you took together.*

My partner is an interesting person. *Plan something to ask your partner about that interests both of you.*

We respond well to one another. *Write a love letter to your partner and mail it.*

If I had it to do over again, I would be involved with or marry the same person. *Plan an anniversary (or other) getaway.*

There is lots of mutual respect in my relationship. *Take a class together.*

**Week 7:**

Sex is usually quite satisfying in this relationship. *Plan an evening of massage.*

We have come a long way together. *Think of all you have accomplished as a team.*

I think we can weather any storm together. *Reminisce about having made it through a hard time.*

We enjoy each other's senses of humor. *Rent a comedy video, and watch it together.*

My partner can be very cute. *Get very dressed up for an elegant evening together.*

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## Meredith Silversmith, MA, LMFT Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist | Clinical Director

**Biography:** Meredith is a Marriage and Family Therapist who specializes in working with couples and families. She is a lifelong New Yorker who is passionate about her work and truly enjoys her time with clients. Meredith works collaboratively to ensure her clients feel comfortable, listened to, and valued. She has worked with families for over a decade providing support, education, and coaching services.

Meredith believes a strong, happy partnership is key to raising healthy, resilient, and secure kids. Her mission is to educate expectant and new parents on how to establish a solid foundation on which to build their family. Meredith works to provide knowledge, create emotional safety for parents to explore their own childhood experiences, promote understanding of how we are influenced by the way we were raised, and help couples and individuals establish an intentional style of parenting.



Meredith is a Gottman Bringing Baby Home Program Educator and a Gottman Seven Principles Program Educator. She has completed numerous trainings on attachment, parent-child relationship dynamics, and the family system. She works with couples to help them re-establish feelings of closeness, trust, and connection. Meredith works with families to provide training on effective parenting, resolving parent-child conflict, and promoting emotional health and well-being for all members.

### Credentials/Memberships:

NYS Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist  
Gottman Method Couples Therapy Certification (In Process)  
Professional Member of Attachment Parenting International (API)  
Professional Member of Long Island Doula Association (LIDA)

### Media Mentions:

Bustle “9 Ways To Be More Honest With Your Significant Other”  
Eat Live Glow “Are You A Toxic Parent?”  
About.com “How Marriage Therapists Can Tell if Therapy Will Help You or Not”

### Blog Articles:

Happy Couples Do Small Things Often  
How To: Stay in Touch When You’re Apart  
Why Giving in is a Win  
Your Relationship 4.0 | Update Available  
Do This Today for a Better Relationship

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## Marina Voron, MA, LMFT Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist | Clinical Director

**Biography:** Marina is a Marriage and Family Therapist who strives to bring calm, closeness, and better intimacy into the busy and sometimes hectic lives of New York couples. Her approach is all about balance; she strives to create a healthy interplay between concrete interventions (“this hasn’t been working, let’s try that instead”) and depth work (“let’s explore your feelings and figure out where they come from”).

Marina believes all couples have the power to form a loving, caring, and lasting relationship given the right tools. Her true passion and strength is helping couples learn to incorporate new skills to improve communication, deepen their connection, and improve intimacy to build the life they want. She strives to create a supportive and open environment where partners are able to work through challenges and learn practical ways to communicate better, work through ongoing issues, push through impasses, and enrich their intimate lives. She believes that happy couples make collaborative and supportive parents, and raise well-adjusted children. By focusing on strengthening the parental relationship the whole family wins.



Marina is a Gottman Bringing Baby Home Program Educator and a Gottman Seven Principles Program Educator. She is currently completing her Sex Therapy Certification at the Modern Institute for Sex Therapy in New York. She has completed numerous trainings in couples and family therapy that help guide her work and help her couples and families achieve lasting results. She works with couples and individuals to help them learn new methods of communication to manage conflict and deepen loving connections.

### Credentials/Memberships:

NYS Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist  
Gottman Method Couples Therapy Certification (In Process)  
Sex Therapy Certification (In Process)  
Clinical Member of the American Association of Sexual Educators, Counselors, and Therapists

### Media Mentions:

Yahoo Health “7 Signs You’re Having an Emotional Affair”  
Conscious Magazine “Defining Feminism for What it Really Is”  
AskMen “Bedroom Sex Upgrades”

### Blog Articles:

Want to Feel More in Love? Try a New Activity Together  
Kissing: Why it Died and How to Revive it (and Make it Better than Ever)!  
How To: Get Your Husband to Really Hear You  
Emotional Affairs | Part I: What is an Emotional Affair?  
Emotional Affairs | Part II: Am I Having an Emotional Affair?  
Emotional Affairs | Part III: I’m Having an Emotional Affair – What Do I Do Now?