

The Winter Sound Relationship House

The Sound Relationship House theory, developed by Drs. John and Julie Gottman, features nine components of a healthy relationship represented as levels of a house. Partners build upon each level to create a sturdy bond. For more than 20 years, it's given countless couples the tools they need to develop happy, healthy relationships.



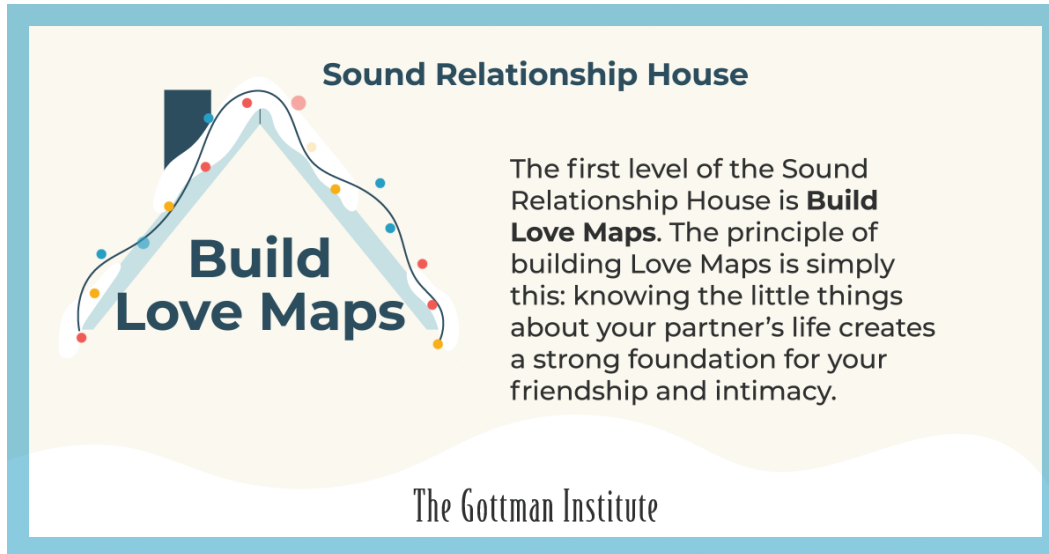
Sound Relationship House

gottman

The Winter Sound Relationship House

First Level:

Build Love Maps



Sound Relationship House

The first level of the Sound Relationship House is **Build Love Maps**. The principle of building Love Maps is simply this: knowing the little things about your partner's life creates a strong foundation for your friendship and intimacy.

Build Love Maps

The Gottman Institute

How well do you know your partner's inner world, their history, worries, stresses, joys, and hopes?

Build Love Maps is the first floor of The Sound Relationship House. The concept is simple: you and your partner should know each other intimately.

Without Love Maps, you can't know your partner. Emotionally intelligent couples are familiar with each other's worlds. They remember major life events, and they keep updating their information as the facts and feelings of their partner change.

Couples who have detailed love maps of each other's worlds are far better prepared to cope with stressful events and conflict. Those who are aware of what their partner is feeling and thinking aren't as thrown off course by changes and stress in their life. They are better prepared to weather any storm together.

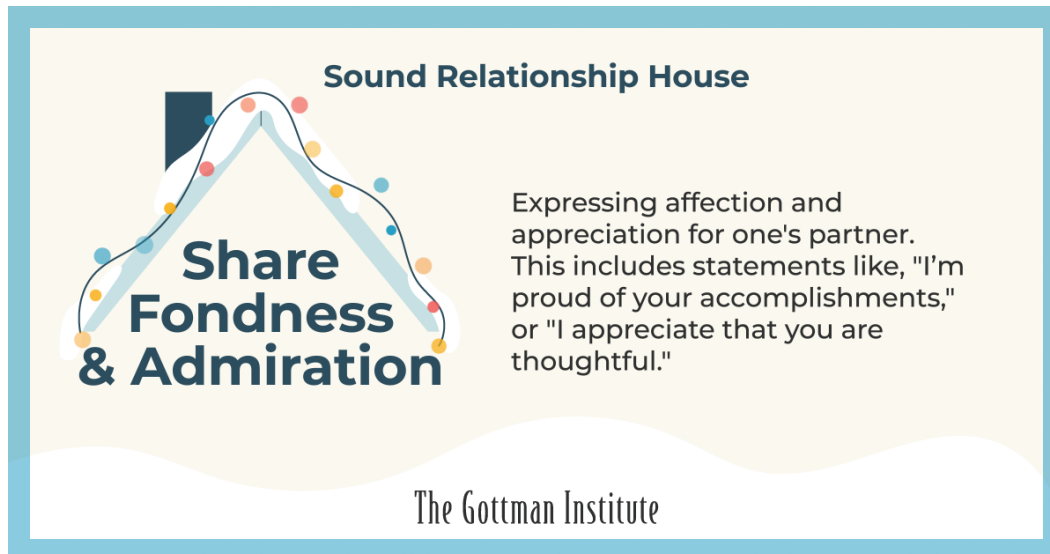
TO DO THIS MONTH TO Build Love Maps:

- Ask open-ended questions**
- Tell stories**
- Talk about fond memories**
- Discuss hopes for the future**

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Second Level:

Share Fondness and Admiration



Sometimes, you may find that you've been investing so much time in your jobs, kids, massive to-do lists, and goals, but not in your connection. As a result, that connection can start to feel like it's fading away.

The good news! There are many ways you can increase the positivity in your relationship to rebuild intimacy and friendship.

Share Fondness and Admiration is the second floor of The Sound Relationship House. It's all about vocalizing the characteristics that you appreciate and love about your partner, big or small, to grow affection and respect in your relationship.

Look for ways of letting the other person know that they are important and valued, focus on what you cherish in each other and share those thoughts regularly, and show affection on a regular basis.

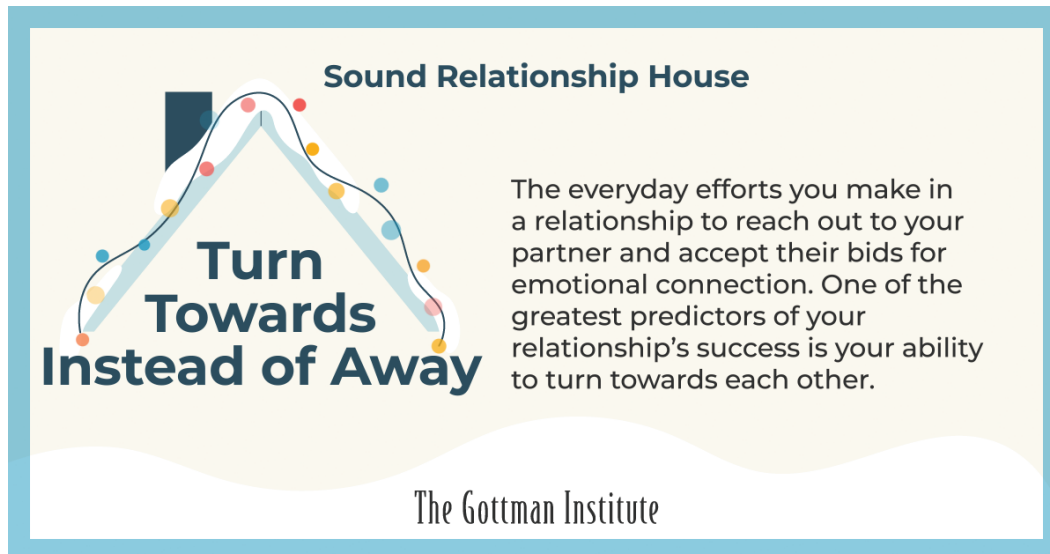
TO DO THIS MONTH TO Share Fondness and Admiration:

- Give your partner a genuine compliment
- Catch your partner doing something "right" and thank them
- Tell your partner you love them
- Share a favorite memory from your past together
- Tell your partner how proud you are of them or how proud you are of the relationship
- Be physically affectionate with your partner
- Express appreciation for the ways they have supported you now or in the past
- Surprise them with a gift or love note just because you thought about them

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Third Level:

Turn Towards Instead of Away



Turning towards instead of away is the third level in *The Sound Relationship House*, and it all starts with bids.

Bids are verbal or nonverbal gestures between a couple that signal a need for connection. They can be big or small, spoken or unspoken, obvious or indistinct.

There are three ways to respond to a bid:

1. Turning towards (*acknowledging the bid*)
2. Turning away (*ignoring or missing the bid*)
3. Turning against (*rejecting the bid in an argumentative or belligerent way*)

Healthy couples constantly make and turn towards bids to connect. When bids are ignored or rejected, partners are more inclined to criticize each other and become frustrated.

Practice recognizing and *turning toward* your partner's bids to create a safe space for you both to express yourselves and your needs. When you make a point to really listen and focus on your partner, it can do wonders for your connection.

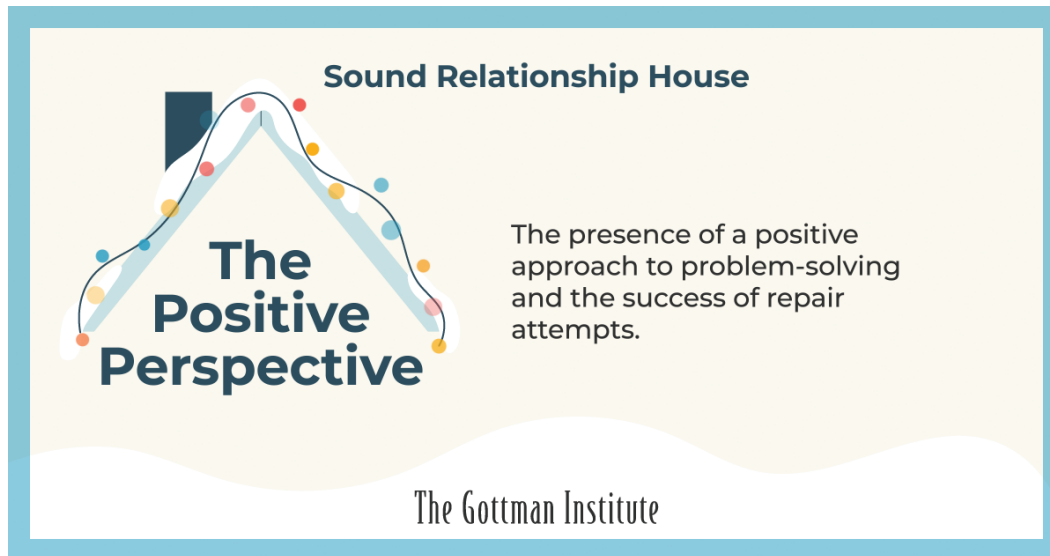
TO DO THIS MONTH TO Turn Towards:

- Make many small bids of your own every day**
- Watch for your partner's verbal and nonverbal bids**
- Kiss hello and goodbye (a six-second kiss is ideal and has romantic potential—it's proven!)**
- Verbally acknowledge when your partner looks stressed**
- Compliment your partner**
- Make eye contact when they ask you a question and engage with them when they bring up a topic of conversation**

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Fourth Level:

The Positive Perspective



Do you have a positive view of your partner?

When you're away from your partner, do you think about how they don't help out around the house enough or about disagreements you've had, or do you reminisce about past memories and think about how you can't wait to see them again?

The Positive Perspective is the fourth level of The Sound Relationship House. It means that you give your partner the benefit of the doubt and you believe that you're on the same team, which in turn solidifies your union and strengthens you from the inside out.

Dr. John Gottman found that having a Positive Perspective of your partner and your relationship helps to more effectively solve problems during conflict, make more repair attempts, and generally see your partner in a more positive light.

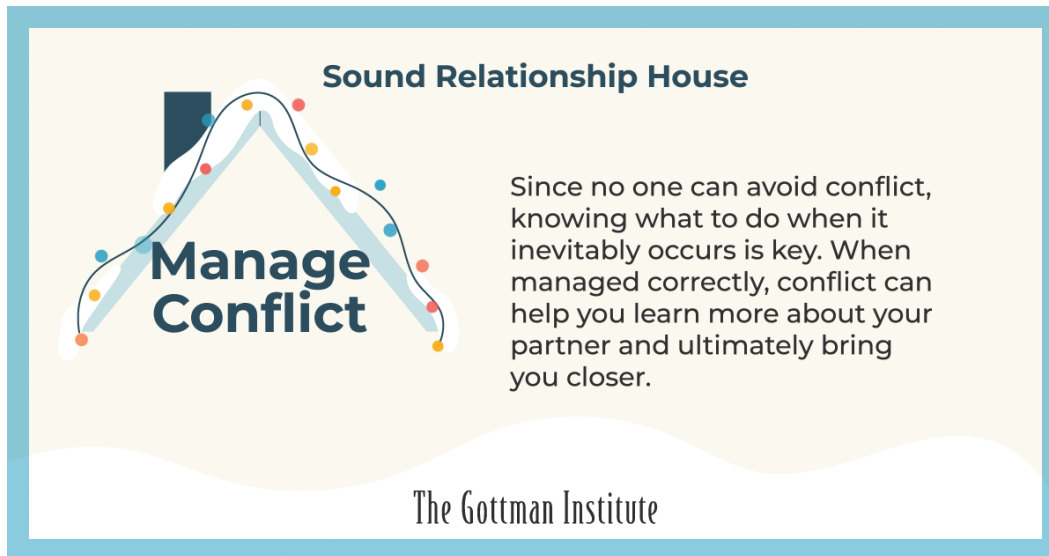
TO DO THIS MONTH TO Maintain a Positive Perspective:

- Accept your partner's influence. When you accept your partner, you also accept their influence when discussing problems and solutions.**
- Increase fondness and admiration in your relationship. Tell your partner what you love about them regularly, express how proud you are of your relationship, and be physically affectionate with your partner.**
- Respond to bids for connection. Make it a point to really listen and focus on your partner when they verbally or nonverbally ask for your attention.**

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Fifth Level:

Manage Conflict



Do you seek resolution to every disagreement with your partner? Do you feel like you must agree on everything for your arguments to truly be over?

You might be approaching conflict incorrectly in your relationship.

When you *manage* conflict rather than *resolve* conflict, it can help you learn more about your partner and ultimately bring you closer.

Manage Conflict is the fifth level of The Sound Relationship House and focuses on how you and your partner should approach conflict for a healthy relationship.

You might not be able to agree on everything, and that's okay. As long as you and your partner effectively *manage* conflict in your relationship, you're working towards a stronger Sound Relationship House.

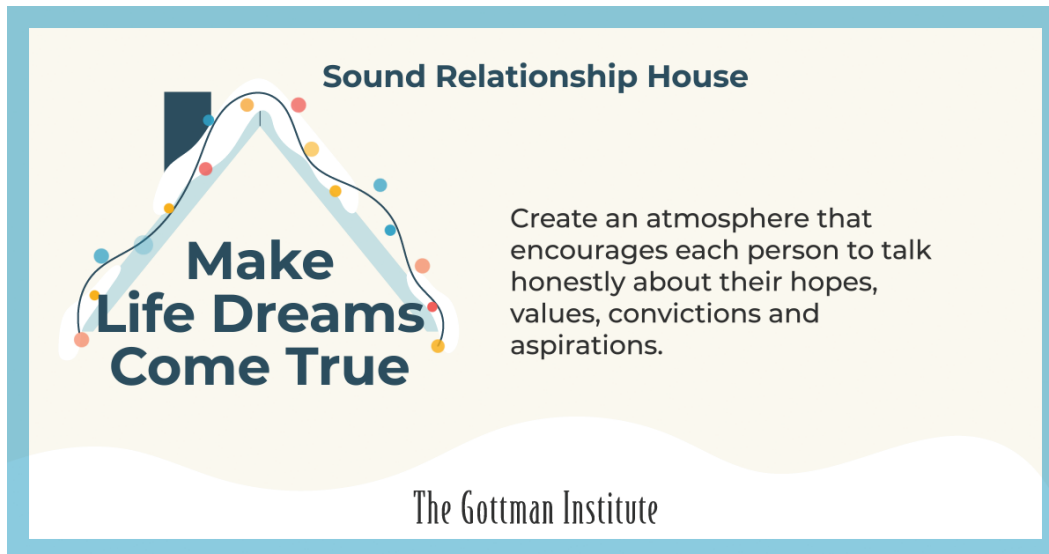
TO DO THIS MONTH WHEN Managing Conflict:

- Accept your partner's influence. Take their feelings and desires into account instead of doing everything your own way.**
- Whether problems are solvable or perpetual (which are recurring issues that never really go away), dialogue about them.**
- When you feel yourself getting heated during an argument, self-soothing (such as taking a walk or taking deep breaths) will help you remain calm.**

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Sixth Level:

Make Life Dreams Come True



What are your life dreams? As you imagine the future, who do you want to be? What do you want to achieve?

Does your partner support your dreams? Do you support theirs? Have you determined any shared goals you're working towards as a couple?

These questions are all part of **Make Life Dreams Come True**, the sixth level of The Sound Relationship House.

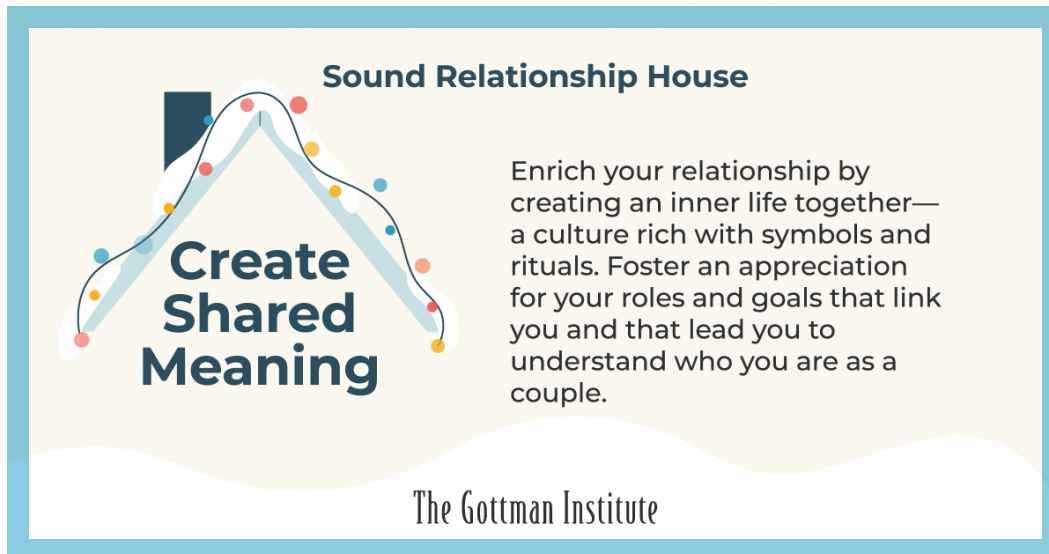
Make Life Dreams Come True means that you want the best possible life for your partner and you are willing to do what it takes to make that happen. When you make space for dreams in your relationship, you can reach your individual and shared goals with the support of your partner, and that's the best part of making your Sound Relationship House your dream home.

TO DO THIS MONTH TO Make Life Dreams Come True:

- Talk honestly about your hopes, values, convictions, and aspirations.**
- Create a no-judgment rule for discussing your dreams and goals.**
- Find ways to support your partner's dreams. It could be emotional support, monetary support, or another way.**

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Seventh Level: Create Shared Meaning



Creating shared meaning is all about understanding important visions, narratives, myths, habits, and metaphors about your relationship. These Rituals of Connection define you and your partner's life together.

The top floor of the Sound Relationship House, **Create Shared Meaning**, functions much like the foundation of Building Love Maps, except on this level, you build and understand an inner world as a couple.

The Gottmans think of it as developing a culture of symbols and rituals that express who you are as a team. These Rituals of Connection define you as a unit, and you create them together.

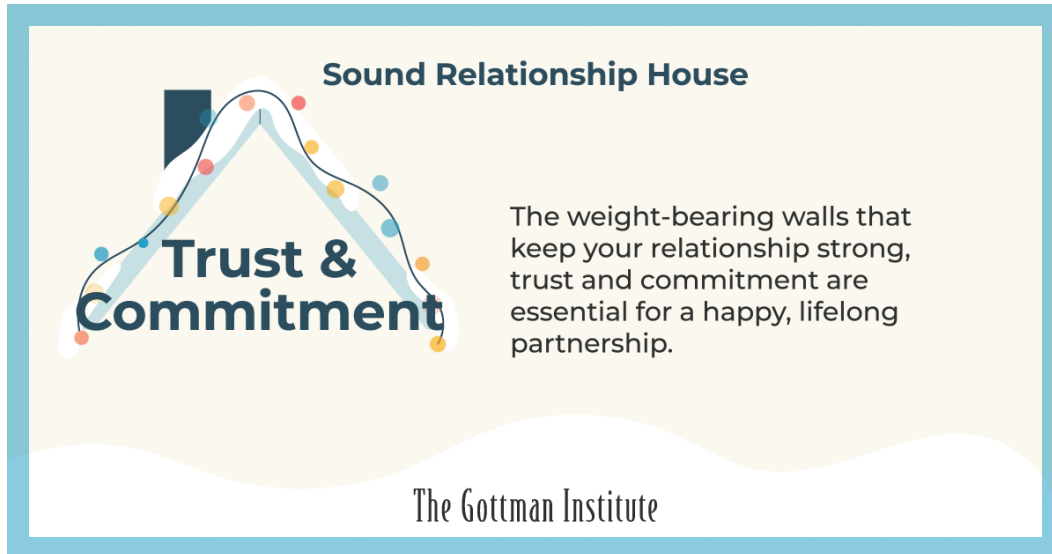
TO DO THIS MONTH TO Create Shared Meaning:

- Develop your own daily, weekly, and yearly rituals. They can be as simple as getting pizza from the place you both love every Friday night and as intricate as the unique way you celebrate birthdays.**
- Remember to honor your rituals and make time for them.**
- Examine your rituals and determine if they still work for you. You may need to adjust them throughout the course of your couplehood.**

The Winter Sound Relationship House

The Pillars:

Trust and Commitment



As important as all the floors of the Sound Relationship House are, they don't hold together without the pillars of trust and commitment.

Within The Sound Relationship House, **trust and commitment** support the overall structure. They are the weight-bearing walls that keep your relationship from falling apart, and they're essential for your happy, lifelong partnership.

Although it may seem obvious, Drs. John and Julie Gottman found that both are essential for guarding against the storms of life.

Trust and commitment are built in your relationship every time you choose your partner.

TO DO THIS MONTH TO Build Trust and Commitment:

- Make the decision to have faith in each other.**
- Cherish one another and the life you have built together.**
- Stay loyal to each other.**
- Pledge to always help your love grow.**