

COMMUNICATION

How talk with people, so that they think it is worth listening?

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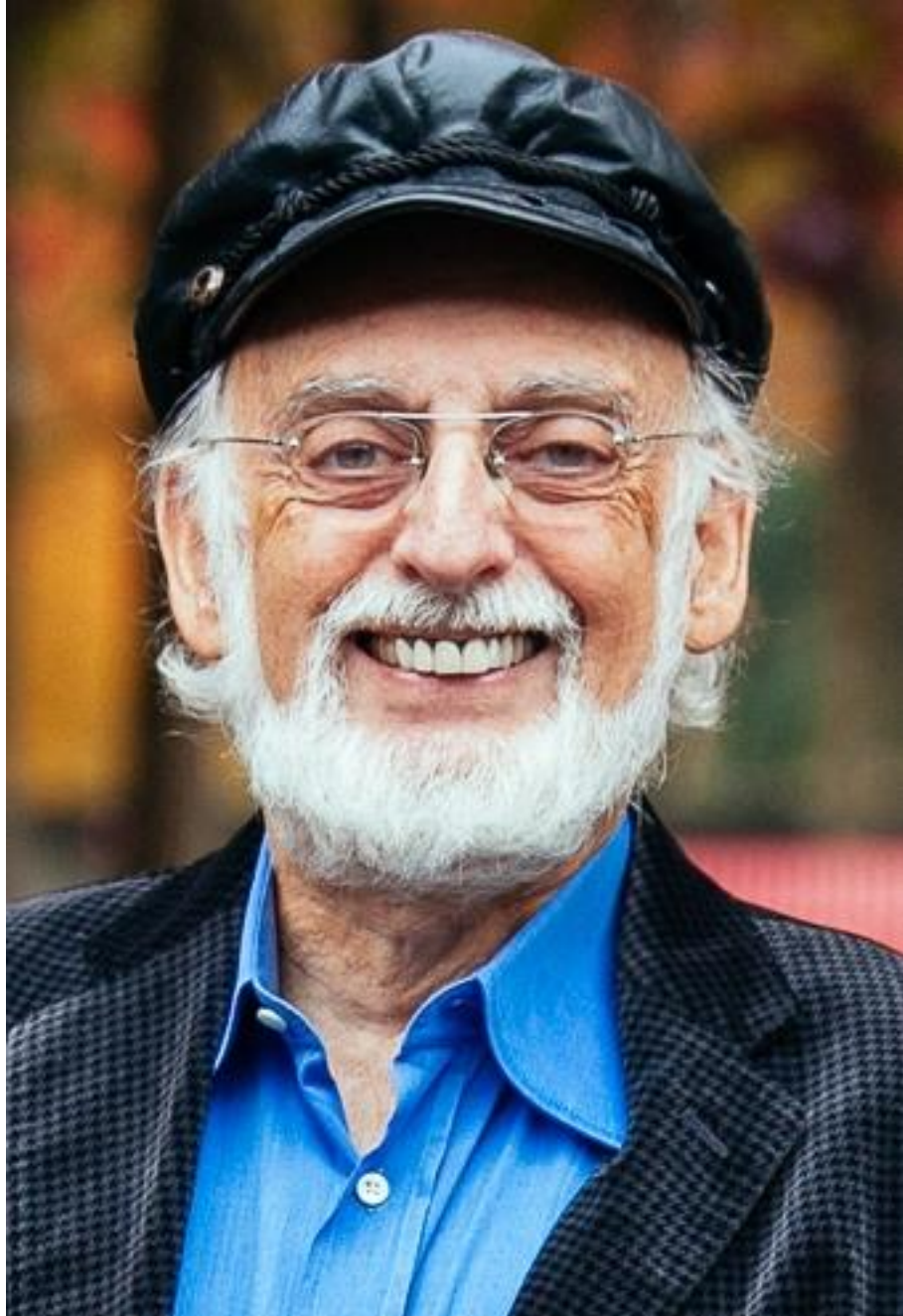


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JOHN MORDECAI GOTTMAN

John Mordecai Gottman is an American psychologist, professor emeritus of psychology at the University of Washington. He has worked for over four decades on divorce prediction and marriage stability and has written a book called:

'SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF A SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE'.

One of the major principles he writes about is how to resolve conflict and to that principle we would like to refer. Admittedly, Gottman in this book refers to marriages, but it can equally well refer to any difficult situation where people who are more or less related to each other and they have to discuss difficult issues, solve mutual problems, and look for compromises. To do this, they need to talk - they need to communicate with each other, and communicate effectively.





Effective communication with other people is extremely important, not only within the family but also in our professional environment. This skill is especially difficult when we are in conflict with our interlocutor, we have a negative attitude towards him/her, we do not believe that a conversation with him/her will bring any result, or, what is even worse, we do not respect him/her.





However, it happens in life that even though we don't feel like it, in many situations it is necessary to communicate with our disliked interlocutor. Such a difficult communication is a kind of art. In short, it is about being able to work out a compromise in peace. To do this, we need to find at least a little bit of respect and readiness to accept each other's views and faults. The key to overcome problems and conflicts between disputants is to use the following model of solving them consisting of several **STEPS**.



1

STEP ONE: SOFTEN THE START OF THE DISCUSSION



Softening the start of a discussion contributes significantly to conflict resolution, because (as research reveals) all discussions end with the same tone they began with. An accusatory tone at the beginning of a discussion usually triggers feelings of contempt, criticism, defensiveness, a wall of indifference, which leads to a flood of negative feelings, resulting in an increased sense of emotional detachment and often anger, which undermine our functioning together. Often the cause of misunderstandings lies in the fact that two people, in order to avoid constant quarrels, distance themselves from each other so much that the friendship and sense of community or bond between them disappears altogether. Remember that if you hit a sensitive spot of your partner, you will hurt them. The result may be war or withdrawal rather than a meaningful discussion that would lead to the desired effect. So if you are angry with your interlocutor, or just are not fond of them, think carefully about how to start the conversation best.



ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

WHEN WE START DISCUSSING DIFFICULT ISSUES

01

My interlocutor criticises me a lot.

02

I hate the way my partner discusses things.

03

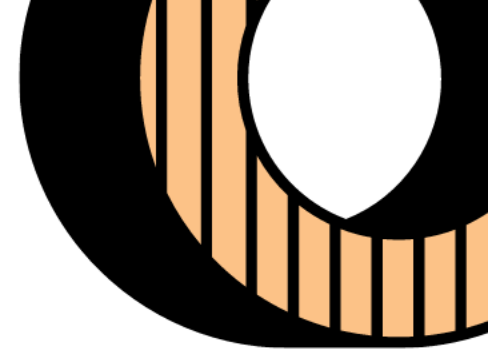
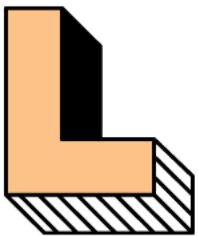
Our arguments and disagreements with each other come from nowhere.

04

Before I know it, we're already arguing.

05

When my partner complains, I feel that he or she is picking on me.





ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

WHEN WE START DISCUSSING DIFFICULT ISSUES

06

I feel that if things don't work out, it's always my fault.

07

My partner has an overly negative attitude towards me.

08

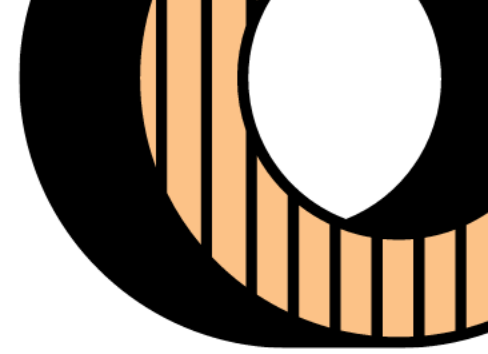
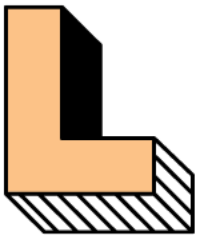
I feel that I constantly have to deal with personal attacks.

09

I often have to deny accusations made against me.

10

Sensitive topics are discussed in a way that is offensive to me.





ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

WHEN WE START DISCUSSING DIFFICULT ISSUES

11

Sometimes my partner complains about something in a prideful or superior tone.

12

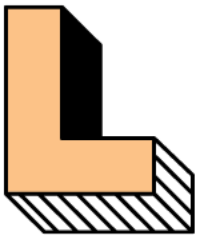
I am fed up with all the hostility between us.

13

When accusations are made by my partner, I feel like getting up and walking away.

14

I find my partner's hostility annoying and disturbing.





IF YOU ANSWERED "YES" TO MOST OF THESE QUESTIONS, IT'S NOT GOOD.

HOW TO FIND A COMPROMISE WITH SOMEONE LIKE THIS?



HERE ARE A FEW TIPS THAT CAN HELP EASE THE BEGINNING OF A DISCUSSION:

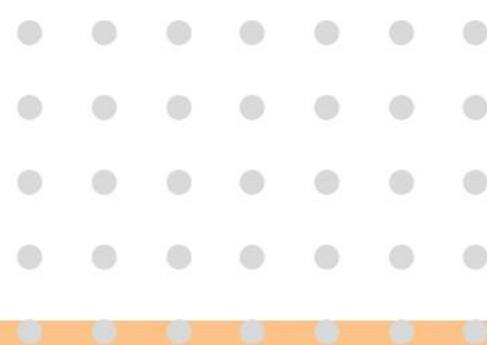
1 .You can complain to yourself, but you cannot blame your interlocutor.

“

COMPLAIN: *"THIS HAS BEEN A TERRIBLE WEEK. I AM VERY TIRED AND I DON'T HAVE THE STRENGTH TO KEEP WORKING LIKE THIS. I NEED MORE REST. I NEED YOUR HELP".*

“

BLAMING: *"EVERYTHING IS ON MY HEAD. YOU ARE NOT HELPING ME. I AM ALONE WITH EVERYTHING BECAUSE YOU ARE NOT INTERESTED IN OUR PROBLEMS. IT IS YOUR FAULT THAT THIS IS HAPPENING".*



HERE ARE A FEW TIPS THAT CAN HELP EASE THE BEGINNING OF A DISCUSSION:

2. Create sentences where the subject is "I" and not "you"

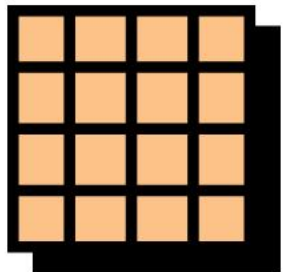


INSTEAD OF ***"YOU DON'T LISTEN TO ME AT ALL"***

TRY ***"I WISH YOU WOULD LISTEN TO ME"***

DON'T SAY ***"YOU LIE ALL THE TIME"*** BUT ***"I FEEL YOU ARE NOT TELLING THE TRUTH"***,

NOT ***"YOU DON'T GIVE ME ENOUGH TIME"*** BUT ***"I WISH YOU WOULD GIVE ME MORE TIME"***



HERE ARE A FEW TIPS THAT CAN HELP EASE THE BEGINNING OF A DISCUSSION:

3. Describe what is happening rather than judging:

“

Say ***"You have been late for work 3 times this week - Wednesday, Thursday and Friday"*** rather than ***"You are irresponsible because you are constantly late for work"***.



HERE ARE A FEW TIPS THAT CAN HELP EASE THE BEGINNING OF A DISCUSSION:

4. Be clear and precise about what you mean.



Instead of ***"You could prepare the report yourself for conference for once"*** say ***"Prepare a report for this conference"***.



5. Try to be polite and appreciate your partner.

6. Do not hold anything in mind.

2

STEP TWO: BECOMING AWARE OF HOW TO MAKE AND RECEIVE ATTEMPTS TO SAVE THE DISCUSSION



When your conversation has already started badly or when you suddenly get into a cycle of mutual accusations, you can prevent disaster if you know how to put the brakes on. These brakes can be called 'trying to save the discussion'. It is not that more clever and smart ways of saving the discussion should be used, but that they would reach your interlocutor. This is applicable if the atmosphere between you is not disturbed by excessive hostility. The basis for a particular attempt to save the discussion is the condition of the particular team in which you are working, for example. In a hostile atmosphere it is difficult to follow up on attempts to rescue the discussion.



DISCUSSION RESCUE ATTEMPT QUESTIONNAIRE:

IN ORDER TO EVALUATE THE SUCCESS OF YOUR ATTEMPT TO RESCUE THE DISCUSSION, ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS. READ THE SENTENCES AND ANSWER YES OR NO

When we try to resolve a conflict:

01

We are able to take breaks when necessary.

02

My partner usually accepts my apology.

03

I am able to admit that I am wrong.

04

I calm down easily.

05

We keep our sense of humour.

06

When my partner states that we should talk to each other differently, he or she is usually right.



IN ORDER TO EVALUATE THE SUCCESS OF YOUR ATTEMPT TO RESCUE THE DISCUSSION, ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS. READ THE SENTENCES AND ANSWER YES OR NO

When we try to resolve a conflict:



07

When a discussion gets off on the wrong foot, my attempts to save it usually have a positive outcome.

08

We are able to listen to each other, even if we have different opinions on a particular subject.

09

When a discussion gets too heated, we are able to step back and start over.

10

My partner is able to calm me down when I get upset.



IN ORDER TO EVALUATE THE SUCCESS OF YOUR ATTEMPT TO RESCUE THE DISCUSSION, ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS. READ THE SENTENCES AND ANSWER YES OR NO

When we try to resolve a conflict:

11

I am confident that we can solve most of our problems.

12

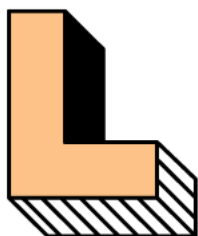
When I talk about how we should improve the way we talk, my partner listens to me.

13

Even if things are not going well between us sometimes, we are able to overcome the differences that divide us.

14

A sense of humour usually helps my partner to overcome hostility.





IN ORDER TO EVALUATE THE SUCCESS OF YOUR ATTEMPT TO RESCUE THE DISCUSSION, ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS. READ THE SENTENCES AND ANSWER YES OR NO

When we try to resolve a conflict:

15

When necessary, we are able to start a conversation again and make it better.

16

When emotions take over, it really helps me to express how upset I am.

17

We are able to talk about the most significant differences that divide us.



If you learn to save the conversation when negative feelings overwhelm, you will be able to resolve conflicts better and get to know each other better.



3



STEP THREE: CALM YOURSELF AND YOUR PARTNER



In most cases, when one interlocutor does not pick up on the partner's attempt to rescue the discussion, the reason is that he or she has been flooded by a wave of negative feelings and therefore can hardly hear what is being said to him or her. When this happens, the person feels devastated both emotionally and physically. They are most likely to feel resentful or victimised. At the same time, their heart beats at an accelerated rhythm, they sweat and hold their breath. Remember that it is more difficult for a man's body to recover from an argument than it is for a woman's body. It's worth trying 'freeze mode' then. Take a break to cool down. For example, have a cup of coffee, go for a short walk, listen to music, etc. Everyone knows best what can calm them down.

4



STEP FOUR: COMPROMISE



Whatever you think about it, the only solution to a problem may be a compromise. The team you work in will be neither intimate nor respectful when each member of the team seeks to solve the problem in his or her own way. Such approach creates a sense of inequality and injustice, and the teamwork fails as a result. Before you attempt to resolve any conflict, it is important to remember that the key to compromise in general, is the fourth principle - accepting influence. This means that in order to reach a compromise, you cannot close yourself off to the opinions and expectations of your interlocutor. This does not mean that you have to agree with everything your interlocutor says or believes, but you must be prepared to consider his or her point of view. Your interlocutor can help you to see things from their perspective.

5

STEP FIVE: TOLERATE EACH OTHER'S FAULTS



Very often communication between partners is hampered by a number of "if onlys" (e.g. if only our partner was smarter, more decent, more responsible, better organised, etc.). It is difficult to resolve any conflicts when you do not accept your partner's faults and quirks - in this way you can get stuck in an endless struggle to transform your partner, and conflict resolution is not about changing the other person, but about negotiating, finding solutions and ways to fit in with each other.



BIBLIOGRAPHY



“

JOHN MORDECAI
GOTTMAN

*Seven Principles of a Successful
Marriage*





Erasmus+

Project „Conscious Parent Academy”
No 2020-1-PL01-KA204-082283
Implementation period - 01.09.2020-31.08.2023

CONSCIOUS PARENT ACADEMY



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Replacement parent urgently needed!



The main goal of the project is to raise the educational competences of foster families and to expand and develop the competences of educators and other employees supporting adult learners by:

- implementation of various forms of support: stationary training, online training, blended mobility.
- creation of tools supporting the implementation of tasks resulting from foster care (or its alternative counterparts in partner countries)
- improving the image of foster families

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THANKS FOR WATCHING



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