

Sound Relationship House Prompt

This activity is based on Gottman's method on the ingredients that form a strong bond in relationships. These are meant to be a guide and exploration.



Floor 1: Build Love Maps

Maintaining awareness of our partner's world. What are their likes and dislikes? Who is your partner's best friend? Did they have a happy childhood? How do they prefer to relax after a tense day? **Building Love Maps** means asking the right questions to learn more about your partner. In an ideal relationship, you and your partner know each other better than anyone else.

List below ways you can create opportunities and take initiative with updating and building the love map for your partner?

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Floor 2: Share Fondness and Admiration

Everyone needs to hear something nice about themselves, and it means the most when it comes from your partner. **Sharing fondness and admiration** sounds like vocalizing the characteristics that you appreciate (Love languages may come into play here). Perhaps you admire their sense of humor or the way they're always willing to help someone in need. In healthy relationships, you can articulate the big and little reasons you love your partner.

What are some ways you can spontaneously and/or consistently help your partner feel your fondness and admiration for them?

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Floor 3: Turn Towards

When you need attention, support, and comfort from your partner, you are likely to say something or make a gesture to elicit a response from them—what the Gottmans call a “bid.” Your partner **turns toward** that bid when they reply with what you need. Consistently turning away (or worst yet, turning *against*) a bid spells disaster for any relationship. When you both recognize and turn toward each other's bids, you create a safe space for you both to express yourselves and your needs.

What are ways in which you extend bids of connection to your partner?

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Floor 4: The Positive Perspective

Isn't so much of life all in how you look at it? That's what the Positive Perspective offers. Couples in healthy relationships see the best in each other and don't rush to offense or criticism. So, when your partner rushes out the door and forgets to kiss you goodbye, a **Positive Perspective** means that you give your partner the benefit of the doubt that they were absentmindedly preoccupied rather than intentionally negligent. Believing that you're on the same team solidifies your union and strengthens you from the inside out.

What positive intentions would you want your partner to know?

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Floor 5: Manage Conflict

Since you can't avoid conflict, knowing what to do when it inevitably shows is key. First, you need to accept your partner's **influence**—meaning you take their feelings and desires into account instead of doing everything your own way. Second, whether problems are **solvable or perpetual**, you dialogue about them. Third, 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.

What ways can you both work together in conflict?

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_____	_____
_____	_____

Floor 6: Make Life Dreams Come True

The beauty of good companionship is that you have someone who will not only encourage you in your goals but also help you reach them. This level can look like being supportive of them going back to school or paying off debt. **Making life dreams come true** shows that you want the best possible life for your partner and you are willing to do what it takes to make that happen.

What ways can you support your partner's dreams? What role does your partner want you to play?

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Floor 7: Create Shared Meaning

The top of the Sound Relationship House functions much like its foundation of 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. It 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. These [Rituals of Connection](#) define you as a unit, and you create them together.

What ways can you create opportunities for spontaneous and/or consistent meaningful moments with each other?

The Weight-Bearing Walls of 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](#). In a healthy, supportive relationship, two people make the decision to have faith in each other and stick together. They freely love one another and pledge to help that love grow. Some examples to build this are below, but take a moment to create them on your own.

What ways can you show your trust and commitment towards your relationship? What are the important ingredients that make up trust and commitment for you?

Here are common examples

1. Make trustworthiness a main priority in your relationship
2. Act to maximize your partner's well-being
3. Know that trust is built in small positive moments
4. Avoid negative comparisons
5. Generate frequent thoughts and acts that cherish your partner's positive qualities and minimize your focus on their negative faults

With dedication towards these principles and the ingredients within them guiding you, you'll have a relationship that can weather any storm.

Inspired by Gottman Institute Inc.