



## Overview

**"The Relationship Cure: A 5 Step Guide to Strengthening Your Marriage, Family, and Friendships"** by Dr. John Gottman is a powerful book that offers practical strategies for improving communication and deepening emotional connections in all types of relationships. Drawing on decades of research, Dr. Gottman provides readers with a clear framework for understanding the dynamics of healthy relationships and offers actionable steps to enhance them.

## Core Concepts

At the heart of *"The Relationship Cure"* is the idea that strong relationships are built on emotional connection, which is achieved through what Dr. Gottman calls "bids for connection." These bids are attempts to gain attention, affirmation, or affection from another person. How these bids are received—whether they are acknowledged, ignored, or rejected—plays a crucial role in the health of the relationship.

Dr. Gottman emphasizes that the quality of our relationships is determined not by the absence of conflict but by the way we respond to each other's bids for connection. By recognizing and responding positively to these bids, we can strengthen our relationships and build a deeper sense of trust and intimacy.

## The Five Steps to Strengthening Relationships

Dr. Gottman outlines a five-step process that individuals can use to improve their relationships, whether with a spouse, family member, friend, or colleague:

- 1 Understand the Emotional Bids:** The first step is to recognize the bids for connection in your relationships. These can be verbal or non-verbal, direct or indirect. Understanding when someone is reaching out for connection is key to responding effectively.
- 2 Turn Toward Your Partner:** The way you respond to bids for connection can either strengthen or weaken the relationship. Dr. Gottman encourages readers to "turn toward" these bids by acknowledging them and responding with interest and support, rather than turning away or ignoring them.
- 3 Reframe and Refocus:** This step involves changing the way you perceive interactions in your relationships. Instead of focusing on negative aspects or conflicts, reframe your perspective to see the positive intent behind bids for connection. This shift in focus can help you respond more positively and constructively.



**4 Nurture Your Relationships:** Building strong relationships requires ongoing effort and attention. Dr. Gottman offers practical advice for nurturing your relationships, such as regularly expressing appreciation, engaging in meaningful conversations, and making time for each other.

**5 Turn Conflicts into Opportunities:** Finally, Dr. Gottman discusses how to handle conflicts in a way that strengthens relationships rather than damaging them. He emphasizes the importance of addressing issues calmly, listening to each other's perspectives, and finding solutions that work for both parties.

## **Practical Applications**

Throughout the book, Dr. Gottman provides exercises, examples, and case studies that illustrate how the five-step process can be applied in real-life situations. These tools help readers practice the skills needed to improve their relationships and build stronger emotional connections.

## **Conclusion**

*"The Relationship Cure"* is an invaluable resource for anyone looking to improve their relationships, whether with a partner, family member, friend, or colleague. Dr. John Gottman's research-based insights and practical strategies provide a clear path to building stronger, more fulfilling connections with the people who matter most. By understanding and responding positively to emotional bids, readers can transform their relationships and create deeper, more meaningful bonds.



## **Blog**

### **Transform Your Relationships with the Power of Emotional Connection: Insights from "The Relationship Cure"**

In our fast-paced world, building and maintaining strong relationships can be challenging. Whether it's with your partner, family members, friends, or colleagues, the quality of your relationships profoundly impacts your happiness and well-being. Dr. John Gottman's book, *"The Relationship Cure: A 5 Step Guide to Strengthening Your Marriage, Family, and Friendships,"* offers a research-backed approach to improving your relationships through the power of emotional connection.

### **The Key to Strong Relationships: Emotional Bids**

At the core of Dr. Gottman's approach is the concept of "emotional bids." These are the small, everyday gestures we make to connect with others—whether it's a smile, a question, a request for help, or even just a comment about the weather. These bids are our way of asking for attention, affection, or affirmation. How we respond to these bids determines the health and strength of our relationships.

When someone makes a bid for connection, we have three options: we can turn toward the bid (respond positively), turn away from the bid (ignore it), or turn against the bid (respond negatively). The more often we turn toward each other's bids, the stronger our relationships become. Conversely, ignoring or rejecting these bids can lead to emotional distance and conflict.

### **The Five Steps to Strengthening Your Relationships**

In *"The Relationship Cure,"* Dr. Gottman outlines a five-step process to help you recognize and respond to emotional bids, improving your relationships across the board.

#### **1. Understand Emotional Bids**

The first step is to become aware of the emotional bids being made in your relationships. These bids can be subtle or overt, verbal or non-verbal. It's important to recognize that even the smallest gestures, like a casual comment or a fleeting glance, can be a bid for connection. By becoming more attuned to these bids, you can start responding in ways that strengthen your relationships.



**Tip:** Start paying attention to the ways people around you seek connection. It might be a co-worker asking how your weekend was or your partner mentioning a tough day at work. These are opportunities to turn toward their bid and show support.

## **2. Turn Toward the Bid**

When you recognize a bid for connection, the next step is to respond positively. Turning toward a bid might involve something as simple as making eye contact, offering a kind word, or actively listening to what the other person is saying. These small acts of acknowledgment go a long way in building trust and intimacy.

**Tip:** Practice active listening. When someone makes a bid, give them your full attention. Put away distractions like your phone, and show that you value the connection by engaging fully in the conversation.

## **3. Reframe and Refocus**

Conflict and misunderstandings are inevitable in any relationship, but how you perceive and respond to these moments can make all the difference. Instead of focusing on the negative aspects of an interaction, try to see the positive intent behind the other person's bid for connection. This shift in perspective can help you respond more constructively.

**Tip:** When faced with a difficult conversation, ask yourself, "What is this person really trying to communicate?" Often, behind frustration or anger is a bid for understanding, support, or connection.

## **4. Nurture Your Relationships**

Strong relationships require ongoing care and attention. This means making a conscious effort to express appreciation, engage in meaningful conversations, and spend quality time together. Regularly turning toward each other's bids reinforces the bond and creates a positive cycle of interaction.

**Tip:** Make it a habit to express gratitude and appreciation in your relationships. Whether it's a thank-you note, a compliment, or simply acknowledging someone's efforts, these gestures help maintain a strong emotional connection.

## **5. Turn Conflicts into Opportunities**



Even in the healthiest relationships, conflicts will arise. The key is to use these moments as opportunities to deepen your connection rather than as points of contention. Dr. Gottman emphasizes the importance of addressing conflicts calmly, listening to each other's perspectives, and finding solutions that work for both parties.

**Tip:** When a conflict arises, approach it with the mindset of collaboration rather than confrontation. Focus on understanding the other person's point of view and work together to find a resolution that strengthens your relationship.

## **Why Emotional Bids Matter**

Dr. Gottman's research shows that how we respond to emotional bids is one of the most important predictors of relationship success. Couples who consistently turn toward each other's bids are more likely to stay together and feel satisfied in their relationship. The same principle applies to friendships, family relationships, and even professional connections.

By understanding and responding positively to emotional bids, you can transform your relationships, creating deeper, more meaningful connections with the people who matter most.

## **Final Thoughts: The Path to Stronger Relationships**

*"The Relationship Cure"* provides a powerful framework for building and maintaining healthy, fulfilling relationships. Whether you're looking to improve your marriage, strengthen your bond with family, or enhance your friendships, Dr. Gottman's five-step process offers practical, actionable advice that can make a real difference.

Remember, relationships are built one interaction at a time. By recognizing and responding to emotional bids, you can create a positive cycle of connection, trust, and intimacy that will sustain your relationships for years to come.

**For more tips and resources on building strong, intimate relationships, visit [CoupleStrong](http://CoupleStrong.com).**



## Handout

# Building Stronger Relationships: A Practical Guide

Inspired by "The Relationship Cure" by Dr. John Gottman

**Introduction** This handout is designed to help you strengthen your relationships with your partner, family, friends, and colleagues. Based on Dr. John Gottman's book *"The Relationship Cure,"* this guide focuses on understanding and responding to emotional bids—the key to building deeper connections and more fulfilling relationships.

## Understanding Emotional Bids

**What Are Emotional Bids?** Emotional bids are the small, everyday gestures we make to connect with others. These can be verbal or non-verbal, direct or indirect. Examples include asking a question, sharing a story, making a joke, or simply giving a smile. These bids are our way of seeking attention, affection, or affirmation from those around us.

**Why Do They Matter?** How we respond to emotional bids significantly impacts the quality of our relationships. When we respond positively, we strengthen our connection. When we ignore or reject bids, it can create emotional distance and lead to misunderstandings or conflict.

## The Three Types of Responses to Emotional Bids

### 6 Turning Toward

**What It Means:** Responding positively to a bid, showing interest, support, or affection.

**Examples:** Nodding and engaging in conversation when your partner talks about their day; laughing at a friend's joke; offering help when a colleague asks for advice.

**Impact:** Turning toward bids builds trust, intimacy, and emotional connection.



## 7 Turning Away

**What It Means:** Ignoring or not acknowledging the bid.

**Examples:** Not responding when someone asks you a question; staying silent when your partner expresses a concern; being distracted on your phone when a friend is talking to you.

**Impact:** Turning away can make the other person feel unimportant or rejected, leading to emotional distance.

## 8 Turning Against

**What It Means:** Responding negatively to the bid, often with hostility or criticism.

**Examples:** Responding sarcastically to a simple question; dismissing your partner's concerns with criticism; showing irritation when someone seeks your attention.

**Impact:** Turning against bids can escalate conflicts and damage trust in the relationship.

## Five Steps to Strengthening Your Relationships

### 1 Recognize Emotional Bids

- **Objective:** Become more aware of the bids for connection in your relationships.
- **Action:** Pay attention to the small ways people around you seek your attention, affection, or affirmation. These might include questions, comments, gestures, or even a look.
- **Tip:** Keep a mental note of how often you notice these bids and how you typically respond.

### 2 Turn Toward the Bid

- **Objective:** Respond positively and engage with the bid.
- **Action:** When you notice a bid, make an effort to respond with interest or support. This could mean asking a follow-up question, offering a kind word, or simply being present.



- **Tip:** Practice active listening—give your full attention, maintain eye contact, and show empathy.

### 3 Reframe and Refocus

- **Objective:** Shift your focus to see the positive intent behind bids, especially during conflicts.
- **Action:** When you find yourself frustrated or annoyed, try to understand the underlying need or emotion behind the bid. Reframe the situation in a more positive light.
- **Tip:** Ask yourself, "What is this person really trying to communicate?" This can help you respond more constructively.

### 4 Nurture Your Relationships

- **Objective:** Build a positive cycle of interaction by regularly turning toward bids.
- **Action:** Make a habit of engaging with those around you in meaningful ways. Regularly express appreciation, share moments of connection, and be present for the people who matter to you.
- **Tip:** Schedule regular quality time with loved ones, free from distractions, to strengthen your bonds.

### 5 Turn Conflicts into Opportunities

- **Objective:** Use conflicts as a way to deepen your understanding and connection.
- **Action:** When conflicts arise, approach them with a mindset of collaboration rather than confrontation. Listen to each other's perspectives and work together to find a solution.
- **Tip:** After a conflict, make time to reconnect. Apologize if needed, and reaffirm your commitment to the relationship.





## Practical Exercises

### 1 Bid Awareness Journal

- **Objective:** Increase your awareness of emotional bids and your responses.
- **Exercise:** For one week, keep a journal of the bids you notice from your partner, friends, or colleagues. Record how you responded and reflect on how it impacted the interaction.

### 2 Active Listening Practice

- **Objective:** Improve your ability to turn toward bids by actively engaging in conversations.
- **Exercise:** Choose one conversation each day where you commit to practicing active listening. Focus on what the other person is saying without interrupting, and respond with empathy.

### 3 Conflict Reframing

- **Objective:** Learn to see conflicts as opportunities for connection.
- **Exercise:** The next time you experience a conflict, take a step back and ask yourself what emotional bids might be underlying the disagreement. Use this understanding to guide your response.

## Final Thoughts

Building stronger relationships takes effort, but the rewards are well worth it. By understanding and responding positively to emotional bids, you can create a positive cycle of connection that strengthens your relationships over time. Use this guide as a starting point to enhance your relationships with the people who matter most.

For more tips and resources on building strong, intimate relationships, visit [CoupleStrong](http://CoupleStrong.com).

Prepared by CoupleStrong *Strengthening relationships, one connection at a time.*



## **Assessment**

### **The Relationship Cure Couples Assessment**

**Based on "The Relationship Cure" by Dr. John Gottman**

#### **Instructions:**

This assessment is designed to help you and your partner evaluate your relationship based on how well you recognize and respond to each other's emotional bids. Each partner should complete the assessment separately, and then you can come together to discuss your responses.

For each statement, rate your agreement on a scale from 1 to 5:

- 9 **1 = Strongly Disagree**
- 10 **2 = Disagree**
- 11 **3 = Neutral**
- 12 **4 = Agree**
- 13 **5 = Strongly Agree**

#### **Section 1: Recognizing Emotional Bids**

**6 I am aware of the small ways my partner seeks my attention, affection, or support.**

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

**7 I notice when my partner is trying to connect with me, even in subtle ways.**

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

**8 I can identify when my partner is making an emotional bid for connection.**

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

#### **Section 2: Turning Toward Emotional Bids**

**4 I respond positively when my partner reaches out for connection.**

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5



**5 I make an effort to engage with my partner's bids for attention or affection**

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

**6 When my partner talks to me, I listen and respond in a supportive way.**

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

### **Section 3: Turning Away from Emotional Bids**

**7 I sometimes ignore my partner's attempts to connect with me.**

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

**8 I find myself distracted or uninterested when my partner seeks my attention.**

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

**9 There are times when I don't notice my partner's bids for connection until it's too late.**

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

### **Section 4: Turning Against Emotional Bids**

**10 I sometimes respond negatively when my partner reaches out to me.**

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

**11 When I'm frustrated, I might dismiss or criticize my partner's attempts to connect.**

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

**12 I recognize that I occasionally react defensively or with irritation to my partner's bids.**

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

### **Section 5: Strengthening Emotional Connections**

**13 I make an effort to express appreciation for my partner regularly.**

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

**14 We regularly engage in meaningful conversations that strengthen our bond.**

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5



15     **We have rituals or habits that help us stay connected, even during busy times.**

◦            ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

**Scoring:**

**80-105:** Your relationship is strong, with a solid foundation of emotional connection. You both recognize and respond to each other's bids for connection, which helps maintain a healthy, fulfilling relationship.

**60-79:** Your relationship is generally healthy, but there may be areas where more attention is needed. Focus on improving how you recognize and respond to emotional bids, and consider ways to strengthen your connection.

**40-59:** Your relationship could benefit from more intentional efforts to recognize and respond to each other's emotional needs. Discuss ways to improve communication and connection, and consider revisiting the principles outlined in *"The Relationship Cure."*

**Below 40:** It may be time to address significant issues in how you interact with each other. Consider seeking additional resources or professional guidance to help rebuild your connection and improve your relationship.

**Discussion and Reflection:**

After completing the assessment, come together with your partner to discuss your scores. Use these questions to guide your conversation:

- 1 **What are our strengths according to this assessment?**
- 2 **Which areas could use more attention or improvement?**
- 3 **How can we better recognize and respond to each other's emotional bids?**
- 4 **What steps can we take to strengthen our emotional connection moving forward?**

**Final Thoughts:** This assessment is a tool to help you and your partner understand and enhance your emotional connection based on the principles from *"The Relationship Cure."* By focusing on recognizing and responding to emotional bids, you can build a stronger, more fulfilling relationship.

For more resources and support, visit [CoupleStrong](http://CoupleStrong.com).



## 7-Day Emotional Connection Challenge for Couples

Inspired by "The Relationship Cure" by Dr. John Gottman

**Challenge Overview:** This 7-day challenge is designed to help you and your partner strengthen your emotional connection by recognizing and responding to each other's bids for connection. Each day focuses on a specific aspect of emotional communication, encouraging you to engage meaningfully and build a deeper, more fulfilling relationship.

### Day 1: Recognize Emotional Bids

**Objective:** Increase your awareness of the small ways you and your partner seek each other's attention and connection.

**Activity:**

- 14 Spend the day consciously noticing the emotional bids you and your partner make. These can be as simple as a comment, a touch, or a request for help.
- 15 At the end of the day, share with each other what bids you noticed. Discuss how these small moments contribute to your overall connection.

**Reflection:** How many bids did you notice today? Were there any that you might have missed before? How did it feel to recognize these bids more consciously?

### Day 2: Turn Toward Each Other's Bids

**Objective:** Strengthen your connection by responding positively to each other's bids for attention, affection, or support.

**Activity:**

- 9 Today, make an extra effort to turn toward your partner's bids. Respond with interest, support, or affection whenever they reach out to you.



- 10 Whether it's a smile, a comment, or a gesture, acknowledge and engage with your partner's attempts to connect.

**Reflection:** How did turning toward your partner's bids impact your interactions today? Did you notice a difference in how connected you felt?

### **Day 3: Practice Active Listening**

**Objective:** Enhance your emotional connection by fully engaging in conversations and showing that you value your partner's thoughts and feelings.

**Activity:**

- 7 Choose one or two conversations today where you will practice active listening. Put away distractions, make eye contact, and focus on what your partner is saying.
- 8 Reflect back what you hear, showing that you understand and are engaged. Ask follow-up questions to deepen the conversation.

**Reflection:** How did active listening change the quality of your conversations? Did your partner feel more heard and understood?

### **Day 4: Reframe and Refocus During Conflicts**

**Objective:** Use conflicts as opportunities to better understand each other's needs and emotions.

**Activity:**

- 10 If a conflict arises today, take a moment to pause and reframe the situation. Ask yourself, "What emotional bid might be underlying this conflict?"
- 11 Discuss the conflict with your partner, focusing on understanding the emotions and needs behind each other's actions. Work together to find a solution that addresses these underlying needs.



**Reflection:** How did reframing the conflict help you understand your partner better? Did it change how you approached the resolution?

### **Day 5: Express Appreciation**

**Objective:** Reinforce your emotional connection by regularly expressing gratitude and appreciation.

**Activity:**

13 Throughout the day, look for opportunities to express appreciation for your partner. This could be for something they've done, a quality you admire, or simply for being there for you.

14 At the end of the day, share with each other the things you appreciated most.

**Reflection:** How did expressing and receiving appreciation affect your connection today? Did it bring you closer together?

### **Day 6: Create a Ritual of Connection**

**Objective:** Establish a new ritual that helps you and your partner stay emotionally connected, even during busy times.

**Activity:**

16 Discuss and agree on a simple daily or weekly ritual that you can do together to maintain your emotional bond. This could be a morning coffee together, a nightly check-in, or a weekly date night.

17 Start practicing this ritual today, and commit to maintaining it going forward.

**Reflection:** How did starting a new ritual impact your sense of connection? What benefits do you see in continuing this ritual?

### **Day 7: Reflect and Plan for the Future**



**Objective:** Consolidate the progress made during the challenge and plan how to continue growing together.

**Activity:**

- 5 Reflect together on the past week. Discuss what activities or conversations were most impactful and how they affected your relationship.
- 6 Identify the practices that you found most helpful and discuss how you can incorporate them into your daily routine.
- 7 Set a few goals for continuing to strengthen your emotional connection in the coming months.

**Reflection:** What has been the most valuable takeaway from this challenge? How can you continue to build on the progress you've made this week?

**Final Thoughts:**

Congratulations on completing the 7-Day Emotional Connection Challenge! By focusing on recognizing and responding to emotional bids, you've taken significant steps toward deepening your relationship. Remember, emotional connection is built through consistent, small acts of engagement—continue to prioritize these moments, and your relationship will thrive.

For more tips, resources, and support on your relationship journey, visit [CoupleStrong](http://CoupleStrong.com).





## Description

### The Relationship Cure Connection Bundle

This comprehensive bundle is designed to help couples deepen their emotional connection and strengthen their relationship, drawing from the insights of Dr. John Gottman's book *"The Relationship Cure: A 5 Step Guide to Strengthening Your Marriage, Family, and Friendships."* The bundle includes:

**Overview of the Book:** A concise summary that outlines the key concepts from *"The Relationship Cure,"* focusing on the role of emotional bids and how they shape the quality of relationships.

**Blog Post:** An insightful blog that delves into practical ways couples can apply the principles from *"The Relationship Cure"* to enhance communication, foster emotional closeness, and turn everyday interactions into meaningful connections.

**Couple's Handout:** A practical guide with clear, actionable steps and exercises that help couples recognize and respond to emotional bids. This handout is a valuable tool for nurturing and maintaining a strong emotional bond.

**Couple's Assessment:** A self-assessment tool that enables couples to evaluate their relationship based on their ability to notice and respond to each other's bids for connection. This assessment highlights strengths and identifies areas for improvement, guiding couples toward deeper intimacy.

**7-Day Couples Challenge:** A structured, week-long challenge that offers daily activities and conversations designed to enhance emotional connection by focusing on recognizing and positively responding to each other's emotional bids.

This bundle is ideal for couples seeking to improve their communication, resolve conflicts, and deepen their emotional bond. By using the tools and insights provided, couples can create a more fulfilling and lasting partnership.