



The Key To Flourishing Relationships

"Recent research suggests that optimal mental health is associated with high ratios of positive to negative emotions. According to this model, normal functioning is characterized by ratios near 2.5 (that is, 2.5 times more positivity than negativity), whereas optimal functioning is characterized by ratios near 4.3.

Summarizing two decades of observational research on marriages, the University of Washington psychologist John Gottman, an expert in marital relations, concludes that unless a couple is able to maintain a high ratio of positive to negative affect (5:1 or greater), it is likely that their marriage will end.

In a highly publicized study, he and his colleagues observed 73 couples discussing an area of conflict in their relationship. The research team measured positivity and negativity using two coding schemes: one focused on positive and negative speech acts and another focused on observable positive and negative emotions.

Gottman reported that among marriages that last and that both partners find satisfying-what might be called **flourishing relationships**-mean positivity ratios were 5.1 for speech acts and 4.7 for observed emotions.

By contrast, among marriages identified as being on downward spirals toward dissolution the mean positivity ratios were 0.9 for speech acts and 0.7 for observed emotions. Gottman has become so good at spotting the strengths and weaknesses of a marriage he can predict with 90 percent accuracy whether the marriage will end in divorce or not, often after just three minutes of observation in his marriage lab."

We've talked about the magic ratio of love before. 5:1. If we want to create **flourishing relationships**, we've gotta go for 5 positive interactions for every 1 negative interaction!

~ Brian Johnson, Positive Psychology

Practice gratitude freely, regularly, abundantly, daily!!

Carole Kirby, lmsw

therapy4couples.com ❤️ 734.221.6829

