

Episode #35 – Magic Relationship Ratio



In John Gottman's article on the Magic Relationship ratio he states "Negative interactions during conflict include being emotionally dismissive or critical, or becoming defensive. Body language such as eye-rolling can be a powerful negative interaction, and it is important to remember that negativity holds a great deal of emotional power, which is why it takes 5 positive interactions to overcome any 1 negative interaction. These negative interactions happen in "partnerships" too, but they are quickly repaired and replaced with validation and empathy."

5 to 1 may seem like a lot. The offering needs to be genuine and intentional because the relationship is important to you. This is easier to do when the relationship is going well, yet it's important to keep depositing good will in the relationship bank.

5 to 1 is especially important when we're in conflict. In conflict we will often be triggered and will need to self-manage, put aside the need to be right, remember the end in mind so we can find the courage and the willingness to offer the 5 to 1.

Here are a few suggestions for positive interactions:

1. Listen fully, with sincere interest in the other person. Stay aware of yourself.
2. Engage by giving your full attention and full presence. Ask them what they need.
3. Express appreciation.
4. Find opportunities for agreement.
5. Empathize and apologize as necessary.
6. Accept the other's perspective. Acceptance does not mean you agree with it.
7. Add humor when appropriate.

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Remember, these positive interactions can occur at the same time. In one interaction you can be present, listen fully, make eye contact, be engaged, stay curious and ask questions. That one encounter is offering five of the positives in that one interaction.

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