

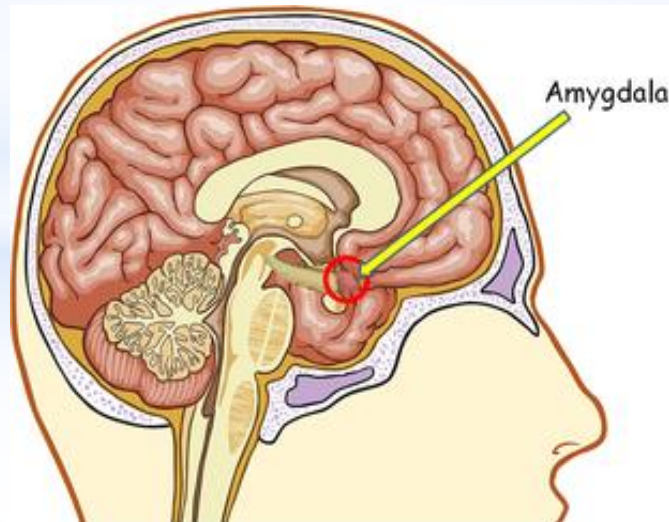
Making a Good Marriage Great

Chris Giles, MS, LMFT &
Jennifer Giles, MS, LPC
Christian Family Institute
ChristianFamilyInstitute.com
918-745-0095

There is Science behind Relationships

John Gottman and the “Love Lab”

- Grouped couples into two categories: “Masters” & “Disasters”
- “Disasters” were in a state of “Fight or Flight” when discussing their relationship



Three Keys to a Great Marriage

1. Kindness

- Speak to your spouse like you would speak to a complete stranger.
- Kindness can calm or even disable the fear response.
- Kindness is like a muscle – it can be developed.
- Even anger can be best expressed with kindness.

Three Keys to a Great Marriage

Ways to express Kindness:

- Look for things to appreciate about your spouse and communicate your gratitude
- “Bids” for Emotional Connection: Choose to turn toward your spouse

Three Keys to a Great Marriage

Exercise: Turning Toward

- Take turns telling one another about something that interests you or something you enjoy.
- Practice positive engagement in your partner's bid for emotional connection through verbal and non-verbal communication

Three Keys to a Great Marriage

2. Generosity

- Most spouses are trying to do the right thing even if it is poorly executed (or perceived as poorly executed).
- Show your spouse love in the way that they desire.
- Recognize and receive the love that your spouse shows, even if it is not the way you desire or the way you would have done it.

*(We recommend reading Gary Chapman's book:
The Five Love Languages)*

Three Keys to a Great Marriage

Exercise: 10 Loving Actions

List 10 actions that your spouse engages in or *could* engage in to show you love.

Examples:

- When you _____ I feel loved.
- If you would _____ I would feel loved.

Three Keys to a Great Marriage

3. Fun

- Creates positive memories
- Increases friendship and intimacy through shared experiences
- Lightens the mood during times of disagreement
- Reduces stress and boosts immune system

Three Keys to a Great Marriage

Exercise: Date Night Jar

- Brainstorm ideas for Date Nights
(no criticism of brainstormed ideas)
- Categories: Dates at home, \$20 or less, Requires \$\$ and Planning, etc.
- Put your dates on the calendar
- Have fun trying new things or re-engaging in activities that you used to love to do together!

RESOURCES

Article: Science Says Lasting Relationships Come Down To 2 Basic Traits by EMILY ESFAHANI SMITH
<http://www.businessinsider.com/lasting-relationships-rely-on-2-traits-2014-11>

Iphone Apps: <http://www.gottman.com/iphone-apps-2/>

Pinterest has excellent ideas for creating a date night jar.

The therapists at Christian Family Institute would love to help as you journey toward making your marriage great!