

Bids For Connection: The Building Blocks of Emotional Connection

In Dr. John Gottman's apartment lab at the University of Washington, he studies how people interact with one another under everyday circumstances. He has discovered that "bids for connection" happen at a very high rate between partners. For example, happy couples "bid" 100 times in ten minutes. What makes the bids so important? How those bids are made and responded to influences how well that relationship is going to fare over time.

What is a bid for connection? As Dr. Gottman explains in his new book, *The Relationship Cure*, bids can be verbal or non-verbal. They can be highly physical or come totally from the intellect. They can be sexual or non-sexual. The key is that a bid for connection is an attempt to create connection between two people. Its function is to keep the relationship going forward and in a positive direction.

Bids are the fundamental element of emotional connection. The brief quiz below helps you to assess your style of bidding. To take this test, think of a person who is important to you. Complete each item by indicating how much you agree or disagree with the statement.

Point Values:

strongly disagree	1 point
disagree	2 points
neutral	3 points
agree	4 points
strongly agree	5 points

1. I sometimes get ignored when I need attention the most.

strongly disagree
disagree
neutral
agree
strongly agree

2. This person usually doesn't have a clue as to what I am feeling.

strongly disagree
disagree
neutral
agree
strongly agree

3. I often have difficulty getting a meaningful conversation going with this person.

strongly disagree

disagree

neutral

agree

strongly agree

4. I get mad when I don't get the attention I need from this person.

strongly disagree

disagree

neutral

agree

strongly agree

5. I often find myself becoming irritable with this person.

strongly disagree

disagree

neutral

agree

strongly agree

6. I often feel irritated that this person isn't on my side.

strongly disagree

disagree

neutral

agree

strongly agree

7. I have trouble getting this person to listen to me.

strongly disagree

disagree

neutral

agree

strongly agree

8. I find it difficult to get this person to open up to me.

strongly disagree

disagree

neutral

agree

strongly agree

9. I have trouble getting this person to talk to me.

strongly disagree

disagree

neutral

agree

strongly agree

Your score for questions 1-3:

Scores below 8 mean that you are direct in your relationship. This is great news for your relationship, because you have the ability to state clearly what you need from this person. If your score is 8 or higher, you may be too reticent in bidding. The other person in your relationship may feel as if they have to be a mind reader to understand what you need.

Your score for questions 4-6:

Scores below 8 mean that you are not overly forceful in expressing what you need from this person. Your relationship benefits from this quality of yours because it's easier for the other person to hear and understand what you need. If your score is 8 or higher, you may be expressing so much anger in your bidding that you are turning this person away. Maybe this is because of past frustrations, or maybe it is the way your personality is.

Your score for questions 7-9:

If your score is below 8, this means you have a high level of trust in your relationship. If your score is 8 or higher, this reflects a problem with the level of trust in your relationship. You may need to do more to win this person's trust. Some people accomplish this by concentrating more on responding to the other person's bids, rather than trying to get the other person to respond to you.