

# Building Healthy Relationships

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# Our Game Plan

Keys to Relationships  
Building the Toolbox  
Relationship Check-Ins





Relational Functioning; What goes “*Wrong?*”



Intimacy  
Sex  
Substances  
Parenting  
Loss  
Discrimination  
Infidelity  
Illness  
Arguing  
Addiction  
Politics  
Grief  
Decisions



# How Do Problems Develop?

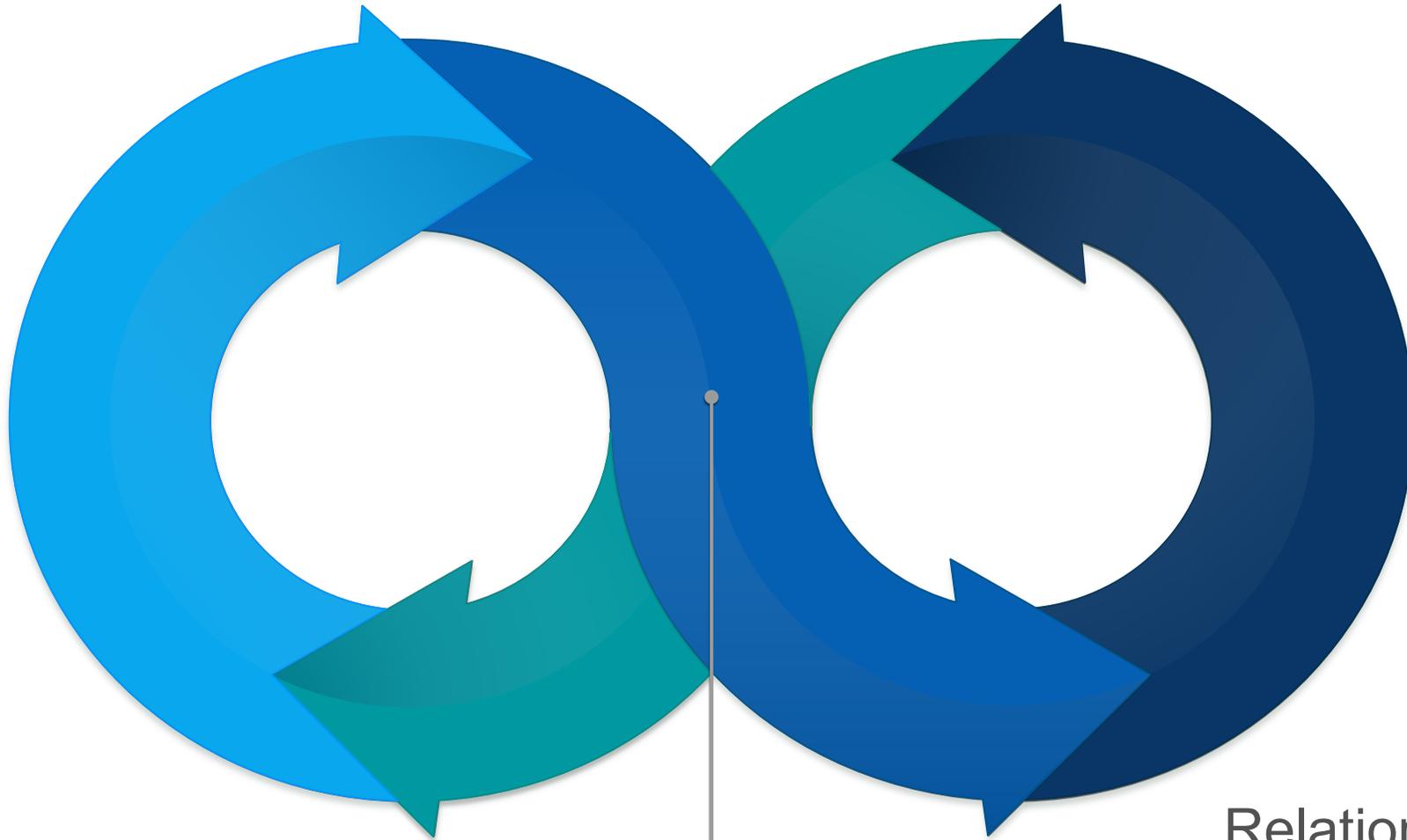
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Clients struggle communicating

Interactional patterns get *stuck*

Positive affect is diminished

Problem solving skills are decreased because of emotional activation



Relationship  
Dynamics

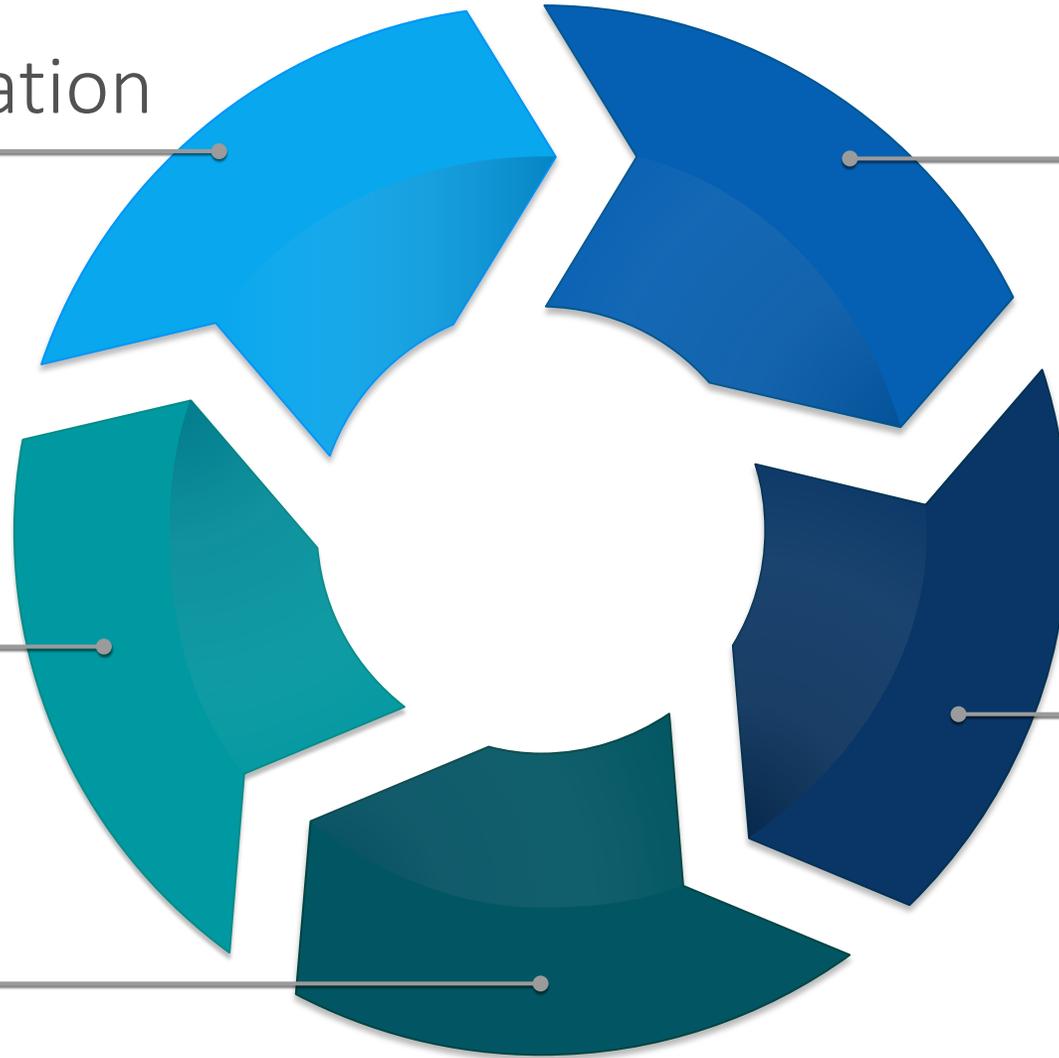
Communication

History

Affect

Culture

Behavior





Most relationship problems (69%) are “unsolvable” based on *personality differences* between partners.

*Thus, the focus should be on SOLVABLE problems*



# The Gottman Institute

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Observational data

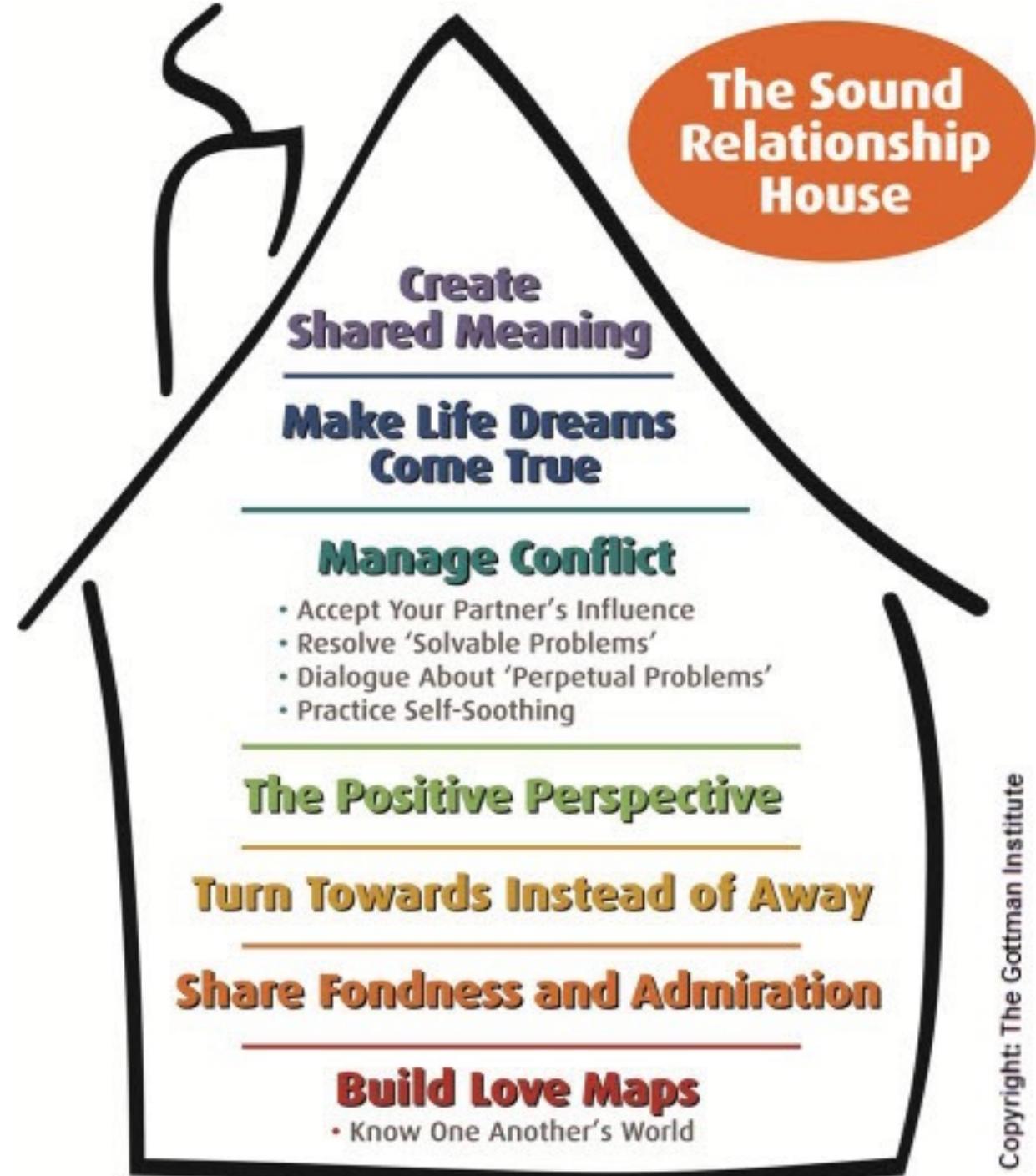
Divorce prediction

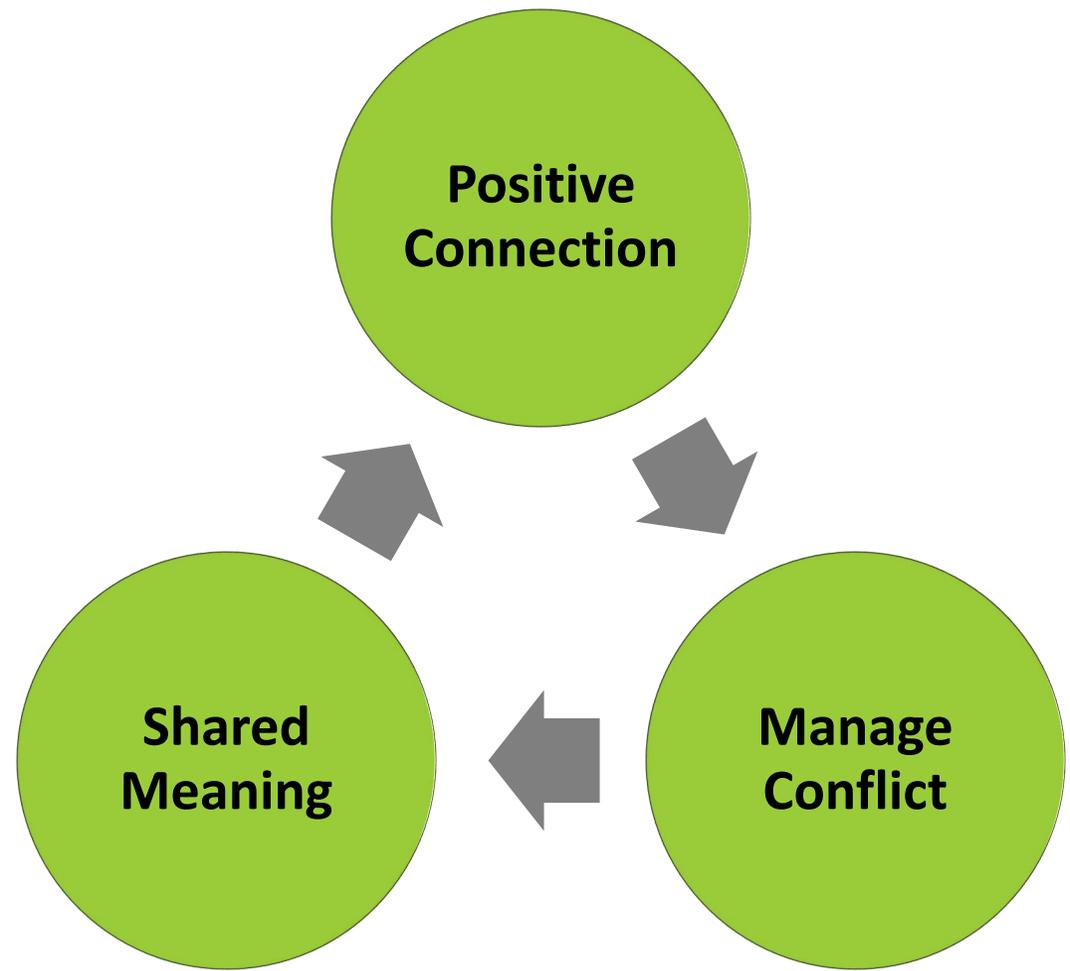
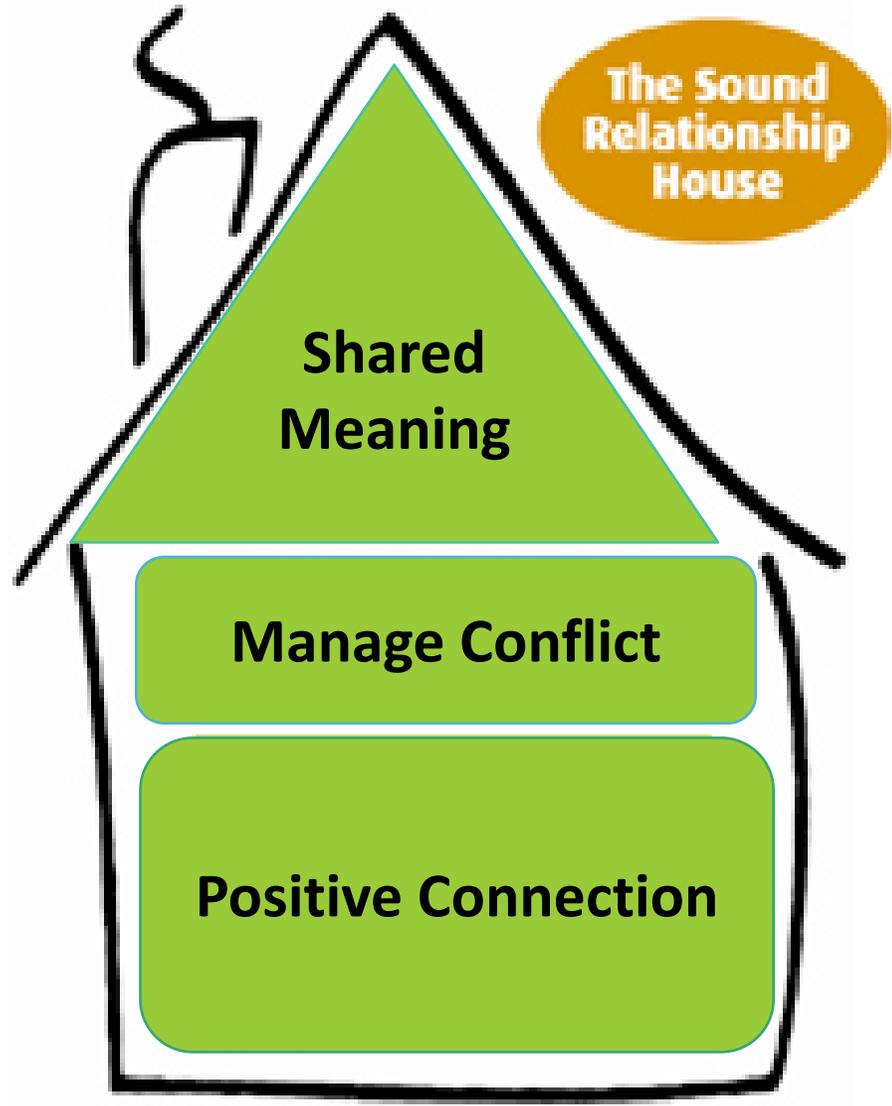
Apartment Lab

Sound Relationship House

4 Horseman

# The Sound Relationship House





“Emotional  
Bank Account”

**Positive  
connection**

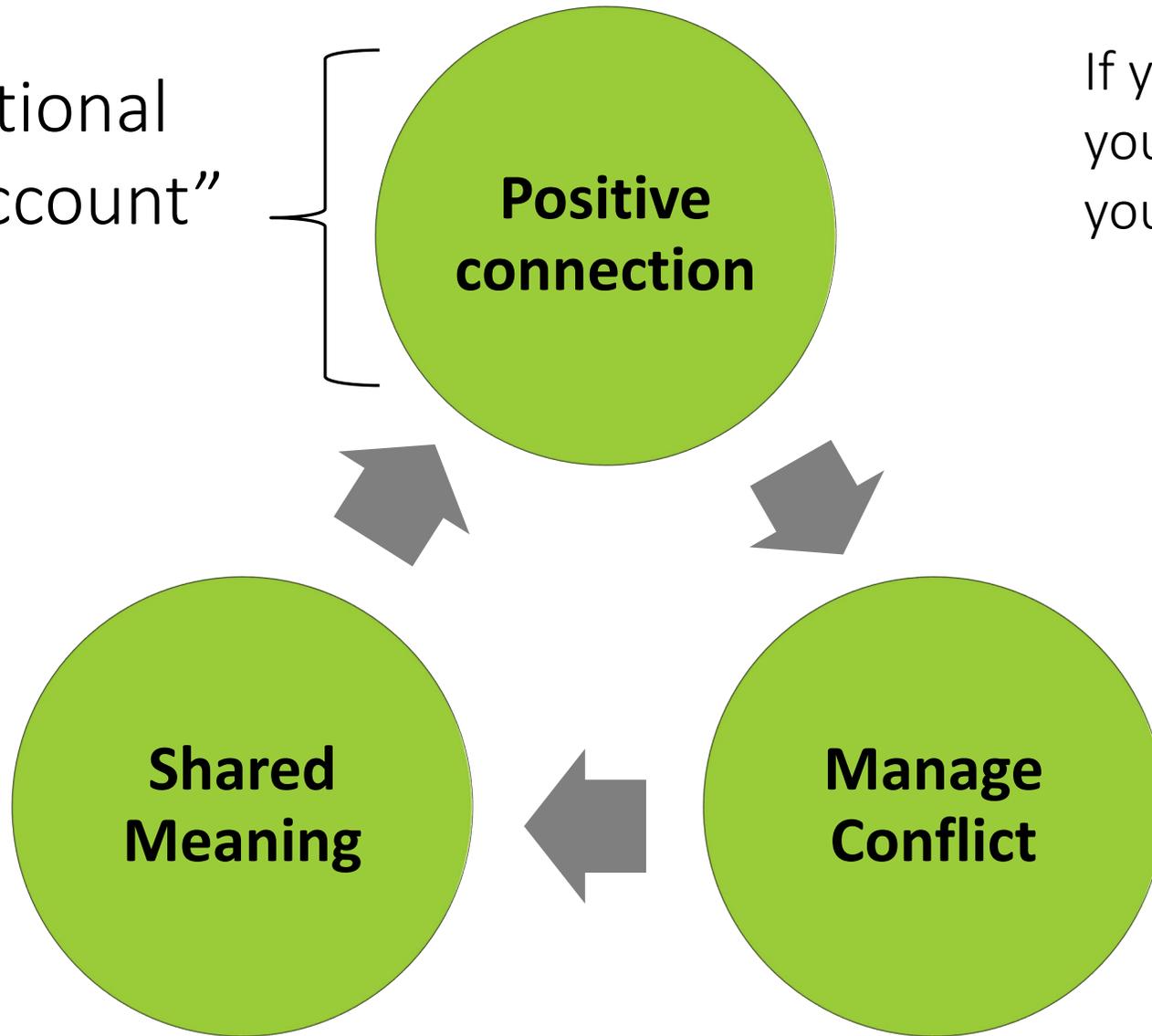
If you feel like  
your partner is  
your friend...

**Shared  
Meaning**

**Manage  
Conflict**

... you will live life  
together in a way  
that helps you feel  
that life is a bit  
more *wonderful*...

... you will give them  
the benefit of the  
doubt when you  
disagree...



# THE FOUR HORSEMEN

**CRITICISM**

Verbally attacking personality or character.

**CONTEMPT**

Attacking sense of self with an intention to insult or psychologically abuse.

**DEFENSIVENESS**

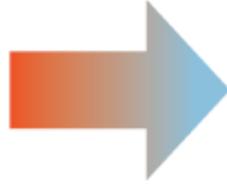
Seeing yourself as the victim in efforts to ward off a perceived attack and reverse the blame.

**STONEWALLING**

Withdrawing as a way to avoid conflict in efforts to convey disapproval, distance, and separation.

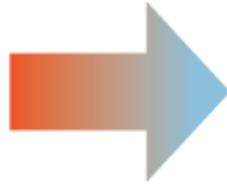
## Stop the Four Horsemen with their Antidotes

**CRITICISM**



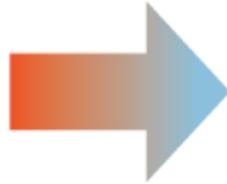
Teach Gentle  
Start Up

**DEFENSIVENESS**



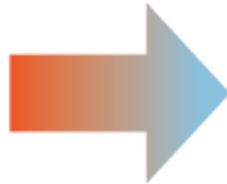
Take  
Responsibility

**CONTEMPT**



Build Culture  
of Appreciation

**STONEWALLING**



Do Physiological  
Self-Soothing



*"I want to feel connected to you."*



1. Turning Toward
2. Turning Against
3. Turning Away



Adds to the *emotional bank account.*



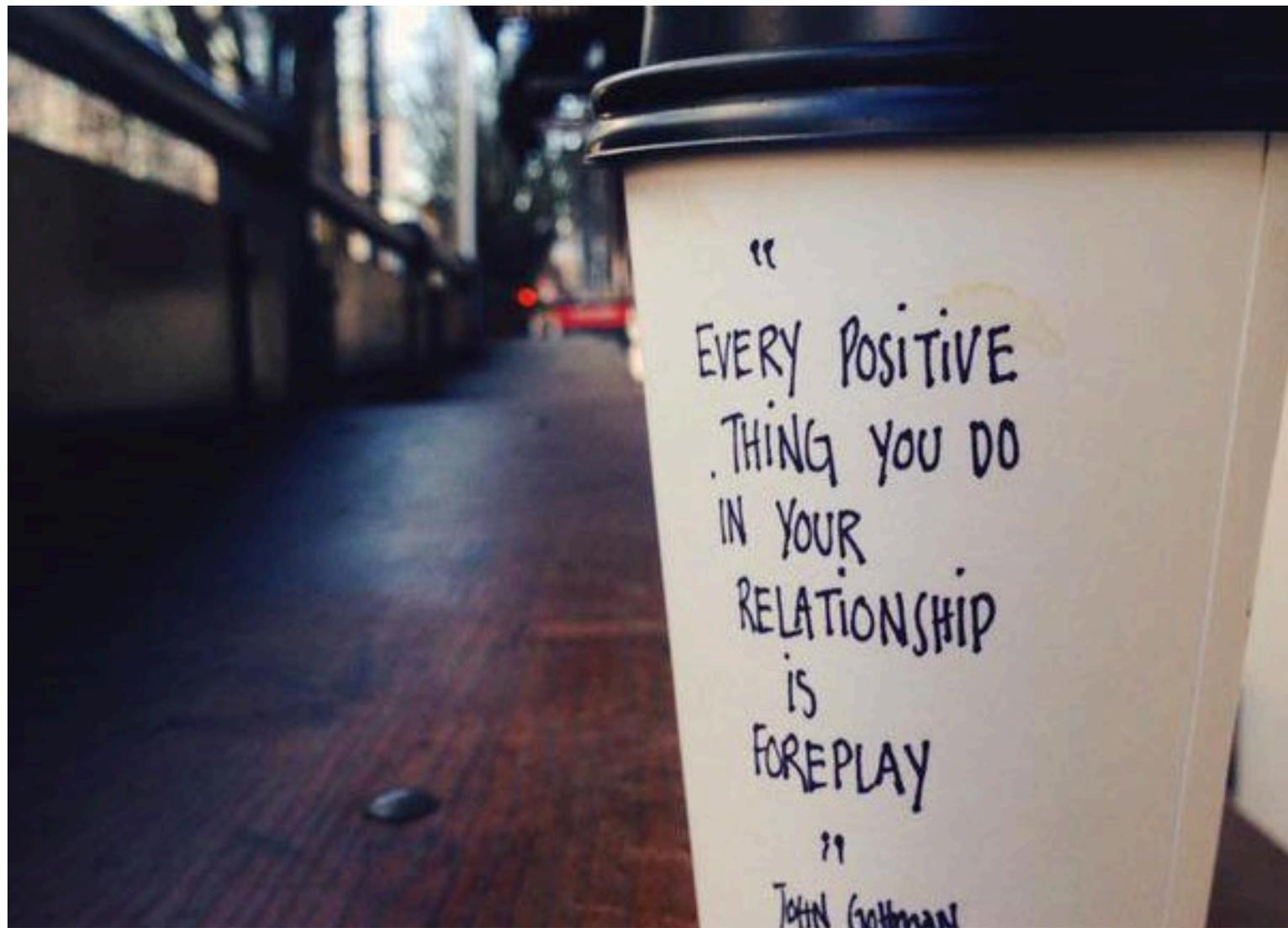
# In a Nutshell, what works?

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Intervention studies that have produced *lasting results* have changed three things:

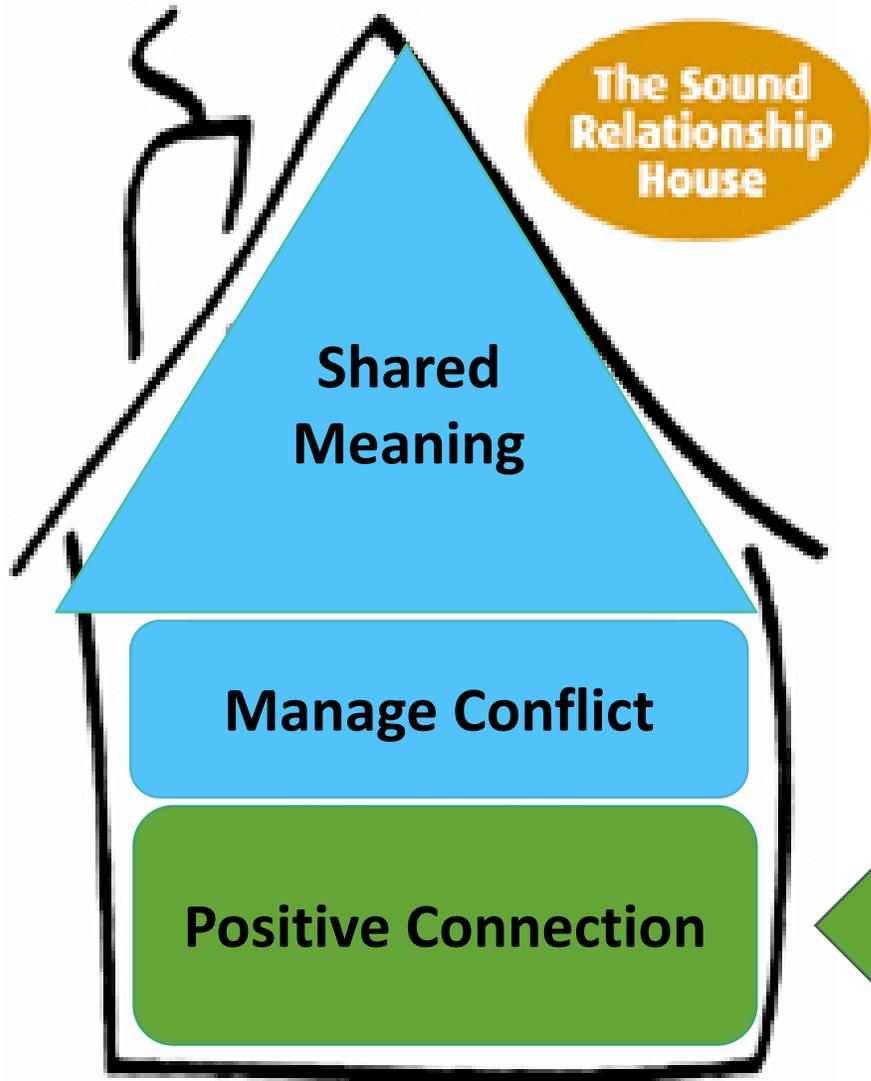
1. Increased positive feelings *outside* the conflict situation (e.g., when things are going well)
2. Reduced negative feelings during conflict
3. Increased positive affect during conflict

TIP!



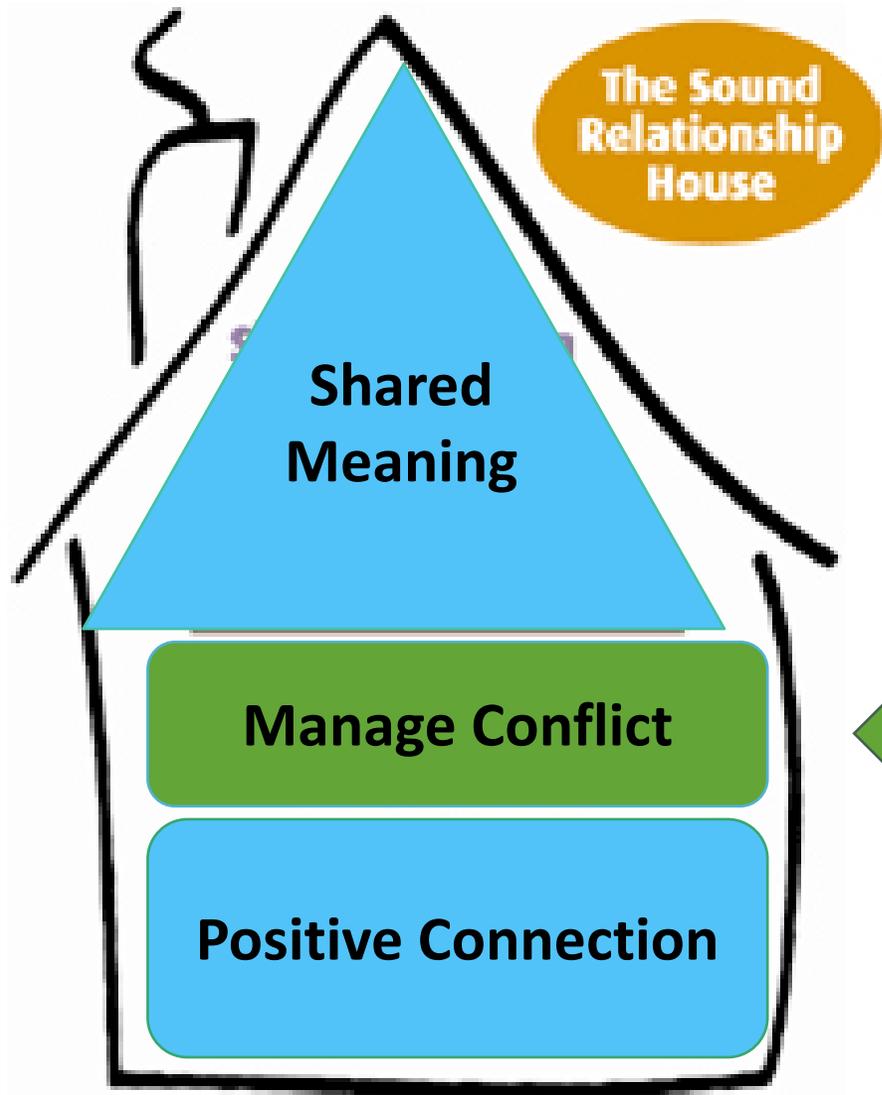
“  
EVERY POSITIVE  
THING YOU DO  
IN YOUR  
RELATIONSHIP  
IS  
FOREPLAY

”  
JOHN GUTTMAN



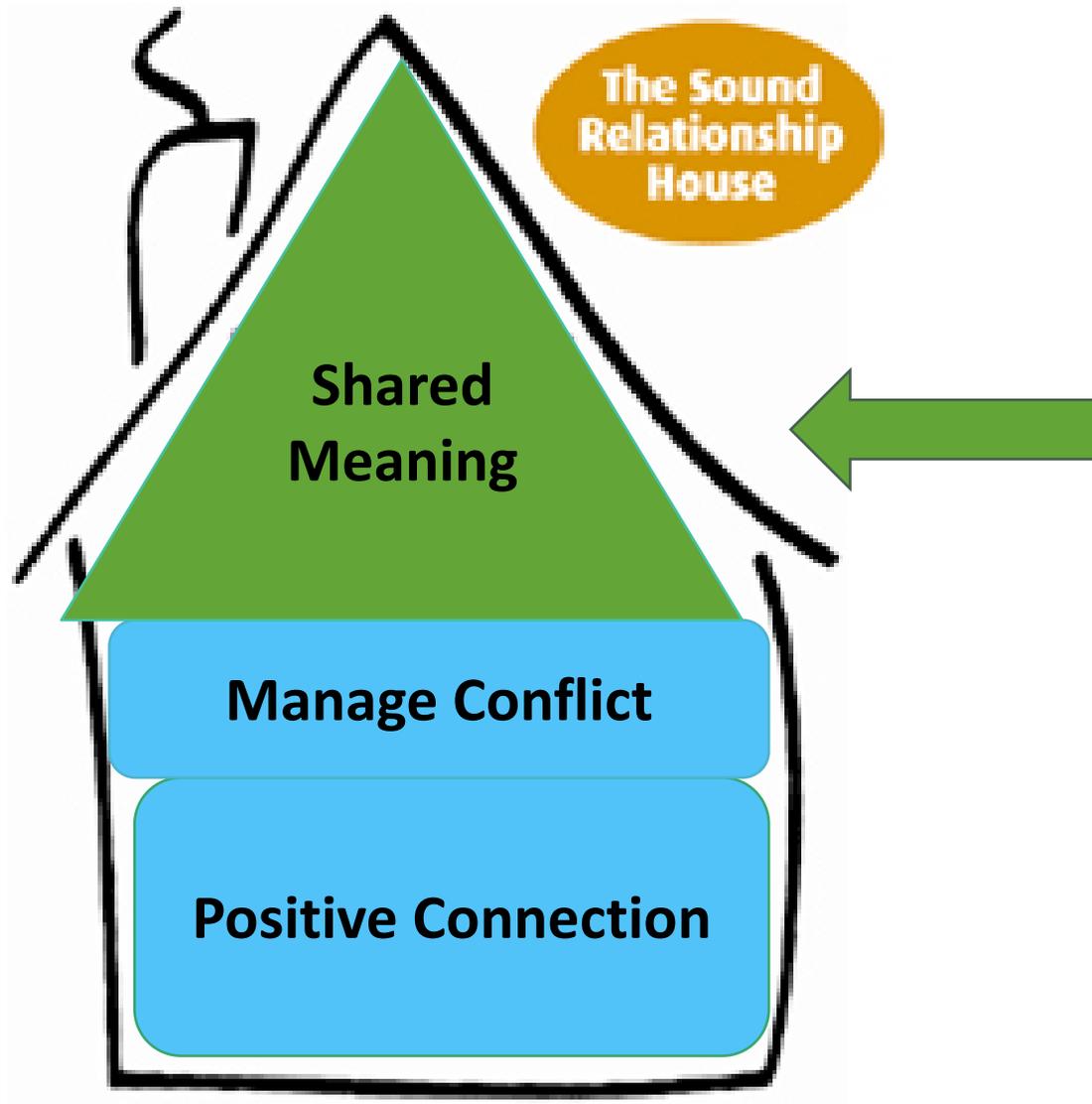
***TIP!***

- Date nights // Fun!
- Simple “getting to know you” conversations
- Love mapping (dreams, stories)
- High fives



***TIP!***

- Complain w/o blame
- Listen w/o interrupting
- Validate one another
- Repair strategies



***Tip!***

- Share life goals
- Find ways to support one another's dreams
- Identify shared values

To make a relationship last, relationships must focus on friendship, learn to manage/repair conflict, and create ways to support each other's hopes and dreams.

# Relationship Check-Ins at HEDCO

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- **WHAT:** Free, one-time session for any relationship focused therapy
- **GOAL:** The focus is to *recognize* and develop strengths in the relationship.
- **WHO:** Open to partners, friends, roommates, families, siblings, etc.

# Center for Healthy Relationships

*Located at the HEDCO Clinic*

## A Year At a Glance

~ 3,000 sessions

~4,200 people served

~800 sessions per academic term

7.5% no show rate





Collaborative; Team Oriented



# Any Questions?

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