



Wonderful Relationships Takeaway

The Wonderful Relationships Takeaway helps you focus on the important relationships in your life. These relationships are at the heart of your well-being

- Well-Being is largely about having a positive relationship with yourself but almost as important is the relationships with the next group of people closest to you, your family. These relationships are massively important to most people yet very few of us really spend any time at all trying to make these relationships positive.
- After studying married couples for many years, psychologist John Gottman proposed the theory of the "magic ratio" for successful marriages. The theory says that for a marriage to be successful, couples must average a ratio of five positive interactions to one negative interaction. As the ratio moves to 1:1, divorce becomes more likely. Negative interactions include criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and ignoring. Positive interactions include praise, thanks, encouragement, cooperation and showing an interest.
- It is often in the most simple and mundane situations that these negative interactions appear. Comments such as you haven't done the dishes is a negative criticism whilst simply asking would you like me to help with the dishes is positive and cooperative.
- Without realising it we often become habitually negative towards our families, supposedly the people we love most in the whole world. Much of this negativity is towards the other person's behaviour or actions not towards the person themselves but we struggle to separate the two and as we already know it is not the person's actions or behaviour that makes us feel angry or upset but the thoughts that we have about their actions or behaviours.

- So can we train ourselves to think differently about those actions? Can we take control of our own thoughts and therefore take control of our own feelings? Can we take control of our relationships?
- In the words of Bob the builder, "Yes we can".

One of the first things to do is to be mindful of what you are thinking about when ever you see your partner.

Picture this.

- You drive home from work after a terrible day at the office. You hate your job, you hate your car. The rain is pounding against the windscreen reducing your visibility making driving even more stressful. You hate the weather and all of the other stupid drivers who are making your journey even more difficult. You eventually pull onto the drive and get out of the car. You get soaked as you struggle with your bag and finally open the front door. You walk into the house and the first person you see is your partner. You immediately burst into a negative rant about all of those things you hate.
- Now consider this. Remember when we talked about anchoring and how it is a natural function of the human brain that automatically links our thoughts and emotions to a particular trigger.
- In the scenario above you have subconsciously linked the sight of your partners face to all of the things you hate in the world. To make matters worse your partner has just anchored the sight of your face to a negative, ranting human being who hates everything in the world.

Okay, having a rant about the traffic occasionally might not destroy your relationship but if you behave in a similar way on a regular basis you are certainly not helping yourself.

Imagine this alternative.

- You drive home from work after a terrible day at the office. You hate your job, you hate your car. The rain is pounding against the windscreen reducing your visibility making driving even more stressful. You hate the weather and all of the other stupid drivers who are making your journey even more difficult. You eventually pull onto the drive and get out of the car. You get soaked as you struggle with your bag and finally open the front door. Before you walk into the house you stop for a moment and think about how lucky you are to have a job and a car. You look at your front door and think about how wonderful it is to have a home that you share with the ones you love and you close your eyes and picture

your partner remembering why you fell in love with them in the first place. Then you walk into the house and the first person you see is your partner. What do you think you anchor to the sight of their face this time?

That's how you take control of your thoughts and start to take control of your relationships.

You can use the same principal with any relationship but it is especially useful with close family who you often see every day.

The simple act of taking a moment to stop and take control of your thoughts can make you a better partner, a better parent, a better sibling a better son or daughter and maybe a better person. Taking control of your relationships helps make you be the best you can be!