

# Bids for Connection: The Building Blocks of Emotional Connection

Reprinted courtesy The Gottman Institute

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. More in depth tests are available in ***The Relationship Cure***. 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.

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

<input type="text" value="0"/>	strongly disagree
<input type="text" value="1"/>	disagree
<input type="text" value="2"/>	neutral
<input type="text" value="3"/>	agree
<input type="text" value="4"/>	strongly agree

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

<input type="text" value="0"/>	strongly disagree
<input type="text" value="1"/>	disagree
<input type="text" value="2"/>	neutral
<input type="text" value="3"/>	agree
<input type="text" value="4"/>	strongly agree

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

<input type="text" value="0"/>	strongly disagree
<input type="text" value="1"/>	disagree
<input type="text" value="2"/>	neutral
<input type="text" value="3"/>	agree
<input type="text" value="4"/>	strongly agree

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

<input type="text" value="0"/>	strongly disagree
<input type="text" value="1"/>	disagree
<input type="text" value="2"/>	neutral
<input type="text" value="3"/>	agree
<input type="text" value="4"/>	strongly agree

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

<input type="text" value="0"/>	strongly disagree
<input type="text" value="1"/>	disagree
<input type="text" value="2"/>	neutral
<input type="text" value="3"/>	agree
<input type="text" value="4"/>	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

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

- strongly disagree
- disagree
- neutral
- agree
- strongly agree

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

- strongly disagree
- disagree
- neutral
- agree
- strongly agree

**Scoring:**

Strongly disagree: 0 / Disagree: 1 / Neutral: 2 / Agree: 3 / Strongly agree: 4

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. To learn more about bids for connection or about the best ways to respond to bids, you can take quizzes and try exercises in *The Relationship Cure* by John Gottman and Joan DeClaire.