

Positive Perspective: The Secret to Happy Relationships

The Power Moves | 27 May, 2018 | by Lucio Buffalmano

This article is about the the Positive Perspective, a John Gottman's concept that is the key to happy relationships.

By the end of this article you will learn how keeping a positive attitude (positive sentiment override) will make your relationship a paradise.

And how a negative attitude (negative sentiment override) can destroy your relationship (and happiness).

Contents

- [What's Positive Perspective](#)
 - [What a Positive Perspective Does](#)
 - [Keys to a Happy Relationship](#)
 - [Negative Sentiment Override](#)
 - [Vicious Circle VS Negative Sentiment Override](#)
- [Are You in a Negative Relationship?](#)
 - [Away Time Test](#)
 - [Positive VS Negative Override](#)
- [SUMMARY](#)

What's Positive Perspective

The Positive Perspective is the fourth level of the Gottman's Sound Relationship House.

And it refers to how people see the relationship as a whole.

Basically: do you have a positive impression of your partner and your relationship or do you have a negative one?

When your relationship has a positive perspective, Gottman calls it "Positive Sentiment Override"

What a Positive Perspective Does

In [The Seven Principles to Make Marriage Work](#) Gottman explains the positive impacts of the positive perspective. I paraphrase for brevity:

When you have a positive image of your partners and your relationship, you will take notice of the positives and discount the negatives.

But if you have a negative perspective (negative override), you look with suspicion -or disregard- anything that your partner does positively.

Keys to a Happy Relationship

A positive perspective is partly a mental attitude of willingly focusing on the positives of a relationship. But it also happens almost automatically if all the previous three level of the sound relationship are working well.

Such as:

- [Getting to know your partner](#)
- [Fondness and admiration](#)

Remind yourself what you appreciate about your partner and say to each other.

- [Turning towards](#)

Instead of “doing your own thing” you engage with your partner and show that you care.

- [Letting your partner influence you](#)

On top of the three levels of the sounds relationship house, Gottman also mention the important of letting your partner influence you.

This means that you accept your partner and their influence in your decision making and in your issue discussions.

Accepting your partner’s influence takes away the [combative element](#) and introduces team work.

Negative Sentiment Override

The opposite of a positive perspective is a negative sentiment override. In [Ten Lessons to Transform Your Marriage](#) Gottman writes:

When the negative thoughts about your partner overwhelm any positive thoughts about you.
You keep track of grievances and offenses.

Basically, when you have a general negative outlook you focus on the negatives you only see the negatives. Here’s a perfect example of negative sentiment override:

[You will get the relationship you think of](#)

Vicious Circle VS Negative Sentiment Override

A vicious circle is somewhat similar to a negative sentiment override. The difference is that a vicious circle involves both partner and has arguments with [the four horsemen of the apocalypse](#) ([criticism](#), [defensiveness](#), [contempt](#) and [stonewalling](#)).

Negative sentiment override instead can be from just one partner and it doesn’t necessarily translates into open fight -just like the example above-.

Are You in a Negative Relationship?

Think about your current relationship and ask yourself if you often feel the following:

- Innocent and unjustly accused
- It’s your partner’s fault
- Hurt / angry / disappointed
- Your partner is a bad person
- Your partner is annoying you

- There are many bad sides of your partner's character
- Maybe you and your partner don't fit well
- You want to get up and leave
- Under attack
- Vengeful
- Like you want to protect yourself
- Your partner is trying to control you

If you answer yes to a lot of the above question, you might either be in [negative vicious circle](#) or in a negative sentiment override.

Away Time Test

Here's another quick test: when you're away from your partner, do you think of them positively or negatively? Do you think of what they do for you or what they don't do?

Of the good times together or of the bad times?

If you focus on the negativity, you're probably in negative sentiment override.

Positive VS Negative Override

The movie 500 Days of Summer provides a great example of the difference between a positive and negative sentiment override.

Often how we view life reflects how we view our relationships. And as much as for anything else, we see what we feel in relationships. Feel positive, focus on the positives, and you will have a happy relationship.

This is something [Tony Robbins](#) also talks about a lot.

SUMMARY

In life as in relationships, you get what you focus on. If you have an overall positive image of your relationship, you will naturally focus on the positives. But if you have an overall negative image of your partner and your relationship, you will only see the negatives.

So if you're wondering how to have a happy relationship, here are the keys to build a culture of positivity:

1. Celebrate the good times together
2. Remind and remember the positive times
3. Give to your partner and be grateful for what they give you

Archived from theredarchive.com