

OSHKOSH MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY CENTER, LLC

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2

THE SCIENCE OF TRUST

John M. Gottman (2011)

In my practice, I make an effort to ensure that my interventions and therapeutic techniques are evidence based. This means that theories and therapy models have been empirically studied and published in reputable journals. This brings me to talking about trust within the dyad of a couple. John M. Gottman has spent years researching and conducting experiments with couples to discover what makes happy couples happy and unhappy couples unhappy. He has also studied trust and how distrust flows between partners.

One of the most discernable behavioral patterns in couples who trust each other versus those who distrust and betray their partner is the simple act of turning away from the other during conflict. This turning away comes in the form of dismissing the others emotions, becoming flooded with one's own emotions,

avoidance, defensiveness, stonewalling, criticism, and eventual contempt.

White lies seem easier than facing disagreement. These white lies may start off as something simple, "If I tell him I bought another pair of shoes he'll get so mad. I'll just put them in the back of the closet where he won't notice them." These then turn into moderate white lies, "She'll be mad if I tell her I want to go to the game instead of joining her at her sister's house for Sunday brunch. I'll just pretend I'm sick and when she leaves go to the game. She'll never find out and I get to enjoy myself." The spiral downward only continues. Gottman is right in many ways about how people engage in lies.

Bader, Pearson, and Schwartz (2000) added to this point by referencing the partner or the lie invitee. The lie invitee may not even realize they are welcoming

lies. Ultimately, they cannot handle hearing the truth even though they state, "I want the truth," their tone, expression, or posture screams "I want you to tell me what I want to hear." Here is a list of the fourteen faces of a lie invitee:

- 1) The Fury
- 2) The Martyr
- 3) The Crybaby
- 4) The Blamer
- 5) Plugged Ears
- 6) The Attack
- 7) The Character Assassin
- 8) The Look
- 9) Confusion
- 10) Too Busy to Talk
- 11) The Drill Sergeant
- 12) Desperately Seeking Reassurance
- 13) Pretending to Listen
- 14) Laying Down the Law

If your couple dyad is displaying these tactics, it is time to consider therapy to work through the lies and distrust moving towards honesty and trust.

Oshkosh Marriage and Family Therapy Center, LLC

1000 Oregon Street, Suite B

Oshkosh, WI, 54902

July 10, 2017