



A COUPLES RITUAL

6 HOURS TO A BETTER RELATIONSHIP

The Gottman Institute’s “Magic Six Hours,” six small weekly rituals that keep couples connected. None of them is long, and together they add up to about six hours a week, the difference the research points to between couples who drift and couples who stay close.

THE SIX RITUALS

Partings

10 min / week

2 min a day × 5 workdays

Before you say goodbye in the morning, learn one thing happening in your partner’s day. Ask about it, the ordinary and the exciting both.

Reunions

1 Hr 40 min / week

20 min a day × 5 workdays

When you reunite at the end of the day, share a hug and kiss that lasts at least six seconds, then have a 20-minute stress-reducing conversation about the day (not the relationship).

Appreciation & Admiration

35 min / week

5 min a day × 7 days

Keep an admiration journal. Notice something small and connect it to a trait you admire in your partner. It primes you to see the good and makes them feel valued.

Affection

35 min / week

5 min a day × 7 days

Embrace before you fall asleep, a cuddle or a goodnight kiss. Treat it as a way to let go of the day’s small stressors together.

Date Night

2 Hrs / week

once a week

Protected “we time.” Ask open-ended questions and turn toward each other. Relaxing and romantic, and the point is connection, not logistics.

State of the Union

1 Hr / week

once a week

One hour to raise areas of concern so both of you feel heard and loved rather than neglected. Lead with appreciations, then one issue, gently.

6 hours a week, total. Ten minutes here, twenty there, one protected evening. Small and consistent is the whole design.



HOW TO MAKE IT STICK

START HERE

- Start with one. Don't install all six at once. Pick the ritual your relationship is most missing and add just that one this week.
- Put it on the calendar. Date Night and the State of the Union especially need a protected, recurring slot, or life eats them.
- Small and consistent beats big and rare. Six seconds, two minutes, five minutes: these are short on purpose so they actually happen.
- This is maintenance, not repair. Six hours keeps a good relationship good. If you're in real distress, that's what couples therapy is for.

PROMPTS TO GET YOU STARTED

Date Night and everyday connection run on open-ended questions. These draw on Gottman's Seven Principles, so each one opens a door: knowing each other, appreciation, and shared dreams. Reach for a few when you need a starter.

TURN TOWARD EACH OTHER

- "What's been on your mind this week that we haven't talked about?" (love maps)
- "What's a worry or a hope you're carrying right now that I might not know?" (love maps)
- "What's something I did recently that you appreciated?" (fondness & admiration)
- "When did you feel closest to me this week?" (turning toward)
- "What's one thing I could do more of that would help you feel loved?" (turning toward)
- "If we had a completely free year, what would you want us to do with it?" (shared dreams)
- "What do you want our life to feel like five years from now?" (shared meaning)

GOES DEEPER WITH

Two of these six rituals have their own printable MMC handout that walks through the details step by step.

COMPANION HANDOUTS

- **The Stress-Reducing Conversation**, the 20 minutes inside Reunions, structured so it stays about the day and doesn't curdle into problem-solving.
- **The Weekly State of the Union Check-In**, a six-part walkthrough of that one-hour meeting, from appreciations to a single gentle concern.

Both are free at mymentalclimb.com/resources.

These hours keep a good relationship good. They're rituals of connection, not a fix for a relationship in real distress. If the harder patterns are already running, that's where couples therapy does its best work. Adapted from The Gottman Institute's "Magic Six Hours" (John Gottman, *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work*). My Mental Climb is not affiliated with, endorsed by, or certified by The Gottman Institute.

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