



# **Me We Us**

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## Building the Foundation for a Strong Relationship

At the core of the Gottman **Sound Relationship House** theory lies the concept of **Love Maps**.

Love maps represent a deep, mutual understanding of each partner's unique tapestry of life experiences and personal truths.

To effectively build and enrich love maps, it is essential for both partners to explore and share personal insights in three key areas:

- **Me** – Understanding yourself
- **We** – Understanding your partner
- **Us** – Understanding your shared relationship

If a couple seeks to move forward with trust, commitment, and health in their relationship, they must strive to create **shared meaning**.

In other words, partners must come to understand one another through **Me | We | Us**.

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## The Surface Level vs. Deeper Connection

Most relationships begin with a surface-level understanding of each other, often focused on broad or practical topics like:

- Finances
- Trust
- Love, sex, and intimacy
- Division of labor
- Family of origin and culture
- Religion/spirituality
- Politics
- Parenting styles

While this foundational knowledge is important, **external circumstances or internal challenges** such as stress, trauma, or life transitions often force the relationship into a space that demands **deeper emotional connection and skill**.

Unfortunately, many relationships have not built the foundation to support the deeper demands and become: **Caught or Stuck in Repetitive Conflict Cycles, Disconnected or Withdrawn, Emotionally Fatigued & Exhausted, or Consider Separating**.

## Why Conflict Happens?

Conflicts in relationships are often rooted in: **Lack of self-awareness around personal behaviors as well as common relationship “traps”, Lack of transparency between partners, Lack of emotional tools or relational skills, and/or Inability to support a partner in crisis**. Over time, these gaps lead to emotional distance, loneliness, or disconnection.

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## Me | We | Us: A Blueprint for Connection

Understanding Me | We | Us helps couples **create shared meaning** by learning to translate and speak one another's emotional language. This process allows each partner to:

- Be seen
- Be heard
- Be understood
- Express their truth with courage and vulnerability

When both individuals share deeply, they gain insight and empathy that fuels **mutual understanding and support** allowing them to move together toward a shared **mission statement** (i.e., their relationship goals, values, and dreams).

## Integrating the Gottman Method

The practice of Me | We | Us supports key components of the Sound Relationship House, such as:

- Building love maps
- Sharing fondness and admiration
- Turning towards instead of away
- Maintaining a positive perspective
- Managing conflict constructively
- Creating shared meaning
- Supporting each other's dreams

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## The Work

The work starts with **Self-Reflection (ME)** and continues with **Shared Discovery (WE)**:

1. Reflect on your personal contributions to the Me | We | Us system.
2. Understand how your partner contributes.
3. Use individual insights (Me) to strengthen your connection (We) and build your relationship (Us).

## The Outcome

By intentionally filling out your relationship blueprint and building your mission statement, you will:

- Develop a richer understanding of one another
- Strengthen emotional intimacy
- Cultivate resilience and trust
- Move closer to the relationship you both desire

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## Reflection and Discovery: *An Invitation to Explore...*

Please accept this as an invitation to reflect on how you **show up in your relationship** individually and together. **A journey of Self-Awareness, Connection, and Intention.**

**Take your time** with these prompts. Some may feel familiar; others may invite new insights. There are no right answers, just authentic reflections. Once you gain clarity or insight, **share it with your partner** to deepen your connection.

### Mechanics of ME | WE | US

- **ME:** Build self-awareness around personal beliefs, behaviors, and tendencies.
- **WE:** Translate and communicate with your partner to help them support and understand you.
- **US:** Collaborate on how you want to show up together through your mission statement.

This process builds trust, emotional safety, and the ability to hold each other accountable with care.

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### ME: Self-Reflection Prompts

*Work through the prompts below and document your responses. Eventually, share them with your partner.*

#### How do I...

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| • Respond to conflict, disagreements, or emotional triggers? | • Build confidence in myself?                              |
| • Express my limits when I'm overwhelmed or at capacity?     | • Trust myself? Trust others?                              |
| • Apologize or take responsibility for my behavior?          | • Judge others when they make mistakes.                    |
| • Forgive others for their actions?                          | • Connect with others physically, emotionally, mentally?   |
| • Use my strengths and superpowers to my advantage?          | • Grieve losses big or small (job, mistakes, loved ones)?  |
| • Give in to my own personal "junk food" behaviors?          | • Recover from a tough moment, situation, or day?          |
| • Take care of myself and recover (self-care)?               | • Share my emotions am I a Tsunami? Wave? Island? Desert?  |
| • Set and communicate boundaries?                            | • Transition between roles or spaces (work to home, etc.)? |

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## **WE: Understanding My Partner**

As you reflect on your own behaviors and beliefs, share the findings from the previous prompts with one another. Seek to understand...

- **What do I know or not know about my partner?**
- **What could I learn or ask about?**
- **How can I translate what I've learned to help my partner support me?**

As a suggestion - find intentional time to work through the questions and share with one another. Be patient, take a walk together and explore one question at a time. Let the conversation unfold over a series of conversations.

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## **US: How Do We Want to Show Up Together?**

As you and your partner deepen your awareness and share insights, take time to explore **how you both want to show up** especially during moments of tension, disconnection, or vulnerability.

**Example: "I want to show up as..."** Kind, Patient, Supportive, Understanding, Direct, Calm, Honest, Curious, Compassionate, etc.

### **Mission Statement(s)**

- How I want to show up (as ME)
- How we want to show up (as US)

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## **Reminder: Practice over Perfection**

This is not about perfection it's about being intentional and holding space for growth. Stay open. Stay curious. Be committed to the *practice* of being yourself for YOU, for THEM, and for US.