

# The Power of Positive Interactions

(From the Book: *How Full Is Your Bucket?* –  
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The frequency of positive acts in relation to negative acts is critical in relationships and the workplace.

John Gottman's research predicted an ideal ratio of 5 to 1 of positive to negative interactions for a successful marriage. As the ratio approached 1 to 1, relationships were likely to end in divorce.

In a study testing this model, Gottman recruited 700 couples that had recently married. They videotaped a fifteen-minute conversation with each couple and logged the ratio of positive to negative interactions. Based on the ideal 5 to 1 ratio, they predicted whether each marriage would succeed or fail.

Ten years later, they followed up on their predictions. They had a 94% accuracy rate for the couples they had predicted would divorce.

In another study, focusing on the workplace, Frederickson and Losada developed a similar mathematical model for work groups. They found that work groups were significantly more productive when the ratio of positive to negative interchanges was 3 to 1 or greater.

This same study suggested an upper limit of a 13 to 1 ratio. The implication is that too much optimism is perceived as false.