



# CCPA NET Letter

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Collin County  
Psychological  
Association

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## COUPLES THERAPY



### Steve Sliwinski, Ph.D.

Steve presented to CCPA on John Gottman's model of Couples Therapy. Steve completed a week long training program and had many observations of his experience with extremely entertaining anecdotes. Gottman's research on "healthy" (masters) and troubled couples is impressive and certainly gives credibility to this approach. While not characterizing his treatment as 'cognitive', Gottman draws from many theorists among them Frankl.

Steve demonstrated various interventions and was particularly helpful with behaviors such as turning toward and turning away. The understanding that couples create a "dance" in which they facilitate each other and ultimately define their relationship is crucial. Teaching couples how to make and receive repair attempts as well as soothing your self and each other are important in breaking cycles.

Gottman's model of building from foundational issues of love and trust helps prepare couples for dealing with conflict. It was very interesting to hear that even the masters disagreed 66% of the time in conflict but had learned to be tolerant of faults and differences and find compromise. The top of the model involves the creation of shared meanings and dreams.

Be sure to read the President's column inside!  
If you want more information, go to: [www.gottman.com](http://www.gottman.com) or as Steve suggested you may want to buy one of his books, such as *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work*.

## "Collaborative Divorce"

9/24—12 PM  $\Psi$  **Bob Matlock, PhD**

**Please attend and bring a friend!**  
**Our meetings are a great time to network!**

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### **FUTURE MEETINGS:**

- **9/24— Collaborative Divorce Southfork Hotel 12 Noon**
- **10/22— MMPI Scales Southfork Hotel 12 Noon**
- **12/3—Holiday Social**

## UPCOMING MEETINGS—SCHEDULE THESE NOW!

Our monthly meetings are held from 12:00 noon to 1:30 p.m. on the 4th Friday of each month at the Southfork Hotel Plano, unless otherwise specified. The Southfork Hotel is on the east side of 75, 1 block north of 15th Street in Plano. Meetings are usually held in the Hackberry room. Members may order lunch from the menu, or just enjoy the presentation. 1.5 CEU credits are given to members for attending the meeting.

**Sept 24—Collaborative Divorce with Bob Matlock, Atty. Southfork Hotel Plano**

**Oct 22—MMPI Scales With Roger Greene, PhD**

**Dec 3— HOLIDAY SOCIAL at the home of Frank & Pattie Wichern**

**RSVP: 972-234-3178**

**PLEASE CHECK YOUR REFERRAL INFO. ON [www.psychselect.com/ccpa](http://www.psychselect.com/ccpa)! We try to keep it up to date, but we need you to verify your location and phone info. Remember you need to be current on dues to be listed!**

### OPPORTUNITIES!

#### Office Space

Several large offices with waiting area available. Located in Richardson near UTD. Office with other mental health professionals.

Contact: Frank Wichern (972) 234-3178

Two story, reasonably priced (\$950), 1200 sq ft office for rent. Four offices, waiting room, break area, rest room. 1325 19<sup>th</sup> St. Ste. 4B, Plano

Contact: Dan Perkins 972-562-9140

West Plano 2300 sq. ft. office condominium has two spaces for lease to mental health professionals. The smaller office is about 172 sq. ft. in area and faces onto an eastern courtyard. The larger office has about 272 sq.ft. and has eastern and northern windows, a skylight, and built-in cabinets. Both have internet connections, phone hookups, recessed lighting, and soundproofing. The suite itself has a very nice and spacious waiting room, a nice admin area, file storage, a kitchenette, and interior restrooms for clients and staff. A separate exit is also provided for client and staff use. Free parking and easy access to all parts of the Metroplex are added features of this location. Please call Tom Van Hoose for more details at 972-250-2919.

#### Services

##### Groups

Sarah Spreda, PhD and Jason Simpson, PsyD will be offering a **Divorce Recovery Support Group!** The group will concern issues about the divorce transition. Contact them at 972.670.5153 Or 469.879.9588

email: [groups@SynergistWeb.com](mailto:groups@SynergistWeb.com)

##### Employment Sought:

**Marcia Moriarity who has been employed for a number of years in a psychologist's office is seeking employment. Contact Marcia at 972.867.8599**

##### Billing

WE MANAGE MANAGED CARE! You are in charge of scheduling your patients, treating your patients, and your TRF's. We do the rest. We are seasoned professionals. We make the phone calls to managed care and make sure they pay. We pre-authorize, file your claims, process your EOB's, do all the billing and collections, send you monthly reports, answer patients billing and insurance questions, and more! Free yourself to market your practice or balance your life! Call JLD and Associates at 972 -424 - 9212.

**LET THIS SPACE WORK FOR YOU! Advertise your specialty or service so our members can refer or utilize it! Send to: [wichern@att.net](mailto:wichern@att.net)**

**CCPA PRESIDENT'S COLUMN: Greetings CCPA members! September 2004**



Someone at our CCPA meeting said they weren't sure what I meant when discussing the John Gottman idea of dreams within conflict so I thought I would discuss that a little more. It is similar to the Dr. Harville Hendrix idea of looking for the desire behind the complaint. The wife complains that the husband is driving too fast and tailgating. Her desire behind her complaint may be that she would like to feel safe while riding with her husband. You might think of Gottman's dream within conflict as analogous to finding the personal meaning or the subjective reality behind each partner's position when they are fighting about a particular topic. Gottman is focusing more on the dream behind perpetual conflicts.

Couples usually have a limited set of issues they have most of their painful fights about. Some examples of these issues would be differences in; neatness and organization, desire for time together or time apart, approach to finances, how they want each other to relate to relatives, approach to household chores, how to raise and discipline children, importance of work, and so on. Some examples of dreams would be; saying goodbye to something, having a sense of order, honor, feeling free, reflecting on one's life, and so on. According to Gottman there is a dream within each person's stance on each of the perpetual conflicts that are unique to that person. If the couple is able to establish an on going dialogue about the dream they will dramatically reduced the strain in the conflict without trying to resolve it.

The following is taken from a Gottman example of a response to the dream within conflict exercise. The client's perpetual conflict stance is, "I want order and neatness in our home. I'm always stuck with picking up after my partner. My partner is sooo inconsiderate and I'm fed up with it!"

When the client is prompted by the therapist to discuss the dream within the conflict the client responds with a discussion/story something like this, "I grew up in a home where things were out of control, things were a mess, and no one was in charge. I couldn't count on anyone. I never knew who would give me a ride or pick me up. There usually was no meal prepared and no clean clothing. I took on the responsibility of bringing order to chaos and seeing to it that my younger siblings had meals and clothing. I want to have a much better kind of home to raise my children in. Order and neatness mean security and peace. I want my children to have that peace and security that I never had when I was in my childhood home." In this response the client is revealing their dream of peace and security.

Often, in the first session, the couple brings to you one or more of their gridlocked conflicts and their style of fighting about it. I have been surprised with how easy it has been to have success with this exercise even while falling short of doing it the way Dr. G instructs. The basic idea is to discuss with them the concept of dreams within conflict and shift from adversarial stance to neutral story telling and listening in a supportive way. Then you or the listening spouse have the other spouse discuss what their position means to them, what the dream behind their position might be, how it is central to who they are as a person, and tell a story of what the dream means to them. They are to discuss what they want, why it's important to them, how they see it in the past and what they hope for in the future regarding their dream. You coach them to not argue, defend, or criticize and to share feelings as they tell the story. It can take from three to twenty minutes depending on the therapist's style. The listening partner tries to make their spouse feel safe and listened to. It's important for the therapist and couple to know that one can support their partner's dreams without actually making them come true. Many dreams will never come true or will be only partially realized depending on resources but dreams can be psychologically supported by a caring partner.

This exercise may not always work. In most cases it will introduce hope and new choices of how to think about the conflict. According to Dr. G in 10 to 20% of cases this exercise brings up anger that is probably related to a person having given up on their dream. However, you can work with that too!

All of Dr. Gottman's ideas are in his books and at [The Gottman Institute.com](http://TheGottmanInstitute.com)!

***Steve Sliwinski, Ph.D.***

Suggestions, comments? Please contact me at [dr.sliwinski@comcast.net](mailto:dr.sliwinski@comcast.net).

**Collin County  
Psychological Association**

600 W. Campbell Road  
Suite 5  
Richardson, Texas  
75080  
  
www.psychselect.com/ccpa

*The network of psychologists that  
connects!*

**CCPA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

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**ANNOUNCEMENT OR OTHER  
RELEVANT INFORMATION,  
CONTACT CCPA: [wichern@att.net](mailto:wichern@att.net)**

***BOARD MEETINGS:***

***Please attend!***

600 W. Campbell Rd #5,  
Richardson

*NOON – First Friday of month!*

**CCPA THANKS  
Bill Whitehead, PhD  
For his efforts as  
Webmaster for  
[www.psychselect.com](http://www.psychselect.com)**

***MENTOR'S CORNER: CCPA encourages it's members to  
build profitable, ethical practices. These tips are timely and  
we solicit your suggestions, recommendations and Questions!  
Copies of the CCPA Office Practices CD are still available!***

**ARE YOU "BRANDING" YOUR PRACTICE?**

- Branding is not just about having a logo, a catchy slogan, or an eye-catching advertisement. It is about communicating unique strengths so you are seen as the preferred choice. Like a brand, your professional image reflects the way people think and feel about your practice.
- Branding has both physical and psychological dimensions that relate to defining your professional image. Physical elements include the name of your practice, and the slogan you use in your brochure or website and other promotional materials. They also include distinctive graphic elements such as colors, fonts, logos, and other art that you use in communication vehicles.
- Branding should allow someone who views your communications a quick, defining presence; what sets you apart from others who may use your professional title. Your brand should consider how it looks and sounds, what it reminds people of, what emotions it elicits, what beliefs and values it communicates, and what population it appeals to. For example, simply saying "Play Therapist", may identify you with parents seeking play therapy but turn off adults who want a serious approach, not play!

**How to build a "brand":**

- **Define your image** - Try to write a single sentence that clearly defines how you want people to view your practice. An effective statement should reflect your mission and values, your strengths, and address the needs of your target market.
- **Stand out from the crowd** – The main purpose of your professional image is to communicate the way in which your practice is unique. Don't try to communicate that you can be everything to everybody. Ask yourself why clients come back to see you, what do they tell referrals.
- **Communicate consistently** – Keep your message simple and focused, make sure it reflects your professional image, repeat the same message, and include the same physical elements (e.g., logo, slogan, colors) year-to-year in all of your promotional materials. The effects of marketing are cumulative, so consistency is key. Identify which sources provide you referrals and keep your brand in front of them with thank yous, newsletter, cookies or whatever!

***Summary: Branding is a consistent communication about what makes your practice distinctive! Branding is not marketing hype but the realization that clients want and need choices and setting your practice apart as the best choice for them is what you are doing. As psychologists we are not mundane, replaceable by computers, or a pill. We are in the "face to face" business where the uniqueness of our experience and training does make a difference in treatment outcomes.***