

SILENCE IS NOT GOLDEN: REVIEW OF STUDIES OF COUPLE INTERACTION

Silence is not golden when it comes to romantic relationships. Couple interaction and dialogue make up the most important pillars of a functional relationship (Gottman & Notarius, 2002), and the importance of interaction has been recognized (e.g., Ebling, & Levenson, 2003; Roberts, 2000). Yet, research of couple interaction still looks for answers to many questions, such as whether happy and unhappy couples differ in their way of interpreting each other's messages. Indeed, misunderstandings are common in communication: people can express and interpret messages in various ways and the intended meaning may differ from the interpretation. For example, the phrase "We have to talk about this" can be interpreted in different ways; while one person may think it is time to have a serious negotiation where ups and downs are discussed to find a solution, another may pass it off with a blunt remark expecting the problem to be solved in due course (cf., Baucon, Atkins, Eldridge, & Christensen, 2010; Määttä, 2005a; Määttä & Uusiautti, 2012c).

Indeed, daily talk and communication are crucial for the continuance of a relationship (Ramirez & Broneek, 2009). According to Duck (1994), daily talk represents a rhetoric vision that reflects the state of the relationship and its chances of continuing. However, conflict and stressful situations are especially challenging for communication (Busby & Holman, 2009; Van Binsbergen, Graham, & Yang, 2010) as spouses' ability to communicate reciprocally is tested in these situations (Beach & Whisman, 2012; Braun et al., 2010; Sümer & Cozzarelli, 2004). According to numerous studies, the connection between communication problems and divorces is evident (Birditt, Brow, Orbuch, & McIlvane, 2010; Gottman, 1994; Gottman & Notarius, 2000).

In this article, couple interaction is discussed. In the light of the vast body of research all the way from the 1970s to 2010s, we analyzed the role of couple interaction in long-lasting relationships. The core question is how happy and unhappy couples differ from each other. The purpose is to discuss the factors of couple interaction and its cornerstones. How do happy and unhappy couples differ in their interaction? What are the core issues of couple interaction based on the most relevant studies in the field?

We were interested in discovering the similarities and differences between previous studies and whether there were some common themes to be found. Eventually, we categorized the themes that emerged from the literature into three views on couple interaction. As a conclusion, we decided to compile a general view of positive couple interaction that is based on our own empirical research (see e.g., Määttä, 2010, 2011bd; Määttä & Uusiautti, 2012bcf; Uusiautti & Määttä, 2012) and other researchers' studies.

METHOD

In this research, a selection of studies starting from the 1970s to the present date was reviewed. The studies reviewed were selected based on their relevance to couple interaction and the various sides illustrated as the purpose was to compile a rich description of the theme.

This kind of research approach can be defined in various ways: Qualitative meta-synthesis refers to the amalgamation of a group of qualitative studies with the aim of developing an explanatory theory or model that could explain the findings of a group of similar qualitative studies. Meta-analysis of quantitative studies aims to increase certainty in cause-and-effect conclusions in a particular area. Systematic review must also be distinguished as a form of a literature review focused on a research question that tries to identify, appraise, select and synthesize all high quality research evidence relevant to that question. (Barnett-Page & Thomas, 2009; Walsh & Downe, 2005.)

Even more detailed definitions can be given. Barnett-Page and Thomas (2009) distinguishes a thematic synthesis, which means that free codes of findings are organized into “descriptive” themes, which are then further interpreted to yield “analytical” themes comparable to “third-order interpretations.”

In addition, there is systematic or immanent analysis (Jussila, Montonen, & Nurmi, 1989; see also Holma, 2009), which focuses on analyzing the contents of a theory, an ideology or a theorist’s production. The purpose is to analyze the previous basis and create a new synthesis that is based on familiarity with the previous research. Thus, we place this study in the middle ground of systematic review and thematic synthesis (see also Jussila, Montonen, & Nurmi, 1989; Lucas et al., 2007). The studies selected in this review cover both qualitative and quantitative studies, and they are categorized into three themes that emerged from the data. Therefore, the themes are analytical or third-order interpretations.

According to Walsh and Downe (2005), an appropriate research question, purpose or aim frames this kind of study as well any other study. Framing is crucial because it determines the way the reviewed studies are selected. As mentioned above, the purpose of our review was to draw a comprehensive picture of the phenomenon based on representative studies. Thus, it is not a systematic review because it does not follow any computational aspects but has a more qualitative focus. The review proceeded so that we analyzed the select studies and discovered the core dimensions of couple interaction. These dimensions are considered the results of this study, and they were discussed from a wider perspective with the purpose of finding future directions for research on couple interaction.

THREE DIMENSIONS OF COUPLE INTERACTION

According to our review, three core dimensions of couple interaction appeared evident from the point of view of defining the core areas that are the most likely to

further or hinder the success of couples' happiness. These dimensions are the level of interaction, the content of interaction, and the accuracy of interaction.

The Level of Interaction

Level of interaction refers to the wealth of interaction (e.g., recurrence and length of contact), diversity of interaction methods and strategies, and the width of interaction (e.g., social networks). Wealth of interaction seems to have an influence on the quality of a romantic relationship (Guldner & Swensen, 1995) although the research results starting from the 1970s have been somewhat contradictory. While Hill, Rubin, and Peplau (1976) stated that seeing one's partner daily does not predict the stability of the relationship, other studies with comprehensive measurements of interaction (Femlee, Sprecher, & Bassin, 1990; Parks & Adelman, 1983; Surra & Longstreth, 1990) proved that the level of interaction does correlate with the continuance of a relationship. Furthermore, Vincent et al. (1979) noted that unhappy married couples differ from happy couples in the level of nonverbal messages (eye contacts, touching).

One of these studies was conducted by Parks and Adelman (1983). They observed 172 couples for three months. Their especial focus was to measure the length of time the couples engaged in face-to-face interaction and shared free-time activities. In another study, Surra and Longstreth (1990) studied the level of 59 couples' activities for over a year. Not only did they study the level and content of shared activities but also related conflicts and satisfaction. The study proved that in addition to the level of interaction, the diversity of interaction methods could explain the stability of a relationship. Some differences between men's and women's ways of assessing the importance of various interaction methods occurred.

Likewise, Berscheid, Snyder, and Omoto (1989) studied couple interaction with a 27-part measurement that included participants' evaluations of, for example, the frequency of weekly interaction, diversity of weekly interaction, and the perceived strength of impact. Interaction correlated with the feelings of intimacy and predicted the continuance of a relationship. Simpson (1987) and Orthner and Mancini (1990) had similar results.

Furthermore, Zuo (1992) noted that the regularity observed by Homans already in 1950 seemed valid; as the level of interaction increased, the strength of impact between two persons was likely to increase. Shared leisure time and the number of shared activities therefore explain the happiness of a relationship (Zuo, 1992; see also Reissman, Aron, & Bergen, 1993). This kind of interaction is a sign of a healthy family, Homan and Epperson (1984) concluded.

Thus, the level of interaction is unquestionably significant but so is the actual way of interacting as well. Dindia and Baxter (1987) showed the importance of various interaction strategies for the continuance of a relationship and for coping with relationship problems. Five strategies were proved crucial:

1. Communicative strategies, such as having time for talking about each other's day and sharing feelings and opinions on an open and honest manner.

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2. Metacommunication, to discuss the way problems are solved and to pay attention not only to the problem itself but also to the way of handling it. The concept “talk about talk” refers to this strategy.
3. Anticipatory social strategies such as the endeavor to be nice, kind, and empathic toward the other and to avoid criticizing the other’s personality.
4. Ceremonies and rituals created in a relationship that remind of the old times in a warm and firming way. Cherishing these rituals help partners to enjoy the development and existence of their relationship.
5. Sense of togetherness or spending time with shared hobbies and activities that bring joy just because they are shared (cf. Dindia et al., 2004).

In addition to the interaction strategy, the level of interaction can also be analyzed from the perspective of a social width of interaction. Some studies have focused on analyzing how the social network predicts the continuance of a relationship. Lewis (1973) measured the social factors by asking couples to assess how much their relatives and friends (a) invited them to various shared events and activities and (b) considered them as a couple. Parks and Adelman (1983) added to these social factors an evaluation of the level of interaction between a couple and the wider community. Stable relationships had stronger support of a social network than unstable couples (see also Surra 1985, 1987). More recently, Sprecher and Femlee (2000) proved that especially the support given by a woman’s relatives and friends was more important to the stability of the relationship than the support from a man’s corresponding network (see also Sprecher, 2011). On the other hand, lack of social integration affects social relationships in two ways. Social isolation or lack of integration diminishes the level of social support and control. Furthermore, these factors are likely to cause, for example aggressiveness (see Stets, 1991; Rehman, Holtzworth-Munroe, Herron, & Clements, 2009).

In all, the level of interaction consists of various factors. In addition to frequent contact with the spouse, the way that spouses interact and the support they get from their relatives and other acquaintances as a couple appeared to be significant contributors to the couple’s happiness.

The Content of Interaction

The second core dimension is the content of interaction which refers to the quality and type of couple interaction including spouses’ ability to interpret each other’s messages correctly. The importance of communication in romantic relationships has been known for a while, as Noller stated in 1987 and referred to, for example Locke et al.’s study called “Correlates of Primary Communication and Empathy” from 1956. The latest studies have focused on a more careful analysis of couple communication and its various traits (Cornelius & Alessi, 2007; Gottman & Notarius, 2000; Schuler, 2009): whether happy and unhappy couples differ in their way of understanding each other’s messages, whether they use various types of messages, whether

the messages differ in quality and number, etc. (Slatcher, Vazire, & Pennebaker, 2008).

Already in the early 1970s, Kahn (1970) developed the Marital Communication Scale, which covers a series of various messages depending on their purpose and related nonverbal behavior. One example of an equivocal message is the question “What are you doing?” One can express it neutrally, positively (in a pleasant or surprising manner) or negatively (in an angry or frustrated manner).

The problem was, however, that the research participants could not use their spoken language. They had to limit their speech into the communication that the scale offered to them. Thus, Gottman et al. (1976) developed a method that studied the differences in couple communication from two points of view: what the partners wanted to express (the purpose) and how the message was received (the influence) (see also Gottman & Notarius, 2000).

The method developed here was the so-called talk-table method. The research participants—couples—sat down, face to face, and discussed one marital problem. Each conversation situation was evaluated so that the one who expressed the message graded its purpose and the respondent of the message graded its influence with a five-part scale (dimensions between positive and negative). According to the results, couples who were categorized as unhappy experienced the influence of the message more negative than its purpose was. Among happy couples, such a difference between the purpose and influence did not exist (Gottman et al., 1976).

A salient result was that unsatisfied or unhappy couples used more negative expressions. This type of communication easily leads to a circle of negativity; because of one spouse’s negative message, the other communicates in a negative manner too. Furthermore, the messages can be interpreted more negatively than the original intention had been. The history of a relationship and all shared experiences influence in the interaction situation as well (Noller, 1987).

Indeed, there are plenty of aspects in common in the way men and women communicate but there are differences, too. It seems that in serious problem situations, unhappy women are more negative than unhappy men. For example, Notarius, Benson, and Sloane (1989) observed that 63% of unhappy wives started to talk more negatively while the corresponding figure among men was 46%. A more careful illustration of the negativity of women in unhappy relationships was presented by Gottman and Krokoff (1989). According to their study, unhappy wives tended to be more stubborn, to humiliate others, to boss others around, and to complain.

The studies on the flow of interaction have analyzed partners’ ability to omit or edit their negative answers when their message is likely to have a negative impact. Gottman et al.’s (1977) study showed that in addition to men and women who were categorized as unhappy, happy men had a tendency to use negative language when listening to a negative emotional expression. Happy women were more able to avoid negative language when in the likelihood of having long chains of negative exchange is high which is typical of communication in unhappy marriages (Baucom, Notarius, Burnett, & Haefner, 1990; Gottman, 1979; Margolin & Wampold, 1981; Schaap,

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1984). By doing this, these women were either able to recognize the real reasons for the problem or they simply forgave and ate humble pie (Gordon, Baucom, & Snyder, 2000; Schuman, 2012).

Later on, Notarius, Benson, and Sloane (1989) reviewed the above-mentioned chain of negative exchange from another perspective and discovered new findings. They analyzed spouses' ability to behave positively after their partners' malevolent behavior for example, whether a spouse was able to take the offensive expression with humor and forget about being hurt. Based on the findings, especially women who considered their relationship unhappy were less frequently able to behave positively than others. These women's ability to break the chain of unhappy exchange proved lower than others.

According to the aforementioned studies, the most evident differences occur between women who live in happy or unhappy relationships. The findings are consistent with the previous studies that had showed that women are the barometers of unhappy relationships (Baucom, Notarius, Burnett, & Haefner, 1990). Moreover, in conflict situations, women seem to take the active role while men stand back (Gottman, 1994; Julien & Dion, 2004). Actually, this is a long-known (Terman, 1938) and internationally common (Cristensen et al., 2006) phenomenon.

On the other hand, Weiss and Heyman's (1990) review pointed out that compared to men, women smile and laugh more, complain, criticize and disagree more, and use more positive nonverbal expressions. Men, on the other hand, use more excuses and negative nonverbal expressions and they avoid eye contact more often than women. In addition, men seem to express agreement more often than women. Spouses do not recognize the usual enemies: bad communication skills, destructive ideas about the reasons for disagreements and problems (e.g. Bradbury & Fincham, 1992), and lowered expectations toward the ability to solve disagreements (Baucom, Notarius, Burnett, & Haefner, 1990).

Altman and Taylor (1973) describe a relationship as a penetration phenomenon. Due to abundant negative communication and interaction, the relationship can have the nature of de-penetration. Altman and Taylor (1973) describe the situation with these words:

Once it has begun, the process of alienation goes on remorselessly, as if it were Frankensteinian monster which the couple has created and now would gladly destroy. Everything that the two persons try to do in the situation seems only to make it worse. Because they have quarreled much, they quarrel more easily than before. Their continued strife produces in each an emotional instability, a lowering of the threshold for experiencing slights and of the emotional boiling point in reaching to them, and the strife which arises from this reacts upon their personality yet further... Yet as the process ensues, each member still continues to need and depend on one another. But part of this dependency is to return to the conflicts and exacerbate them, which results in a continued destruction of the relationship, partly for the price of building up an identifying self. (p. 178)

Negative communication has a corrosive influence on a relationship. No one wants to hear constantly how he or she has become a partner who just causes trouble to the other (cf. Määttä, 2005a; Blood & Wolfe, 1960).

In addition to the spoken content, nonverbal interaction can also be considered as a significant dimension of the content of interaction. For example, in the 1980s, Noller (1985, 1987) studied the content and differences of nonverbal communication in relationships. Some differences were found between women's and men's nonverbal communication: When expressing positive messages, women smile more whereas men express their feelings by moving their eye brows. In negative messages, women give more angry looks and expressions while again men raise or move their eyebrows. In general, women's nonverbal communication appeared more accurate, plentiful, and versatile. In all, both women and men who are dissatisfied with their relationship communicated in a more restricted manner than those who were happy.

In sum, the content of interaction consists of the type and quality of messages and their positivity or negativity. The content of interaction covers not only spoken messages but also nonverbal communication. The studies reviewed here showed that there were some apparent differences between women and men.

The Accuracy of Interaction

The accuracy of interaction refers to spouses' ability to express themselves clearly as well as their ability to interpret the other correctly. In his studies of the communication accuracy of couple interaction, Kahn (1970) divided couples' videotaped expressions into good communication (messages that more than two-thirds of evaluators could interpret accurately) and bad communication (messages that few than two-thirds of evaluators could interpret accurately). These badly communicated messages were categorized into encoding errors (messages that both spouses and outsiders found difficult to interpret) and decoding errors (messages that outsiders but not spouses could interpret accurately). There were a few messages that spouses but not outsiders could interpret accurately. These messages were categorized as idiosyncratic communications; in other words, messages that are part of spouses' mutual and private communication.

Kahn (1970) noted that happy couples communicated more accurately than unhappy couples, especially when women expressed the message and men were the receivers. Why is that? Another result gives an explanation: Kahn (1970) also found out that men whose marital satisfaction was high were more accurate than those who were unhappy, both when it came to expression and interpretation of messages. Such a difference did not occur in women. Therefore, the difference in the communication accuracy between happy and unhappy couples when the wife is the one who expresses the message seems to be connected, according to Kahn (1970), especially to the difference that occurs in men's communication: Happy men are better at interpreting messages than unhappy men (cf. Clements, Holtzworth-Munroe, Schweinle, & Ickes, 2007).

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Among others, Gottman and Porterfield (1981) showed how men who were dissatisfied with their marriages also had inadequate communication skills. Likewise, Noller's several studies (1980, 1981, 1982, 1985) have showed that in romantic relationships, women usually make fewer mistakes in expressing their messages than men. Women's communicate well, especially positive messages. Men who are satisfied with their marriages express especially positive messages more accurately than men who are dissatisfied with their marriage.

Moreover, Noller (1982) noted that men's accuracy in particular, both expressing and interpreting messages is crucial for the happiness of relationship—especially when it comes to positive messages. Noller concluded that women who were dissatisfied with their marriage were specifically concerned about the lack of their husbands' positive communication: The women wished for more emotions, appreciation, gratitude, and general attention.

A crucial question in a couple's communication is also the spouses' ability to recognize problems in communication and interpretation and to ensure that the message becomes understood (cf. Stanley, Bradbury, & Markman, 2000). Although spouses are familiar with each other's communication, they are not necessarily able to interpret each other objectively and may be even too trusting that their way of interpreting each other is accurate (Sillars & Scott, 1983). When comparing happy couples with unhappy couples, it became evident that happy couples—and particularly happy women—could predict whether the spouse interpreted their messages correctly. In addition, unhappy men proved to be worse predictors than other men. Kahn (1970) found out that happy spouses interpret each other's nonverbal behavior better than spouses who are in an unhappy relationship (see also Hawkins, Carrère, & Gottman, 2002).

In addition to accurate expression, the ability to interpret the other's messages correctly seemed to have a central role in successful couple interaction. Of the contents of interaction, this concerns both verbal and nonverbal communication.

DISCUSSION

We presented three dimensions of couple interaction that are interconnected with each other. Successful couple interaction has various levels that are easy to understand through this three-dimensional analysis; spouses need to find success not only at the level of interaction but the content and accuracy also matters. It seems that there are also certain differences between men and women and their ways of interaction, expression, and interpretation.

The viewpoint we present here attempts to point out what the keys are to succeed in couple interaction and how to enhance it. There are, naturally, plenty of studies that focus on interaction problems. For example, Vangelisti (1992) studied couples' communication problems with diversified data. She categorized communication problems into three main categories, which were expressive problems (e.g. inability to express feelings, false or hasty assumptions, etc.), responsive problems (e.g. the

spouse does not respond to appeals or does not accept the other's point of view, etc.), and conflict problems (e.g. constant disagreement, blaming, or standing back, etc.). Vangelisti's list of problems is relatively comprehensive and gives good insight into the gamut of communication problems that may occur between partners. Furthermore, these findings are supported by other studies of communication problems (e.g. Domingue & Moller, 2009; Erbert, 2000).

In this study, we would like to have a more positive point of view and focus on what couples need to understand regarding couple interaction. Indeed, good interaction seems to be crucial for the stability of a romantic relationship (Baucom et al., 2010; Graham, 2011). Yet, long-lasting marriages have become more and more scarce (O'Leary, 2012) and therefore, it has become difficult to find comprehensive illustrations of how and of what positive communication comprises. For example, Altman and Taylor (1973) described the development of intimacy and penetration processes through significant communication contents and dimensions that result from the positive development of couple interaction. Based on Altman and Taylor's (1973) assertions, the following factors are the most important:

1. The richness and breath of communication followed by developing awareness of each other's personality.
2. The uniqueness of interaction that is strengthened by understanding the meaning of certain stresses, expression, and body movements.
3. The accuracy, speed, and efficiency of exchange. As a relationship develops, various nonverbal messages become more meaningful and make communication deeper. Sensitivity increases—not just to words but also nonverbal behavior.
4. The substitutability and equivalency of various communication methods. As a relationship develops, partners are able to use various expressions regardless of the complexity of interaction situations. For example, concern can be expressed with words, a look, meaningful hand movements, silence, or certain movements.
5. Synchronization and pacing of interaction. Altman and Taylor (1973) also talked about a working consensus where partners know their roles, characteristics, and limits, and develop a stable interaction model that pays attention to the other and surrounding factors. This is possible after a longer period of being together.
6. Permeability and openness. Openness and permeability are manifested in verbal and nonverbal communication. With openness, mutual familiarity and acceptance increases, partners' abilities and courage to move quickly and directly from one communication theme to another strengthens.
7. The voluntariness and spontaneity of exchange increase.
8. Mutual evaluation of communication increases. Partners become more willing and able to criticize and thank each other.

The above list is not all-encompassing but it does include important factors that occur in the various studies of couple interaction discussed in this article. Altman and Taylor's list covers the gamut of successful communication all the way from

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non-verbal communication to mutual desire to understanding and interacting with each other in an authentic manner.

The three dimensions of couple interaction that emerged from our review illustrate the core of couple interaction. But what is the key element in all these three dimensions? According to our review, self-disclosure might be the answer. When communication is understood broadly, it can cover, for example, the ability to empathize, to respond to the other's needs, and to adjust one's own behavior. Self-disclosure seems to be of especial importance. (Barness et al., 2007; Roberts, 2000.)

Self-disclosure refers to a process where a human being makes him or herself familiar to the other. It may be either verbal or nonverbal action (Jourard, 1971) or "any information exchange that refers to the self, including personal states, dispositions, events in the past, and plans for the future" (Derlega, 1979, p. 152). According to Derlega (1979), self-disclosure has five functions that further the development of a relationship: self-expression, self-clarification, the chance of getting social reinforcement when comparing oneself to others, the way of expressing the development of the relationship, and the way of expressing the modes of control and impression related to the relationship.

In conclusion, the ability to express one's feelings and thoughts to the other is essential for the development and stability of a relationship. Openness is assumed to promote this development because of its rewarding nature: Openness leads to positive emotions and increases partners' mutual trust (Sprecher, 1987) and care and understanding (Mikulincer & Nachshon, 1991). Inability to maintain openness explains individuals' dissatisfaction with their social networks and loneliness (Mikulincer & Nachshon, 1991).

Indeed, self-disclosure as the basis of couple interaction might be considered a key factor of long-lasting relationships (Berg & McQuinn, 1986; Femlee, Sprecher, & Bassin, 1990; Hendrick et al., 1988; Surra & Longstreth, 1990; Sprecher, 1987). When dissecting these results, it is, however, worth noticing that openness is quite a multidimensional concept (Ben-Ari, 2012). As Mikulincer and Nachshon (1991) pointed out, it can be understood as a personality trait or a behavioral type, and it can vary by its level, intimacy, informational content, and objectives. One salient feature of openness in a relationship is flexibility, which means the ability to take the present situation into account and adjust one's disclosures according to the situation. The individual who is able to modulate his or her disclosures across a wider range of social situations in response to situational and interpersonal demands will function interpersonally more adequately, whereas a less flexible individual who has not learned the discriminant cues that signal whether disclosure is appropriate or inappropriate will not. (Mikulincer & Nachshon, 1991.)

In order to be a binding factor, self-disclosure necessitates reciprocity or the ability to respond the other's disclosures. Among other things, this reciprocity reflects in increasing trust and attentive behavior (Berg & McQuinn, 1986). On the other hand, self-disclosure alone does not guarantee functional interaction. Thoughtfulness,

consideration, and empathy are also important. Love shies away from duress and therefore, the necessity of openness and talking can become oppressive.

CONCLUSION

In sum, it is worth noticing the complexity of couple interaction. It is interaction where both the person expressing and the person receiving and interpreting the message influence each other. It is a process where misunderstandings occur both in expression and interpretation. In addition to verbal communication, nonverbal communication is important too. Especially, men who were dissatisfied with their romantic relationship had low nonverbal communication skills. On the other hand, the communication skills of spouses who live in an unhappy relationship are apparently better than they seem when communicating with each other; many of these spouses communicate more accurately and positively with outsiders (Birchler et al., 1975; Noller, 1987).

Even though spouses had the worst communication skills, their relationship still may not be doomed to failure. Based on our findings (Määttä, 2005a; Uusiautti & Määttä, 2012), those couples that made the effort to listen to each other and tried to find a common ground appeared eventually the happiest. As important as talking is, it does not guarantee any solutions to problems, as they are not necessarily solved by talking. Quite often, problem solving takes time. Through talking, it is possible to clear the air and various points of view become recognized and yet, excessive rehashing may lead to a deadlock. Sometimes, “talk fasting” can be a surprisingly good solution—but naturally, with moderation.

Our review introduced an overview of the dimensions of couple interaction. The overview was based on various studies, most of them focusing on a carefully defined trait or dimension of couple interaction. We also argued that self-disclosure, when understood as an authentic ability to openness and reciprocal communication, might be the key that opens the doors of the three dimensions of couple interaction. This argument needs to be further studied—especially drawing from the contribution and concepts of positive psychology. Studies focusing on couples’ positive interaction experiences in these three levels and their sublevels would be of great interest. They could provide new understanding and insight into questions such as “How do couples succeed in these dimensions of couple interaction?” “Are they learnable?” “Can self-disclosure be learned?” and “What is the role of self-disclosure in successful couple interaction.”