

MINDTHEORY

Bids for Connection:

The Small Moments That Build Closeness

Big relationships are built from small moments.



1 What are Bids for Connection?

Bids for connection are small, everyday attempts to get another person's attention, response, or engagement. They can be verbal, non-verbal, or even a simple action – and they are how we signal **"Hey, I see you. I want to connect."**



2 Everyday Examples



Sharing something interesting	Asking for help	Seeking attention (non-verbal)	Commenting on something around you

3 3 Types of Responses

When someone makes a bid, there are three possible responses:

Turning Toward



- You notice and respond positively
- Show interest and engagement
- Builds trust and closeness
- Strengthens the relationship

Turning Away



- You ignore or miss the bid
- Get distracted or don't respond
- Can make the other person feel unimportant
- Over time, can create distance

Turning Against



- You respond negatively
- Dismiss, criticize or show irritation
- Can make the other person feel rejected
- Repeatedly doing this harms trust and connection

4 Key Research Findings

Research by Dr. **John Gottman** shows that how we respond to bids for connection directly predicts relationship satisfaction and long-term stability.

- Couples who turn toward each other's bids most of the time are happier and more resilient.
- It's not grand gestures, but small, everyday moments that matter most.
- Positive bid responses create a virtuous cycle of warmth, trust and emotional safety.
- These small moments help us feel seen, valued and understood – core human needs in any close relationship.

5 Daily Bid-Spotting Guide

Try these simple steps to notice and respond to bids in your everyday life.

1 Notice the Bids

- Be present and pay attention to small cues.
- Look for verbal, non-verbal and contextual bids.
- Slow down and stay curious.

2 Pause and Check

- Take a breath before responding.
- Ask yourself: "What might this mean to them?"
- Choose to be intentional rather than automatic.

3 Turn Toward

- Show interest, even if it's just for a moment.
- Use a warm response (a smile, a question, a comment)
- Be fully present, even in small moments.

4 Make it a Habit

- Look for multiple bids every day.
- Respond positively and consistently.
- Over time, these small moments build a stronger, more fulfilling relationship.

Small Bids. Big Bonds. A More Connected You.