Dear

Thank you for your interest in Gottman Method Couples therapy.  When we engage in couples therapy we know that in order to really help couples and to prevent relapse after treatment that we have to complete 3 stages of treatment with them, first there needs to be a thorough assessment - broadly speaking this generally takes about 4 hours – a one hour conjoint session, a one hour individual consultation each and a 1 hour feedback and goal setting sessuon;  then there is the treatment phase which generally speaking takes around 12-14 hours of therapy; and finally there is the relapse prevention stage or follow up phase which can take anything from 3 to 7 hours across 6-10 months

You will also be asked to complete anextensive online questionnaire to help your therapist gain a deep understanding of your particular issues.

We can offer a range of modes of therapy:

**1.  Standard face to face therapy**

For couples who live in our local area who wish to attend weekly therapy the process involves completing the assessment phase as outlined above .

The second stage of treatment can be delivered at a rate that suits you however, we know from research and from experience that couples make better progress when treatment is intensive therefore we usually suggest that we try to schedule you so that you complete all of the assessment phase within one calendar week and that initially  we schedule two hour treatment appointments until you  have  both  developed better skills in conflict management.  This usually takes around 4x2 hour  appointments.  Then depending on your  individual  needs we might move to 1 hour appointments a week  or a fortnight until you feel you are able to consistently  manage  your  relationship successfully.

During the third stage of relapse prevention we might suggest  monthly  follow up appointments for a few months to ensure you stay on track and then perhaps move to quarterly follow ups  and maybe to bi-annual check-ins to ensure relapse prevention has been achieved.

**2.  Intensive Marathon Therapy**
Marathon Couples’ Therapy has become one of the most popular and successful approaches to helping couples through a relationship crisis.  It is an approach that we would recommend for any couple presenting with significant relationship distress.

Marathon Couples' Therapy is a specific type of therapy that is short-term and intensive. Its purpose is to move couples quickly through your current crisis or specific perpetual issue. It is not meant as an on-going, long-term time commitment.   The process consists of 2 consecutive days of intense, structured, evidence-based couples’ therapy.

Gottman Marital Therapy is the gold standard when it comes to successful couple recovery.  It is a process oriented, phenomenological, cognitive, emotionally based approach to assisting couples gain better understanding of each other and to develop a range of new skills and behaviours that foster closer, more intimate relationships where conflict is managed in a functional manner.

Marathon Couples Therapy usually consists of two consecutive days in which  you and your partner engage in therapy for 6 – 7 hours per day broken down into
4 x 90–100 minute sessions with one therapist  This is a very intensive process so the day is split with regular breaks and opportunities to take time out.

Couples therapy includes three broad phases.  Phase 1 is the assessment phase — prior to your Marathon, we will email you and your partner a number of questionnaires for each of you to complete.  Sometimes these can feel onerous to complete but, these questionnaires help your therapist to understand both your individual histories and the history of your relationship as well as some of the main issues that have developed over time and bring you to couples counselling now.  It also helps us fast-track your therapy.  The more detail you include in these questionnaires the better I will be able to get to the heart of matters.

Phase 2 is the treatment phase — this is what we do during your two days.  From your assessment information, your therapist creates a treatment plan which you will talk about during the first hour to ensure you all share the same goals, and also so you clearly understand the process.  After that you will begin working on your most problematic concerns.  Your therapist’s role is to assist you and your partner to have constructive conversations so that you can reach greater understanding and a closer more connected relationship.  The focus will be both on addressing issues and on assisting you to develop better skills for managing your relationship - to become ‘Masters' of your relationship.

Phase 3 is the relapse prevention phase.  Approximately two weeks after your Marathon, your therapist will check in via email to see how you are managing.  They will continue to check in for around 6 months to ensure you stay on track and that your relationship continues to get stronger and healthier.  During that time if we identify any issues for additional work, we may recommend a range of options that might include:

* a few appointments either in person or via web conferencing;
* assisting you to find a suitably trained therapist in your local area with whom your therapist can liaise to assist in ongoing treatment;
* recommending additional resources such as books, videos, podcasts etc;
* other support options.

Once you have made a decision to engage in marathon therapy it is very important that you try to ‘call a truce’ on any on-going issues in your relationship for the time being.  Marathon Therapy is a commitment to re-build your relationship and the process begins right now.  Whatever issues you are currently struggling with will be addressed over our two days together in a way that allows both of you to feel heard, understood and validated.  Effectively, what this means is that for the next few weeks until we get started you can ‘shelve’ your problems knowing that they will be addressed then, and now is an opportunity for you to have a break from working on those concerns and instead focus on what you would like to build once we have effectively dealt with them together.