

# Relationship Problems? Try Getting More Sleep

By TARA PARKER-POPE    SEPT. 4, 2017

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Kim Murton

It started as a simple conversation about a child's birthday party. But it quickly escalated into a full-blown marital rift. She accused him of

neglecting the family. He said she was yelling.

"Whatever," she said. "Go. Go."

"Go where?" he replied.

"I don't know," she told him. "I don't want to talk to you anymore."

The bickering parents were among 43 couples taking part in an Ohio State University study exploring how marital interactions influence a person's health. Every couple in the study — just like couples in the real world — had experienced some form of routine marital conflict. Hot-button topics included managing money, spending time together as a family or an in-law intruding on the relationship.

But while marital spats were universal among the couples, how they handled them was not. Some couples argued constructively and even with kindness, while others — like the couple fighting about the birthday party — were hostile and negative. What made the difference? The hostile couples were most likely to be those who weren't getting much sleep.

“When people have slept less, it’s a little like looking at the world through dark glasses,” said [Janice Kiecolt-Glaser](#), a longtime relationship scientist and director of the Ohio State Institute for Behavioral Medicine Research. “Their moods are poorer. We’re grumpier. Lack of sleep hurts the relationship.”

The men and women in the study had been married from three to 27 years. They reported varying amounts of sleep — anywhere from three and a half to nine hours a night.

### **Paraphrasing Sample**

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According to an article by Tara Parker-Pope (published in NY Times on Sept 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017), dissimilar patterns were observed for “how [couples] handled” their marital spats while the patterns of their marital spats remained constant. Patterns for how they handled their spats ranged from constructive and kind arguments to hostile and negative arguments. Observing this trend, the author predicts that the couples who argued with hostility were sleeping for inadequate number of hours.