



Derailers: The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse And their Antidotes

The Four Horsemen are a metaphor depicting the end of times in the New Testament. They describe **conquest, war, hunger, and death** respectively. Dr. Gottman uses this metaphor to describe communication styles that can predict the end of a relationship.

Criticism

Attacks spouse's identity/ character. Is distinct from a complaint about a specific issue or behavior.

Defensiveness

Feeling attacked
Making counterattacks
Engaging in what-about-ism

Contempt

Sarcasm, shaming, mocking, eye-rolls, exasperated sighs, snickering, condescension, public disparaging of spouse

Stonewalling

Cold-shoulder
Silent treatment
Not responding

Criticism Antidotes

Complain without blame (You Always / You Never)
Eliminate harsh startups
Focus on specific issues (no flooding/generalizing)
Have purposed Conversations

Defensiveness Antidotes

Practice curiosity and inquiry
Examine own contributions, take responsibility

Contempt Antidotes

Identification & Elimination
Share fondness & Appreciation

Stonewalling Antidotes

Self-Sooth, Self-Calm
Share Responsibility
Circle Back and Re-engage



Additional strategies to cause/keep intimacy going

- Accept influence from your spouse (ahem, husbands)
- Exit and repair arguments - repair attempts, olive branches, don't leave undone?
- Seek help early - power of community
- Identify and distinguish solvable from persistent problems
 - 70% persistent/chronic. Not a great use of energy.
 - 30% solvable. Focus energy on these, as well as building the emotional bank account and pursuing shared vision.