

Husband and wife should treat each other with respect as guests for life, and should avoid making the following four major mistakes.



American psychologist Dr. John Gottman is a contemporary expert on marriage. For over 30 years, through the Gottman Institute he founded, he has observed and counseled over 3,000 couples. Dr. Gottman openly claims that if a couple spends 15 minutes discussing an unresolved conflict in front of him, he can predict with over 90% accuracy the likelihood of that couple getting divorced!

Dr. Gottman points out that in the interaction between partners, if the following "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" frequently appear, the probability of unhappiness and divorce significantly increases:

- Criticism
- Contempt
- Defensiveness
- Stonewalling

1) Criticism

Inevitably, problems and conflicts arise between partners that require communication to resolve. It is essential to address the mistakes of the other person and express one's grievances without making personal attacks. Keeping the focus on the issue rather than the individual is the appropriate approach.



2) Contempt

Dr. Gottman believes that sarcasm, ridicule, mockery, and even name-calling are like verbal knives that harm without drawing blood. Contempt, being disrespectful, damages the other person's self-esteem and undermines the foundation of the relationship.

3) Defensiveness

When partners need to address issues, it is necessary to point out mistakes (the definition of which is worth considering, regardless), and express grievances. The way these are handled, whether directed at the issue or the person, directly influences the resolution process. When criticized, everyone naturally responds to protect themselves, explaining their position.

While it's reasonable to hope the other person understands, if each explanation is met with harsher criticism, perceived as avoiding responsibility, it becomes disheartening. Over time, anticipating criticism leads to self-preservation responses like saying "It's not my fault" before shutting down and refusing to listen.



4) Stonewalling

Criticism, contempt, and defensiveness are not ideal forms of communication, but at least they involve a response. When a relationship reaches the point of stonewalling—where conflicts are avoided under the guise of peace—it leads to emotional detachment or even the death of feelings. Silence replaces communication, making salvaging the relationship even more challenging. Dr. Gottman also notes that marriages based not solely on love but also on considerations like money, power dynamics, or a desire to leave home often end in failure. Forcing a relationship to continue under such circumstances often leads to mutual resentment, unhappiness, and negatively impacts children.

Just as a well-thought-out itinerary is necessary for a successful trip, careful planning is essential for a lifelong commitment like marriage. If everything seems smooth sailing, assuming things will naturally work out, and forgetting even the most basic courtesies and respect, then resorting to unforgiving criticism and belittlement when expectations diverge from reality will harm the foundation of the relationship. Stagnant partner dynamics, unhappy lives, and the burden placed on children may perpetuate into future generations.