



Why Do Marriages Get Into Trouble? The Four Horsemen of Marriage Destruction

The Four Horsemen

- Criticism
- Contempt
- Defensiveness
- Stonewalling

Why Do Marriages Get Into Trouble?

Each person is unique, and therefore each marriage is unique. There is, however, certain characteristics that are present in almost every bad marriage.

John Gottman, a well renowned marriage expert, calls these four main characteristics the Four Horsemen.

The Four Horsemen are criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and stonewalling.

The Four Horsemen are emotional deal breakers in relationships that impede growth and must be resolved and dissolved for a healthy, loving, and long-lasting relationship.



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How Can I Improve My Relationship?

OVERCOMING THE FOUR HORSEMEN

Combat Criticism

When encountering the Four Horsemen, the first one to combat is criticism. Eliminating criticism is a gentle start-up in marriage repair.

This small change will have considerable positive effects in the relationship. With this simple difference, you will notice more joy, healthy humor, and fulfillment in your marriage.



Conquer Contempt

After combating criticism, the next step is to conquer contempt. You can accomplish this goal by replacing ridicule with respect and replacing apathy with appreciation. This intention is easier said than done, but with perseverance and coaching, it is highly achievable.





Defeat Defensiveness

The third goal in taking on the Four Horsemen and improving your relationship is defeating defensiveness in yourself.

Any self-improvement in life requires humility and self-reflection. To improve your relationship, you need to take responsibility for your part of its faults and flaws. Your partner must also hold himself/herself accountable.

If you both defeat the defensiveness in yourselves, you will be able to foster greater balance and harmony with each other.



Subdue Stonewalling

The fourth major focus to overcome the Four Horsemen and improve your relationship is to subdue any stonewalling between you and your partner. Stonewalling is quite literally putting up a stone wall between you and your spouse.

Any improvement or progress in your relationship is halted when a wall is in place. To improve your relationship, it is vital to subdue any tendencies of stonewalling you have.

Overcoming these tendencies will bring greater sensitivity and awareness to each others emotional states and individual emotional boundaries. This process takes patience and practice, but the results are incomparable.

Where Can I Go to Get Help In My Marriage?

Knowing what you need to do to improve your relationship is not enough. You need to take action! It is your responsibility to take the health and strength of your marriage into your own hands. No one is going to save it for you.

With the determination to succeed, save your marriage, and experience love and joy in your relationship once more, you may need help. Going to marriage counseling and finding your guide through this process can help you save your marriage and eliminate the Four Horsemen of destruction from your marriage.

