

Relationships' Four Horsemen The Apocalypse: Video Examples

The Power Moves | 16 May, 2018 | by Lucio Buffalmano

The Four Horsemen The Apocalypse is a nickname given to four specific types of destructive behaviors which are well known to cause relationship failure.

To be precise, Gottman's research shows that when these four behavior become commonplace in a relationship, more than 90% of the times they lead to break up.

This article will show you, quickly and efficiently, what these behavior exactly are and what you can do to fix them.

Contents

- [What Are The 4 Horsemen of The Apocalypse](#)
- [#1. Criticism](#)
 - [Antidote](#)
- [#2. Defensiveness](#)
 - [Antidote](#)
- [#3. Contempt](#)
 - [Antidote](#)
- [#4. Stonewalling](#)
 - [Antidote](#)
- [SUMMARY](#)

What Are The 4 Horsemen of The Apocalypse

This is a quick overview of [Gottman's](#) four horsemen of the apocalypse.

For each horseman of relationship apocalypse I give you a quick description, an example and a quick fix. If you need deeper information, click on the links which drill down on each single behavioral issue so that you can see more examples and more fixes.

#1. Criticism

Criticism is a global attack on the partner's personality.

Example:

| “you only think about yourself, you're so selfish”

Video example:

Antidote

To fix criticism, the fir horseman of the apocalypse, use “I” sentences and only complain about specific situations instead of generalizing about your partner's defects.

[Read more about criticism here.](#)

#2. Defensiveness

Defensiveness is a typical response to criticism.

Partners resort to defensiveness when they feel they are unjustly or too strongly under attack.

Defensiveness is also more common in people with a [fixed mindset](#) and a fragile ego.

When a partner uses defensiveness it communicates that he is more interested in not taking blame than listening and fixing the issue. And the partner on the receiving end of defensiveness feels that their partner doesn't care about them, their pain and their gripe.

To make matter worse, defensiveness often does not come alone, but it includes a counterattack.

When that is the case, it often leads to an escalation and a full-blown argument.

Here's an example from the movie "Blue Valentine":

Antidote

The antidote to defensiveness is non-defensive listening, understanding your partner point of view and accepting part of the blame.

Also work on [developing and antifragile ego](#) and a [growth mindset](#).

[Read more about defensiveness here.](#)

#3. Contempt

Contempt is criticism on steroids.

Contempt adds on top of criticism a judgmental and, often, [a mean attitude](#) towards our partner.

With contempt we taunt, mock or ridicule our partner in an effort to make them appear inferior and unworthy.

Here is an example from "Forgetting Sarah Marshall":

Antidote

To eradicate contempt at the roots you really need to change your attitude towards your partner into one of appreciation.

Since contempt is often the result of a "willingness to hurt", it's people with anger and emotional management who sometimes resort to it. If you have anger issue, the good old technique of counting to ten before saying anything cruel will also help.

[Read more about contempt here.](#)

#4. Stonewalling

Stonewalling means to stop engaging with our partner.

We withdraw from the conversation -or argument- either emotionally or physically.

Stonewalling is unnerving for men and emotionally abusive for women.

Here's a extreme example of stonewalling from the movie "Crazy, Stupid, Love":

Antidote

The antidote to stonewalling is taking a break from the argument and resuming when you are calm enough to engage.

[Read more about stonewalling here](#)

SUMMARY

Over time the four horseman of the apocalypse will wreck a marriage or relationship.

That's why it's important to avoid them or to eradicate them early if you notice them in your relationship.

If you recognize any of these behavior in your relationship, that's great! Now you have the chance to fix them.

Archived from theredarchive.com