

# STRENGTHENING YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

When couples fight, these “four horsemen of the apocalypse” spell trouble.

Source: Dr. John Gottman, The Gottman Institute

**Criticism**—  
attacking your partner, not the behavior.

**Contempt**—  
mocking; using sarcasm or ridicule to hurt your partner.



**Defensiveness**—  
Using excuses or victimhood to avoid criticism.

**Stonewalling**—  
Withdrawing or shutting down to avoid the problem.

Here is how to keep your relationship thriving:

De-escalate conflict by taking a few deep breaths to help your mind and body relax.

Remember that you value your relationship and want to bring your best-self to the conversation.

**Improved communication and conflict resolution**

Remind yourself that you and your partner are on the same team.

Explain the problem objectively; keeping to the facts without judgement.

Take daily actions to stay in love.

Express gratitude how your partner best receives it (words, notes, gestures, gifts, etc.).

Experience positive emotions together like joy, serenity and amusement.

Savor the good moments by being truly and deeply present.

Cultivate authentic connection by being clear about what you want, need and feel.

Spot and celebrate the strengths you see in one another.



For more ways to strengthen your resilience, connect with us at:

@ArmyResilience  