

Problematic and Non-Problematic Responses

Problematic responses- the Four Horsemen:

Criticism: “You talked about yourself all through dinner and didn’t ask me anything about my day. How can you treat me this way? What kind of self-centered person are you?”

Defensiveness: “What are you picking on me for? I didn’t do anything wrong. What about all the good things I do? I never get any appreciation.”

Contempt: “It’s not that I could care less, it’s that I *couldn’t* care less. At least get that right.”

Stonewalling: Looking away and no longer taking part in the conversation.

Non-problematic response- a Complaint:

Complaint: “I’m upset that you talked about yourself all through dinner and you didn’t ask me anything about my day. That hurts my feelings.”

Which problematic responses do you use? How does it impact the intimacy in your relationship? How does it impact conflict in your relationship?

Which problematic responses does your partner use? How do these responses make you feel about yourself and the relationship?
