

9 Important Communication Skills for

PREMARITAL & NEWLYWED COUPLES

Written and compiled by Victor W. Harris



9 Important Communication Skills for Every Relationship

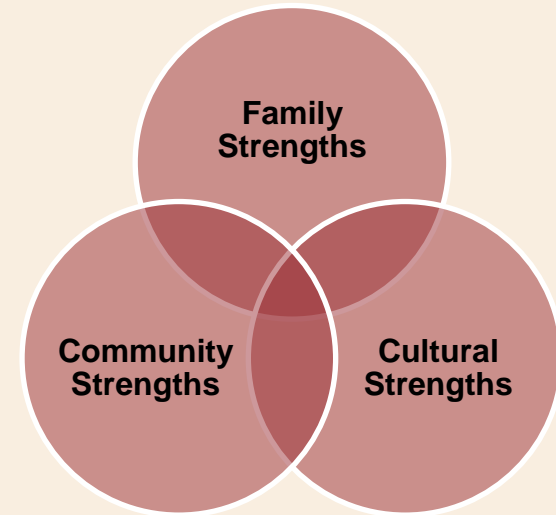
TEACHER'S OUTLINE

Written and compiled by Victor W. Harris



Family Strengths Perspective

- Appreciation and Affection
- Commitment
- Positive Communication
- Time Together
- The Ability to Cope with Stress and Crisis
- Spiritual Well-Being



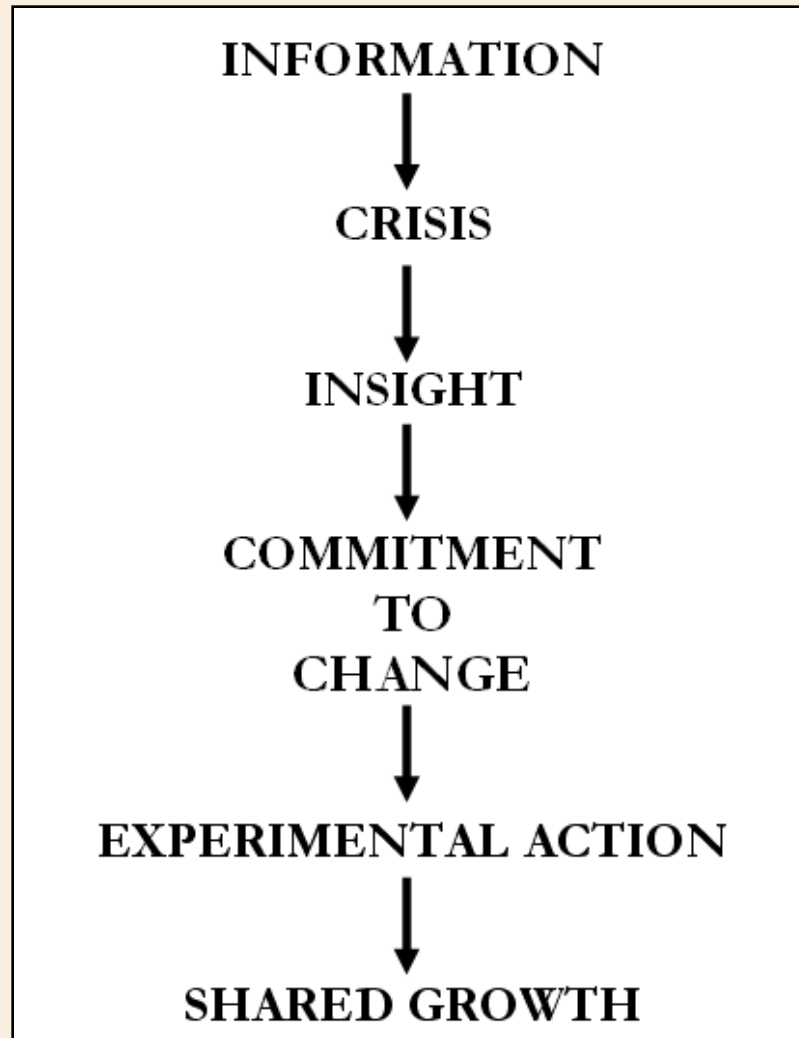
Community Strengths

- Supportive environment
- Effective educational system
- Support for families practicing religion
- Support for families needing assistance
- Safe, secure, and healthful environment

Cultural Strengths

- Rich cultural heritage
- Shared cultural meanings
- Political stability
- Economic stability
- Understanding of global culture and society

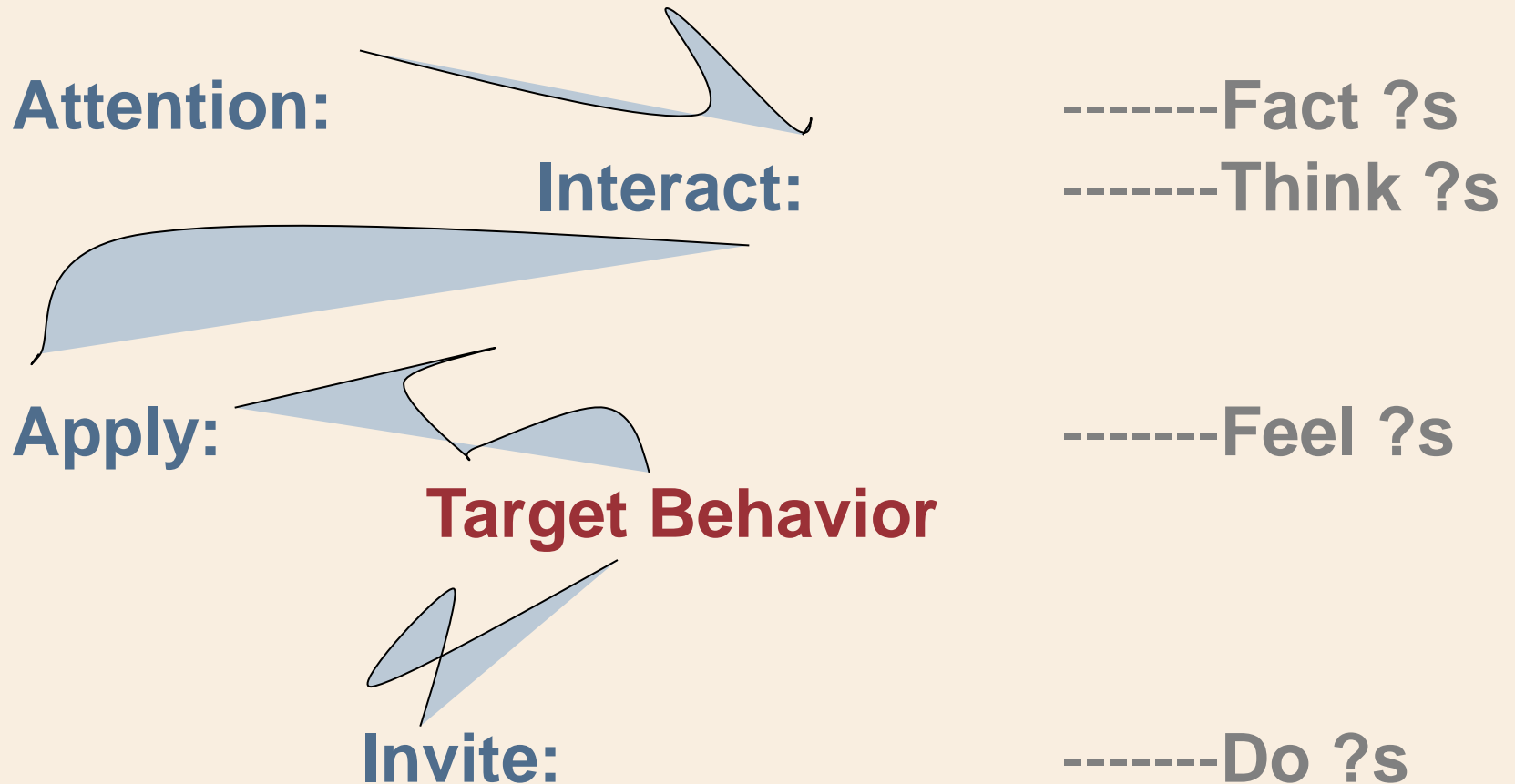
The Process of Change



Source: Mace, D. (1981). The long trail from information giving to behavioral change. *Family Relations*, 30, 599-606.

AIAI-FTFD Teaching Model

© Victor William Harris



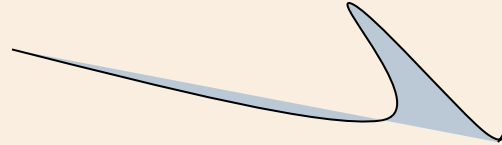
Topic: **AIAI-FTFD Preparation** © Victor William Harris

Student Need(s): Competence, Growth (knowledge and skills) <u>Content 2-3 Concepts/Principles:</u> (1) 4 Don'ts (2) 5 Do's = 9 Skills		Overall Goal: Help students learn the 9 Skills (i.e., practice them in class and motivate them to use them at home).			
Target Skills-Cognitive, Emotional, and Behavioral Processes: Cognitive – Identify 5 Do's & 4 Don'ts Emotional – Confidence using 9 Skills Behavioral – Implement the 9 Skills		Objectives: Teach <u>Knowledge & Skills:</u> Part I: The Four Don'ts Part II: The Five Do's Provide Opportunities to practice the 9 Skills (in class and at home)			
Role: Facilitator, Expert, Consultant....Delivery Strategies: AIAI, FTFD, Variety					
<u>Unit/Section</u>	<u>Instructor Will Do</u> - Teach the 5 Do's - Teach the 4 Don'ts - Provide opportunities to practice the 9 Skills (in class and at home)	<u>Learner Will Do</u> - Understand the 5 Do's - Understand the 4 Don'ts - Practice and apply the 9 Skills in class and at home	<u>Content</u> (Bold Items) 1. Facts 2. Concepts 3. Principles	<u>Mental Process</u> (Bold Items) 1. Remember 2. Understand 3. Apply 4. Analyze 5. Evaluate 6. Solve 7. Create 8. Design	<u>Method</u> (Bold Items) 1. Audio 2. Visual 3. Praxis

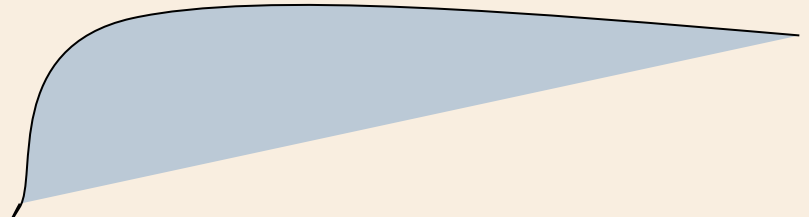
AIAI-FTFD Delivery

© Victor William Harris

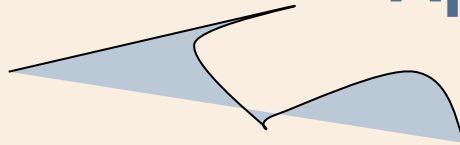
Attention:



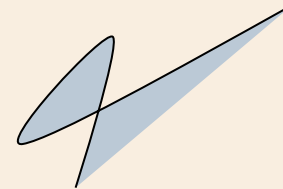
Interact:



Apply:



Practice Target Skill: Cognitive/Emotional/Behavioral



Invite:



NAME _____

Welcome to Class!

GOAL: The overall goal of this workshop is to teach you a minimal set of *9 Skills* (Gottman, 1994) that can help you, if you choose, to drive a wedge into some of the negative communication cycles that may be disrupting your relationships and overall happiness.

You will be asked at the end of this workshop to evaluate the information and skills training you have received in terms of how helpful it has been for you personally and for your relationships. We appreciate and value your feedback and will keep your results confidential.

One purpose/goal for attending this class: _____

9 Important Communication Skills for

PREMARITAL & NEWLYWED COUPLES

Written and compiled by Victor W. Harris



Welcome!

- Electronic Data Information Source (EDIS) Publications
 - 9 Important Communication Skills for Every Relationship
 - Online: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fy1277>
 - 10 Rules for Constructive Conflict
 - Online: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fy1276>
- Introductions
- Welcome Handout



University of Florida

- As one of the nation's leading institutions of higher learning, the University of Florida (UF) has a presence that is felt throughout the country. On the global level, the university enrolls students from nearly 140 countries and our top-ranked study abroad program sends students to Europe, Asia and South and Central America . . . The University of Florida makes significant contributions in every field of endeavor around the globe.

The Gator Nation truly is everywhere.

Cooperative Extension

Nationwide Educational Network

- Each state and territory (Abraham Lincoln)
 - Provides a land-grant university and a network of local and regional offices
- Reaching out
 - Extends the education and research from the university into the local communities
 - Solves public needs with university resources through both formal and non-formal programs


Cooperative Extension

Florida

- Partnership between the University of Florida and county governments
 - All 67 counties in Florida have Extension offices
 - Most counties have a Family and Consumer Sciences Agent
 - Main website: www.SolutionsForYourLife.com




Cooperative Extension

University of Florida



UF IFAS Extension
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

SOLUTIONS



[Home](#) [About Extension](#) [Local Offices](#) [FAQ](#) [Success Stories](#) [Jobs](#) [Weather](#)

[► Agriculture](#)

[► Environment](#)

▼ [Families & Consumers](#)

[Aging & Caregiving](#)

[Children](#)

[Food Safety](#)

[Health & Nutrition](#)

[House & Home](#)

[Money Matters](#)

[Relationships](#)

[Workplace](#)

[FAQ](#)

[► Lawn & Garden](#)

[► Sustainable Living](#)






[► Disaster Prep & Recovery](#)


[► 4-H Youth Development](#)

Families & Consumers

We know your life is complicated. That's why we have information about health and nutrition, money management, food, home concerns, relationships, and many other topics. Our resources can help you whether you are retired, a first-time parent, a teen, or someone in between.


To find out what Extension services are available in your area or to get personal assistance, please contact your [county Extension office](#).






Dangers of Credit Cards

While you may think credit cards are dangerous because of the possibility of theft, that's actually not the case. [More...](#)




The Gift of Gift Cards

Dr. Michael Gutter, a UF/IFAS finance expert, has some tips if gift cards are on your holiday shopping list. [More...](#)




Having a Healthy Holiday

Keep you and your family healthy and happy throughout the holidays with these tips. [More...](#)



Avoiding the Holiday Shopping Hangover

UF/IFAS financial expert Dr. Michael Gutters explains how to stay in budget this holiday season. [More...](#)



Fighting the Holiday Blues

Follow these feel-good tips to fight the holiday blues and enjoy the seasonal celebrations. [More...](#)

General Resources

UF/IFAS Sites

[Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences](#)

[Family Album Radio](#)

[Florida Bed Bugs Workgroup](#)

[School IPM](#)

UF/IFAS Publications

[Family and Consumer Issues](#)

[Florida Homeowners Handbook to Prepare for Natural Hazards \(PDF\)](#)

State & Federal Agencies

[Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services \(FDACS\)](#)

[Florida Department of Children and Families \(DCF\)](#)

[Florida Department of Education](#)

[Florida Department of Elder Affairs](#)

[Florida Department of Financial Services](#)

[Florida Department of Health](#)

Other University Sites

[Family & Consumer Sinuousness State University](#)

Associations & Organizations

[National PTA](#)

For-Sale Products

[Grandparents Raising Grandchildren CD-ROM](#)

[Household Insects ID Sheets](#)

Cooperative Extension

FCS Extension in Florida

- Empowering individuals and families to build healthy lives and achieve social and economic success
 - Aging Well in Florida
 - Food Safety and Nutrition
 - Housing and Community Development
 - Human Development and Family Relationships
 - Personal and Family Financial Education

9 Important Skills Training

Learning Objectives

Knowledge

- Part I: The Four Don'ts
- Part II: The Five Do's

Skills

- Provide Opportunities to practice the 9 Skills (in class and at home)

Learning Outcomes

Knowledge

- Understand the Four Don'ts
- Understand the Five Do's

Skills

- Practice and apply the 9 Skills (in class)
- Practice and Apply the 9 Skills (at home)

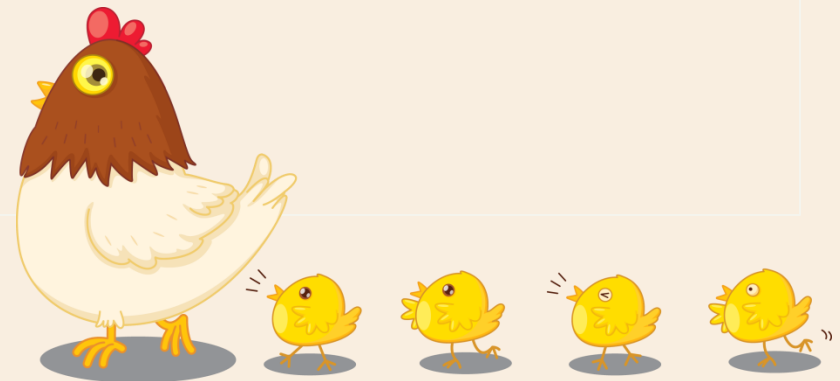
9 Important Skills Training

- **Knowledge:** Defined as awareness and accessibility to “information, facts, ideas, truths, and principles” (Encarta, 2007).
- **Skills:** “The ability to do something well, usually gained through training or experience” (Encarta, 2007).

Why Did the Chicken Cross the Road?

It All Depends On Who You Ask –

- **Kindergarten Teacher:** To get to the other side.
- **Plato:** For the greater good.
- **Aristotle:** It is the nature of chickens to cross roads.
- **Darwin:** Chickens over long periods of time have been naturally selected and are, therefore, genetically disposed to cross roads.
- **Karl Marx:** It was an historical inevitability.



Why Did the Chicken Cross the Road?

It All Depends On Who You Ask –

- **Sir Isaac Newton:** A chicken will continue crossing the road in a uniform motion unless acted upon by some other force.
- **Albert Einstein:** Did the chicken really cross the road or did the road move beneath the chicken?
- **Ralph Waldo Emerson:** The chicken did not cross the road...it transcended it.
- **Robert Frost:** To cross the road less traveled by.

Why Did the Chicken Cross the Road?

It All Depends On Who You Ask –

- **Earnest Hemingway:** To die, in the rain.
- **Sigmund Freud:** The fact that you are at all concerned about the chicken crossing the road reveals your latent sexual insecurities.
- **The Bible:** “And God came down from the heavens, and He said unto the chicken, ‘Thou shalt cross the road.’ And it came to pass that the chicken obeyed and crossed the road and much rejoicing was heard in all the land.”

Why Did the Chicken Cross the Road?

It All Depends On Who You Ask –

- **Dr. Seuss:** Did the chicken cross the road? Did he cross it with a toad? Yes! The chicken crossed the road, but why he crossed, we've not been told.
- **Captain James T. Kirk:** To boldly go where no chicken has gone before!
- **Harry Potter:** To find the final horcrux, die, come back to life, and defeat Lord Voldemort!

Why Did the Chicken Cross the Road?

It All Depends On Who You Ask –

- **Martin Luther King, Jr.:** I envision a world where all chickens will be free to cross roads. Free at last! Free at last!
- **Richard Nixon:** The chicken did not cross the road. I repeat, I knew nothing about the chicken crossing the road.
- **Bill Clinton:** I did not cross the road with that chicken. What do you mean by 'chicken?' Could you define 'chicken,' please?

Why Did the Chicken Cross the Road?

It All Depends On Who You Ask –

- **Bill Gates:** Who cares! We own the road! We own the chicken!
- **Grandpa:** In my day, we didn't ask why the chicken crossed the road. Someone told us that the chicken crossed the road and that was good enough for us.
- **Colonel Sanders** (Founder of Kentucky Fried Chicken): I missed one?

Why Talk about How to Communicate?

It All Depends On Who You Ask –

- Why talk about how to communicate?
- Many meaningful (and heated!) discussions take place about money, health, friendships, parenting, grand parenting, etc. within the context of marriage and the family.
- How we *think* and *talk* about these issues impacts our relationships.

**Focusing on the process of
communication is KEY TO SUCCESS!**

What Do Healthy Relationships Look Like?

- Are satisfied overall with their relationship
- Are committed to each other
- Have positive communication
- Can resolve disagreements and conflicts
- Never resort to violence or abuse
- Spend positive, enjoyable time together
- Provide intimacy and emotional support

What Do Healthy Marriage Relationships Look Like?


- Are satisfied overall with their relationship
- Are committed to each other for the long-term
- Have positive communication
- Can resolve disagreements and conflicts
- Never resort to violence or abuse
- Are sexually (and psychologically) faithful
- Spend positive, enjoyable time together
- Provide intimacy and emotional support
- Are mutually committed to any children they have

What Do Healthy Marriage Relationships Look Like?

“A healthy marriage is a safe, secure, loving relationship that is built on friendship, passion, and commitment. Healthy marriages are strong relationships that can handle life’s ups and downs. They are partnerships based on respect, trust, and a willingness to communicate and resolve differences. Domestic violence plays no part in a healthy marriage. Children that live in the homes of those who have healthy marriages are respected and nurtured by two dedicated and loving parents.”

Source: Harris, S.M., Glenn, N.D, Rappleyea, D.L., Diaz-Loving, R., Hawkins, A.J., Daire, A. P., Osborne, C., & Huston, T.L. (2008). *Together in Texas: Baseline report on marriage in the lone star state*, p. 5. Austin, TX: Health and Human Services Commission.

Keys to Marital Happiness



Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trust• Socialization
Positive Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4 Don'ts• 5 Do's
Positive Bonds	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Friendship• Quality Time

Major Reasons for Divorce

Nationally

- A lack of commitment
 - Too much conflict and arguing
 - Infidelity, extramarital affairs
 - Getting married too young
 - Unrealistic expectations of marriage
- Lack of equality in the relationship
 - Little or no helpful pre-marriage preparation
 - Domestic Violence
 - Financial problems, economic hardship
 - Conflict about division of labor

Marriage & Divorce in Florida

Satisfying Marriages

- Less financial strain
- More time spent with partners
- More sources of social support
- Fewer problems with substance abuse
- Better mental health
- More religious
- Higher education levels

Risk of Divorce

- Lack of commitment
- Lack of trust
- Married too young
- Domestic violence
- Little or no helpful pre-marriage prep.
- Financial problems
- Low-income
- Person of color
- TANF recipient

Are You Ready? Relationship Skills Checklist:

YES or NO

- Can I be myself?
- Am I a positive person?
- Can I begin a conversation?
- Can I keep a conversation moving & progressing?
- Am I a good listener?
- Can I validate others' responses?
- Can I talk about things others are interested in?
- Am I interested in what others think?
- Am I interested in how others feel?

Are You Ready? Relationship Skills Checklist:

YES or NO

- Am I sensitive to other's feelings?
- Can I disclose my thoughts to others?
- Can I disclose my feelings to others?
- Can others trust me?
- Do I have dating rules based upon my values and beliefs?
- Am I honest with myself?
- Am I honest with others?
- Can I admit my mistakes?
- Can I apologize and say, "I'm sorry"?

**Pay Attention
to the
Warning
Signs!**



Top 25 Signs to Watch Out For

- Has extreme views on political, family, religious, or world affairs?
- Encourages you to develop your talents and progress, or do they want to keep you hidden in a closet, away from the rest of the world?
- Allows you time for yourself, or is your partner possessive?
- Encourages you to have your own interests, your own life too?
- Allows you to spend time with your friends, or is your partner jealous of your friends and the time you spend with them?

Top 25 Signs to Watch Out For

- Compares you to past boyfriends or girlfriends?
- Takes an interest in other people, or is your partner selfish with his/her time and pursuits?
- Exhibits behaviors that suggest that the world revolves around him/her?
- Exhibits deep insecurity, excessive jealousy, uncontrollable temper, and inflexibility?
- Exhibits being condescending, or lying, cheating, stealing, arrogance, etc.

Top 25 Signs to Watch Out For

- Fails to admit mistakes and can never admit to being “wrong?”
- Often exhibits negative or critical traits?
- Complains about your family or spending time with your family?
- Seeks to build relationships with your family or does your partner lack the skills to do so?
- Has difficulty relating to his/her own family

Top 25 Signs to Watch Out For

- Enjoys work or is your partner prone to laziness and irresponsibility?
- Has the television on and/or plays video games all the time at his/her apartment or home?
- Criticizes your personal appearance?
- Tells you that you need to lift weights, go jogging, or join a health club?
- Makes fun of your weight or other bodily traits?

Top 25 Signs to Watch Out For

- Verbally, physically, or emotionally abuses you?
- Tears you down and then tries to come back a few days later as "Mr. Nice Guy," promising that it will never happen again?
- Needs to make major social or emotional changes in his/her life?
- Promises that he/she will change after the wedding?
- Has some of the same goals, dreams, and aspirations as you do?

Newlyweds: Top 10 Problems

Wives

- 1) Debt brought into marriage
- 2) Balancing job and marriage
- 3) Frequency of sexual relations
- 4) In-laws
- 5) Expectations – household tasks
- 6) Financial decision-making
- 7) Communication with spouse
- 8) Resolving major differences
- 9) Time spent together
- 10) Husband/Wife employment

Source: Schramm, D.G., Marshall, J.P., Harris, V.W., & Lee, T.R. (2005). After “I do”: The newlywed transition. *Marriage and Family Review*, 38(1), 45-67.

Newlyweds: Top 10 Problems

Husbands

- 1) Balancing job and marriage
- 2) Debt brought into marriage
- 3) Husband employment
- 4) Frequency of sexual relations
- 5) In-laws
- 6) Financial decision-making
- 7) Expectations – household tasks
- 8) Resolving major differences
- 9) Communication with spouse
- 10) Time spent together

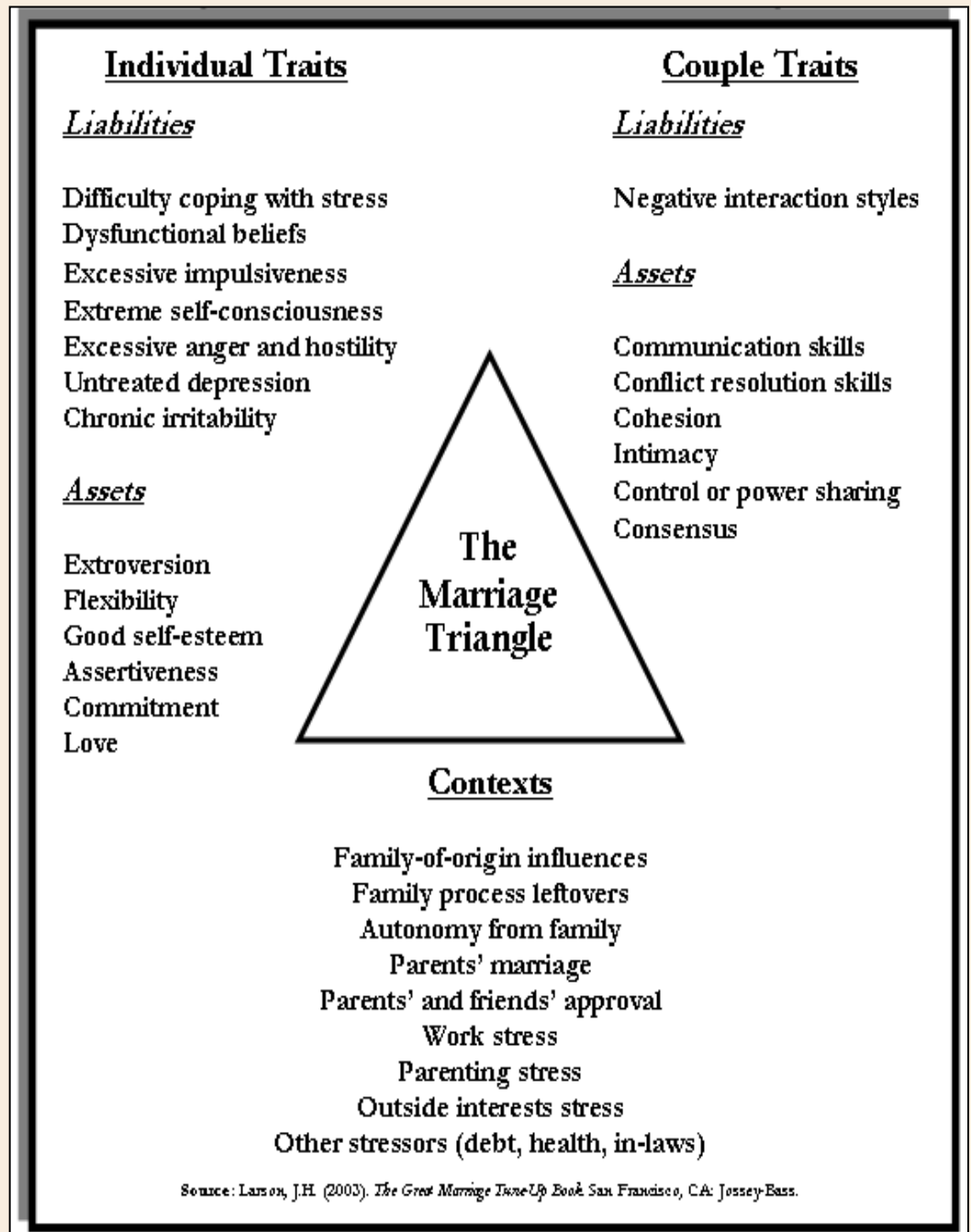
Source: Schramm, D.G., Marshall, J.P., Harris, V.W., & Lee, T.R. (2005). After “I do”: The newlywed transition. *Marriage and Family Review*, 38(1), 45-67.

10 Rituals to Daily Improve Any Marriage

- 1) Say, 'I Love You'
- 2) Kiss or Hug
- 3) Give a Compliment
- 4) Meditate for 5 min. (Why it is wonderful to be married to my partner)
- 5) Touch 'Hello'
- 6) Touch 'Goodbye'
- 7) Share a Personal Feeling
- 8) Perform an Act of Service
- 9) Keep A Promise - Trust
- 10) Provide Surprises

Key Principles

- 80-20 Rule
- Do the Right Thing for the Right Reason
- Change Yourself First
- Seek Marital Therapy





Part I:

The Four Don'ts



Written and compiled by Victor W. Harris

What Do We Talk About?

- Describe a happy family.
- What I like most about myself is . . .
- What I appreciate most about you is . . .
- What worries me most is . . .
- Define true love.
- My favorite thing to eat is . . .
- What makes me happy is . . .
- My most prized material possession is . . .
- I like to spend money on . . .
- Something I do pretty well is . . .
- I exercise . . .
- Something that bothers me is . . .

What Are Some Things We Argue About?

- 1) Gender Issues and Perspectives
- 2) Commitment and Loyalty
- 3) Power and Control
- 4) Money and Finances
- 5) Sexual Issues and Ideologies
- 6) Autonomy and Privacy
- 7) Children and Parenting
- 8) Health, Nutrition, and Health Care

Adapted from: Gottman, J.M. (1994a). *Why marriages succeed or fail*. New York: Fireside.

Gottman, J.M. (1994b). *What predicts divorce? The relationship between marital process and marital outcomes*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Gottman, J.M., Katz, L.F., & Hooven, C. (1997). *Meta-Emotion: How families communicate emotionally*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

The Crying Baby

When James' oldest daughter was a newborn, he and his wife lived in a small two bedroom condo. James and his wife were in one bedroom and their daughter was in the other. James' wife was not working outside the home at the time and he had a 45 mile commute each way to work that required him to wake up at 5:30 a.m. One night about 3:00 a.m., James was awakened by the sound of his daughter crying in her crib. The first thought or feeling that popped into his head and heart was, "go attend to your daughter's needs," whether she needed to be changed, held, fed, or covered by a blanket. Almost as quickly as that thought . . .

The Crying Baby

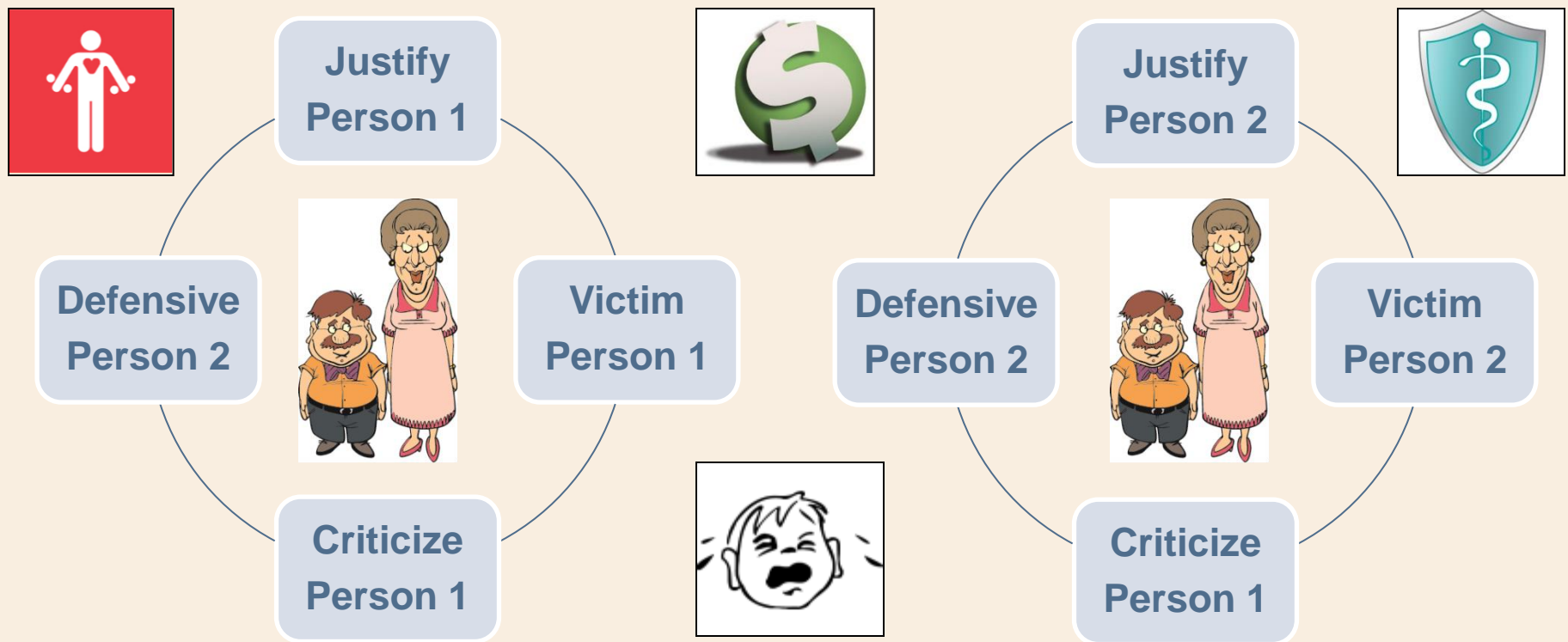
occurred to James, he dismissed it and continued to lie in bed, although he was wide awake now. At the moment that he refused to help his daughter as he felt he should, he began to have some strange thoughts and feelings towards his wife. He began to think how lazy and inconsiderate she was, although she was still sleeping and had not heard their daughter cry. He felt justified in continuing to lay in bed because he was the one who had to get up in a couple of hours anyway to get ready for work. She could take a nap later in the day if she wanted to and he could not. James was upset that she had not yet heard their daughter cry and he . . .

The Crying Baby

found himself not only accusing her in his heart of being inconsiderate of his need to sleep, but of their daughter's needs as well. The crying continued and grew in intensity, and as it grew so did James' sense of being victimized. James' wife was soon awakened by the crying and immediately got up to check on their daughter. James did not let her know that he was awake, but as soon as she left the room he rolled over with a "humph!" thinking that now he would be able to get back to sleep. However, sleep did not come easily.

Communication Patterns

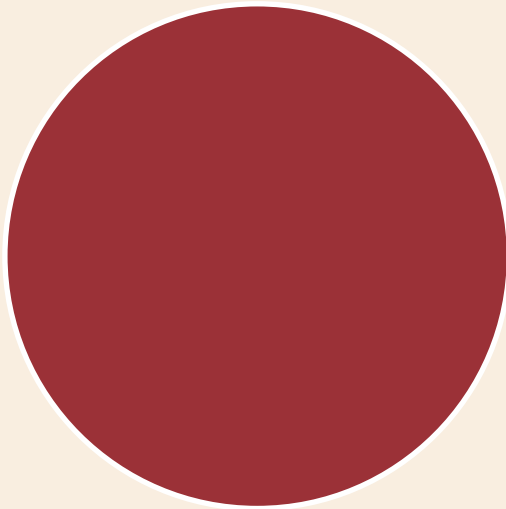
What principles and patterns can we learn from this story?



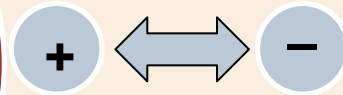
How do these communication patterns play out when we talk about money, health, relationships, or parenting?

Doing the Right Thing for the Right Reason

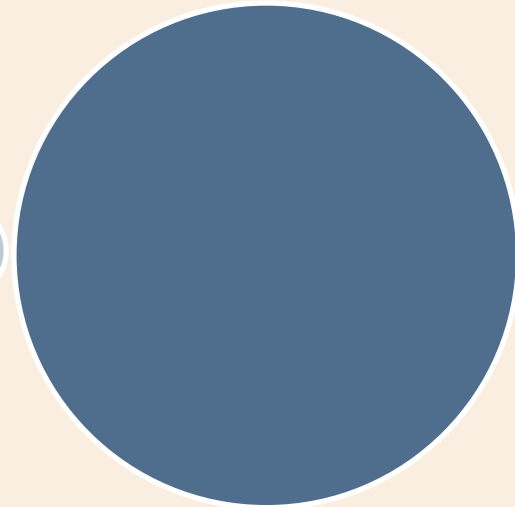
**The
Constructive
World**



Emotions



**The
Destructive
World**



Emotions

9 Important Skills

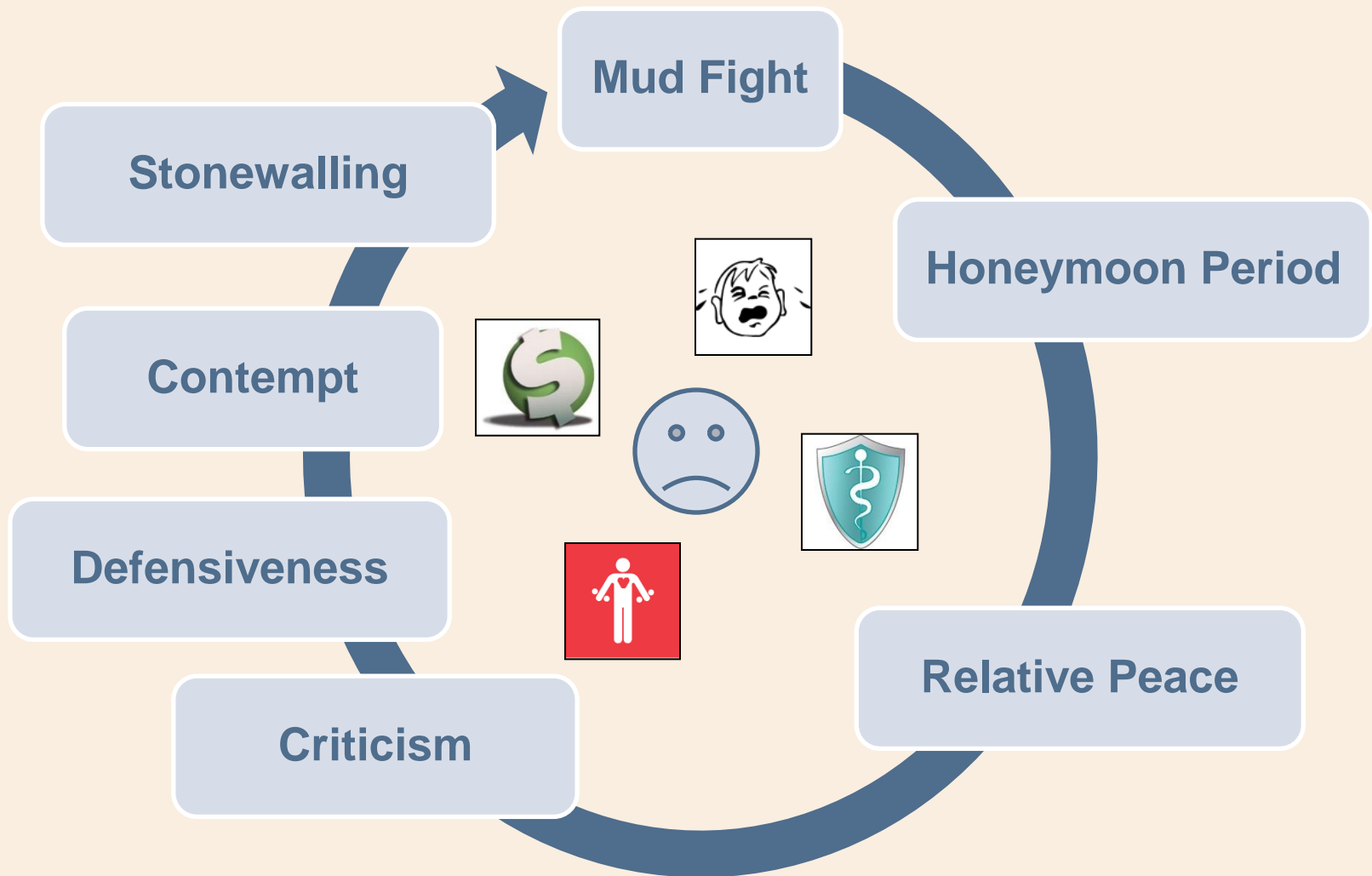
Part I: The Four Don'ts

- 1) Criticism
- 2) Contempt
- 3) Defensiveness
- 4) Stonewalling

Part II: The Five Do's

- 1) Calm Down
- 2) Speak Non-defensively
- 3) Use Specific Complaints
- 4) Validate
- 5) Overlearn 9 Skills

The Cycle of Negativity



How might this cycle play out with people when they talk about money, health, relationship, or parenting issues?

9 Important Skills

Criticism

- You never
- You always
- I accuse you ...
- I blame you ...

Contempt

- Mock, sarcastic, yell, mimic, roll the eyes, call names, ignore

Defensiveness

- Deny responsibility
- Make excuses
- Rubber man/ Rubber woman
- Yes-but . . .
- Repeat yourself
- Whine
- Body language

Application: Choose One!

- **Scenario 1:** Your partner just overdrew the bank account.
- **Scenario 2:** Your partner has diabetes and just ate something that was not a part of the strict dietary plan.
- **Scenario 3:** Your partner is playing *good cop* as a parent and forcing you into the role of *bad cop*.

➔ Use the *Four Don'ts* to discuss the issue. Have fun, but be nice!



Application

Scenario 1: Discuss a recent conflict you had.

- Discuss how criticism, contempt, defensiveness or stonewalling may have been involved in the conflict.
- Identify how you can avoid the use of criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and stonewalling in future conflicts.

Target Behavior:	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Totals
1. Don't Criticize	+							
-Don't attack core personality	—							
-Don't use "never" or "always"								
2. Don't Become Defensive								
-Do accept responsibility								
-Don't make excuses								
3. Don't Use Contempt								
-Don't mock, call names, roll eyes								
4. Don't Stonewall								
-Do be open and available to talk								

Adapted from: Gottman, J.M. (1994). *Why marriages succeed or fail*. New York: Fireside.



Part II: The Five Do's



Written and compiled by Victor W. Harris

Effective Communication

- “I’m getting more exercise lately,” really means ... “The batteries in the remote are dead.”
- “I got a lot done” really means ... “I found Waldo in every picture!”
- “Take a break honey, you’re working too hard,” really means ... “I can’t hear the game over the vacuum cleaner!”
- “You know I could never love anyone else,” really means ... “I’m used to the way you yell at me and I realize it could be worse.”

Effective Communication

- “This relationship is getting too serious,” really means ... “I’m starting to like you more than my truck.”
- “I know exactly where we are,” really means ... “No one will ever see us alive again!”
- “Will you marry me?” really means ... “Both of my roommates have moved out, I can’t find the peanut butter, and we’re out of toilet paper.”

Anonymous

Application: What Would You Say?

- You check your account and notice there has been an unexpected large expenditure. You suspect your partner is the culprit.
- You tell your partner about a health or nutrition concern you have regarding them and s/he becomes defensive.
- Your partner is upset about how little you or your children are doing to help around the house.

10 Rules for Constructive Conflict

- 1) Refuse to Use Destructive Conflict Tactics
- 2) Choose to Gain the Skills to Conflict Constructively
- 3) Focus on Feelings First, then Move to the Specific Issue
- 4) Focus on One Issue at a Time
- 5) Identify the Patterns of Behavior that Reveal the Root Cause of the Issue
- 6) Think Win/Win
- 7) Learn to Calm Yourself
- 8) Learn to Calm Your Partner
- 9) Be Congruent in Your Communication
- 10) Seek Closure and to Resolve the Specific Issue ASAP

9 Important Skills

Part I: The Four Don'ts

- 1) Criticism
- 2) Contempt
- 3) Defensiveness
- 4) Stonewalling

Part II: The Five Do's

- 1) Calm Down
- 2) Speak Non-Defensively
- 3) Use Specific Complaints
- 4) Validate
- 5) Overlearn 9 Skills

Steps to Fair-Fighting

- **Step 1:** Soften Your Start-up
- **Step 2:** Learn to Make and Receive Repair Attempts
- **Step 3:** Soothe Yourself and Each Other (Calm Down, Call “Time Out”)
- **Step 4:** Compromise (Learn to Accept Your Partner’s Faults)

Key: Focus on fondness, respect, and admiration

9 Important Skills

I-Messages

- I feel...when this...
(behavior), because...
 - Describe a feeling
 - Identify a behavior
 - Identify a reason

Accept Responsibility

- I'm sorry . . .
- I understand . . .
- I now realize . . .

Speak Non-defensively

- Soft start-up
- Reduce emotion

Validate

- Listen
 - Eyes, ears, mind, heart
 - Needs and emotions
- Use bridge words

Cycle of Positivity



Application: “I-Messages”

Rewrite the statements using positive I-Messages.

- 1) You never call.
- 2) You're always late.
- 3) That's stupid.
- 4) You always ignore me
when we are together.
- 5) Don't yell at me!
- 6) You probably won't think
it is important, but I need
to talk to you about . . .

- 1) I like it when you call...
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

- 5) _____
- 6) _____

Application: Speak Non-Defensively

Practice using I-Messages, soft voice, low emotion.

- 1) You never call.
- 2) You're always late.
- 3) That's stupid.
- 4) You always ignore me
when we are together.
- 5) Don't yell at me!
- 6) You probably won't think
it is important, but I need
to talk to you about . . .

1) I feel, (identify behavior),
because...

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

6) _____

Application: Accept Responsibility

Practice accepting responsibility for the criticisms.

- 1) You never call.
- 2) You're always late.
- 3) That's stupid.
- 4) You always ignore me
when we are together.
- 5) Don't yell at me!
- 6) You probably won't think
it is important, but I need
to talk to you about . . .

1) I need to call you more.

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

6) _____

Application: Validation

Determine the needs/emotions being expressed.

- 1) You never call.
- 2) You're always late.
- 3) That's stupid.
- 4) You always ignore me
when we are together.
- 5) Don't yell at me!
- 6) You probably won't think
it is important, but I need
to talk to you about . . .

- 1) feel loved/lonely-hurt
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

- 5) _____
- 6) _____

Application: Validation & Appreciation

Practice listening with the eyes, ears, mind, heart.

1) **Partner 1:** Tell a recent story of an experience you shared together that you really enjoyed and why.

2) **Partner 1:** Use bridge words and listening with your eyes, ears, mind, and heart to validate what s/he is saying.

1) **Partner 2:** Use bridge words and listening with your eyes, ears, mind, and heart to validate what s/he is saying.

2) **Partner 2:** Tell a recent story of an experience you shared together that you really enjoyed and why.

Application: Putting it All Together

Scenario 1: Discuss a recent conflict you had (e.g., money, health, relationship).

- Discuss how calming down, complaining, speaking non-defensively, and validating could have been used to negotiate the conflict more effectively.
- Identify specific ways you can calm down, complain, speak non-defensively, and validate in future discussions to short-circuit the negative cycle of communication.

Antidotes to the Four Don'ts

 **Criticism**

Complain w/o Blame
(I-Messages; Speak Non-defensively)

 **Contempt**

Build a Culture of Appreciation
(Validate)

 **Defensiveness**

Take Responsibility
(Validate)

 **Stonewalling**

Do Physiological Self-Soothing
(Calm Down)

Cycle of Positivity



Target Behavior:	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Totals
1. <u>Don't</u> Criticize (Do: <i>Complain w/o Blame, I-Messages</i>)	+							
2. <u>Don't</u> Become Defensive (Do: <i>Take Responsibility</i>)	-							
3. <u>Don't</u> Use Contempt (Do: <i>Build a Culture of Appreciation</i>)								
4. <u>Don't</u> Stonewall (Do: <i>Calm Down & Soothe Partner</i>)								
5. <u>Do</u> Calm Down								
6. <u>Do</u> Complain Using I-Messages								
7. <u>Do</u> Speak Non-Defensively								
8. <u>Do</u> Validate w/ Eyes, Ears, Mind, & Heart								
9. <u>Do</u> Overlearn the 9 Skills								

Adapted from: Gottman, J.M. (1994). *Why marriages succeed or fail*. New York: Fireside.

9 Important Skills Training

Learning Objectives

Knowledge

- Part I: The Four Don'ts
- Part II: The Five Do's

Skills

- Provide Opportunities to practice the 9 Skills (in class and at home)

Learning Outcomes

Knowledge

- Understand the Four Don'ts
- Understand the Five Do's

Skills

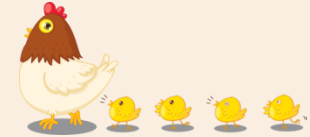
- Practice and apply the 9 Skills (in class)
- Practice and Apply the 9 Skills (at home)

9 Important Skills Training

- **Knowledge:** Defined as awareness and accessibility to “information, facts, ideas, truths, and principles” (Encarta, 2007).
- **Skills:** “The ability to do something well, usually gained through training or experience” (Encarta, 2007).

How Do We Achieve Success?

It All Depends On Who You Ask –



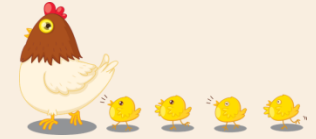
- **Relationship Satisfaction:** Defined as a positive perceptual evaluation of the health of a friendship and the levels of well-being (e.g., happiness) each member of the friendship experiences.
- How we *think about* and *talk about* issues influences our mental and relationship health.

THE PROCESS IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS!

Good Luck!

How Do We Achieve Success?

It All Depends On Who You Ask –



Questions?

Evaluation: 9 Communication Skills

1. Please tell us how much you agree with each statement by circling a number for each one.

	BEFORE this 9 Skills Program:					Now, AFTER this 9 Skills Program:				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. I understand how to avoid using <i>criticism</i> .	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
b. I understand how to complain effectively using <i>I-messages</i> .	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
c. I understand how to avoid <i>contempt</i> .	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
d. I understand how to <i>validate</i> others.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
e. I understand how to avoid <i>defensiveness</i> .	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
f. I understand how to <i>speak non-defensively</i> .	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
g. I understand how to <i>calm down</i> .	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
h. I understand how to avoid <i>stonewalling</i> .	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
i. Overall, I understand how to use the 9 Skills when communicating.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
j. I avoid using <i>criticism</i> when I communicate.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
k. I use <i>I-messages</i> when I communicate.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
l. I avoid using <i>contempt</i> when I communicate.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
m. I <i>validate</i> others when I communicate,	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
n. I avoid <i>defensiveness</i> when I communicate.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
o. I <i>speak non-defensively</i> when I communicate.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
p. I <i>calm down</i> when I communicate.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
q. I avoid <i>stonewalling</i> when I communicate.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Overall, I am in confident in using the 9 Skills when communicating.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Overall, I use the 9 <i>healthy</i> skills to increase positive interactions in my relationships.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Overall, I use the 9 <i>healthy</i> skills to decrease negative interactions in my relationships.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Overall. I use the 9 <i>healthy</i> skills to increase positive bonds (<i>friendship</i>) in my relationships.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Overall. I use the 9 <i>healthy</i> skills to increase happiness and satisfaction in my relationships.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

Please check the box that best corresponds to when you first received the 9 Skills training:

- ☐ Today ☐ 3 months ago ☐ 6 months ago ☐ One year or more ago

Evaluation: 9 Communication Skills

Please check or list: 2. I am: ☐ Female ☐ Male 3. Age _____

4. *What is the highest level of education you have achieved? Is it:*

- ☐ Less than high school ☐ Associate's degree
☐ High school diploma/GED ☐ 4-year college degree (bachelor's)
☐ Some college, no diploma ☐ Graduate or professional degree

5. *What is your total household income?*

- ☐ Under \$20,000 ☐ \$60,000 – \$79,999
☐ \$20,000 – \$39,999 ☐ \$80,000 – \$99,999
☐ \$40,000 – \$59,999 ☐ \$100,000 or more

6. *Marital status:*

- ☐ Married ☐ Remarried
☐ Divorced ☐ Partnered
☐ Separated ☐ Widowed
☐ Single/never married

7. *I consider myself to be:*

- ☐ Hispanic/Latino ☐ Not Hispanic/Latino
☐ Black ☐ American Indian or
☐ White Alaska Native
☐ Asian ☐ Other (Please specify) _____

☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

8. We would appreciate your feedback for the following:

UF/IFAS is conducting a study to determine if providing the BYTK Skills training is helpful for improving healthy relationships. If you would like to participate, please fill in the information below. We will send you a brief survey in three months.

☐ Yes, I will participate in the survey. Send it to us by:

☐ Email. Address: _____

☐ Mail. Address: _____

9. What did you learn (knowledge) in this program that was most helpful? Please explain.

10. What skills did you learn in this session that were most helpful? Please explain.

Please send **all** feedback to Dr. Victor W. Harris at: victorharris@ufl.edu
or: 3028 McCarty Hall D, PO Box 110310, Gainesville, FL 32611-0310