

Slope to Marital Breakup

1. Harsh Startups - If a conversation starts with a harsh beginning it will end on a negative note.
2. Four Horsemen - Predictors of Divorce (82%) by 4-6 yrs.
 - a. Criticism - turn a legitimate complaint into a criticism by adding “what’s wrong with you?” This attacks a person’s character.
 - b. Contempt - Sarcasm is added to fuel long simmering negative thoughts about the other. Contempt conveys disgust. Can’t resolve any issues with contempt.
 - c. Defensiveness - a way of blaming your partner; you don’t back down and the conflict escalates; nothing is resolved.
 - d. Stonewalling - one partner tunes out; avoid the fight and turn away to protect themselves from feeling overwhelmed or flooded by their partner’s negativity. * Flooding – people stonewall to stop from feeling flooded.
3. Repair Attempts - Couple able to repair (positive sentiment override – best intentions from partner. This reduces the emotions and physiology of situation. This may de-escalate the argument. If couple fails in repair attempt – predicts divorce by 90% if added to the four horsemen by 4-6 yrs.