

Love In Real Life

How To Spot and Eliminate Contempt In Relationships

1. _____

Definition: Any verbal or nonverbal behavior that indicates you are better than your partner.

Examples: Sarcasm, eye-rolling, mockery, name-calling, scoffing, disrespect, hostile humor

Luke 7:39 *When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know what kind of woman is touching him. She's a sinner!"*

2. _____

Key: Put the _____

Ephesians 4:2 *Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.*

3. _____

Proverbs 15:1 *A gentle answer deflects anger, but harsh words make tempers flare.*

1 Peter 3:15 *But do this in a gentle and respectful way.*

I feel _____ Because _____ I need _____

4. Develop a _____ seeing

Key: I must _____

a) Start _____

Ephesians 4:29 *Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.*

1 Thessalonians 5:11 *So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing.*

Forms of Contempt in Relationships

Moral superiority: "I would never treat you the way you treat me."

Condescending lectures: Talking to your partner as though they are an ignorant child. "Let me explain how responsible adults behave."

Mocking or mimicking: Imitating their voice, expressions, or complaints to make them look ridiculous.

Cutting sarcasm: "Wow. You actually put your dishes away. Should we throw a parade?"

Insults and name-calling: "You're pathetic." "You're an idiot."

Attacks on intelligence or competence: "How can you not understand something this simple?"

Belittling feelings: "Poor baby. Your life is so hard."

Ridiculing needs: "You need attention again? How needy can you be?"

Hostile humor: Making your partner the target of a degrading joke, then saying, "Can't you take a joke?"

Public humiliation: Sharing an embarrassing story or criticizing them in front of others to get people laughing at their expense.

Unfavorable comparisons: "My sister's husband manages to help without being asked. Apparently, you can't."

Weaponizing vulnerabilities: Using something shared in confidence to humiliate them. "No wonder your family never wanted you around."

Disgusted expressions: Sneering, curling a lip, or looking at your partner as though they are repulsive.

Dismissive gestures: Rolling your eyes, scoffing, or waving them away while they speak.

A patronizing tone: "Oh, honey. You really don't know what you're talking about."

Dismissal of their worth: "Your opinion doesn't matter." "You have nothing useful to contribute."

Scornful silence: Refusing to acknowledge them in a way that conveys they aren't worth answering.

Questions:

- What are you grateful for in this other person?
- What do you appreciate about them?
- What's one thing you really respect about them?
- What can you thank them for?
- When do they feel appreciated and loved by you?

Express appreciation

Express thanks and gratitude

Express fondness and admiration

Motto: Small things often

Week	Theme	What You Practice
1	Fondness	Notice what you find endearing. Name one quality that makes you proud.
2	"We"	Identify shared beliefs, goals, and what makes your partner your best friend.
3	Memories	Recall how you met, why you chose each other, and moments of support.
4	Pride & Acceptance	Appreciate your family, acknowledge imperfections you've adapted to.
5	Luck & Resilience	Recognize what you've weathered together. Plan a surprise gift.
6	Love & Respect	Write a love letter. Think about whether you'd choose this person again.
7	Joy & Celebration	Reflect on accomplishments as a team. Plan an evening together.

Today on The Gottman Relationship Blog:

The Four Horsemen: Contempt Weekend Homework Assignment

"I appreciate..."

From the list below, select three items that you think are characteristic of your partner. If there are more than three, still select just three. For each item you selected, briefly think of an actual incident that illustrates this characteristic of your partner. Now, share this list with them!

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|----------------|------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 1. Loving | 11. Imaginative | 21. Decisive | 31. A great parent |
| 2. Sensitive | 12. Fun | 22. Interesting | 32. Assertive |
| 3. Brave | 13. Committed | 23. Smart | 33. A great listener |
| 4. Intelligent | 14. Considerate | 24. Responsible | 34. Powerful |
| 5. Thoughtful | 15. Expressive | 25. Dependable | 35. Practical |
| 6. Generous | 16. Loving | 26. Nurturing | 36. Understanding |
| 7. Loyal | 17. Athletic | 27. Relaxed | 37. Practical |
| 8. Truthful | 18. Gentle | 28. Beautiful | 38. Reliable |
| 9. Strong | 19. Supportive | 29. Protective | 39. Cheerful |
| 10. Sexy | 20. Affectionate | 30. Sweet | 40. Coordinated |