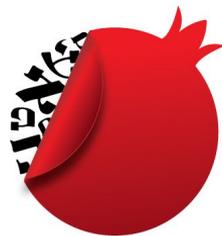


# Me, You and the Space Between

## Part III: Between

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# A little bit deeper now

1. Up in a circle
2. Volunteer to say one random word/phrase with emotional attribute
3. pass it around the circle gradually heightening it.
4. You can't switch the emotion only build on it!



# You + Me Recap

## **Part I - You**

1. Naming our feelings
2. Claiming our lane
3. Recognizing our maps
4. Soothing ourselves

## **Part II - Me**

5. Differentiation
6. Lovers Eyes
7. Know your Partner
8. Teshuva as a Way of Life



# The Four Horsemen of Relationship Apocalypse



# The Four Horsemen of Relationship Apocalypse

— — —

Four negative habits which, if allowed to run rampant will destroy a relationship: a

- **Criticism:** of your partner as a person, as opposed to legitimate *complaint*, about a behavior
- **Contempt:** sense of superiority over and disdain for your partner
- **Defensiveness:** blaming your partner for troubles
- **Stonewalling:** Emotional manifestation of *flight*, not fight

# Addicted to Criticism

Some people are seemingly addicted to complaining and ruminating, always finding fault with their friend, their acts and words, even though the friend is completely whole-hearted and seeks no harm.

The complainer judges all things in the scales of liability and not of merit, and converts every error to malice and suspects his friend of being motivated by hatred, which could not be further from the truth.

[Lashon Hara 1:16](#)

וַיֵּשׁ שְׂסִבַּת הַרְגֵּל עֲוֹנִים בָּא לָהֶם  
מִצַּד מִדַּת נִרְגָּנוֹת. וְהוּא הָאִישׁ  
אֲשֶׁר דָּרְכוֹ וְחֻקּוֹ לְהִתְאוּנָן  
וּלְהִתְרַעַם וַיִּמְצָא תּוֹאֲנוֹת עַל חֲבֵרוֹ  
תָּמִיד עַל מַעֲשָׂיו וְעַל דְּבָרָיו, וְאִף  
עַל פִּי שְׁחֵבְרוֹ בְּתִמּוֹ מִתְהַלֵּךְ עִמּוֹ  
וְלֹא זָד עָלָיו בְּדָבָר. וַיִּדּוֹן כָּל דְּבָר  
לְחֻבָּה, וְלֹא לְזָכוֹת, וְכָל שְׂגָגָה  
יְשִׁים לְזָדוֹן וְחוֹשֵׁד חֲבֵרוֹ,  
שֶׁבְשִׁנְאָתוֹ אוֹתוֹ עָשָׂה הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה

# CRITICISM, the first horseman

Criticism is focusing on perceived flaws in who our partners **are** rather than on changes you would like to see in what they **do**.

Global words like **always** or **never** are giant red flags that a horseman is galloping in.

The *antidote* to criticism is a specific, gentle complaint

1. Here's how I feel ("I'm really angry")
2. About a very specific situation ("because you didn't sweep last night like you said you would")
3. And here's what I want. ("Could you do it now?").



# Pride and Contempt

Sometimes our own pride damages our relationship. There are times when we consider ourselves wise and above others whom we see as lowly, and at whom we scoff. Our pride brings us to envy and hate our friend, whose honor, we think, comes at our expense. And we will probe hidden things in order to have something to say, whether it's true or false, in order to denigrate, diminish, humiliate and shame them... [LH 1:14](#)

וַיֵּשׁ מַחְמַת גְּאוֹה, דְּהֵינּוּ שְׁהוּא מַחְשִׁיב אֶת  
עַצְמוֹ לְחַכָּם וּלְאִישׁ בְּאֲנָשִׁים, וְהַכֵּל  
שְׁפָלִים בְּעֵינָיו, לִכְן מְלֹאוֹ לְבוֹ לְהִתְלוּצֵץ  
מִחֲבָרוֹ. גַּם הִגְאָוָה תְּבִיאֶהוּ לְקִנְיָא וּלְשֹׁטֶם  
אֶת חֲבָרוֹ הַמְּכַבֵּד בְּעֵינָיו אֲנָשֵׁי הָעִיר,  
וַיִּקְנֵא וַיִּשְׁטֵם אוֹתוֹ, בְּעִבּוֹר שְׂיִדְמָה לוֹ  
שְׁנִפְחַת כְּבוֹדוֹ עַל יְדֵי זֶה, וַיֹּאמֶר בְּלִבּוֹ:  
לֹא הוּא, הֵייתִי מִתְאַר בֵּין בְּנֵי אָדָם  
לְאָדָם חָשׁוֹב. וַיִּבְחַן וַיִּבְדֹּק גְּנֹזֵי  
נִסְתָּרוֹתָיו, כְּדֵי שְׂיִהְיֶה לוֹ מֵה לְדַבֵּר  
מִמֶּנּוּ, יִהְיֶה אִמֶּת אוֹ שֶׁקֶר, כְּדֵי לְהַקְטִין  
שְׁמוֹ אֶצֶל בְּנֵי אָדָם וּלְהַרְאוֹת יִתְרוֹנוֹ עֲלֵיו  
וּלְהַפְחִית מַעֲלָתוֹ וּלְהַכְלִימוֹ וּלְבִישׁוֹ.

# CONTEMPT, the second horseman



Contempt is when we are truly **mean spirited** — we mock our partners with sarcasm, ridicule them, call them names, and mimic or use body language such as eye-rolling or scoffing, so they feel despised and worthless. While criticism attacks your partner's *character*, contempt assumes a position of moral superiority over them as a person.

The antidote to contempt is **Small Things Often** - in non-heated moments, make a habit of regularly expressing appreciation, gratitude, affection, and respect for your partner! One of the most reliable indicators of **a ratio of five positive interactions for every negative interaction *during conflict***; in non conflictual moments, the ratio is 20:1.

# Defensiveness and Acceptance

[Our portion begins: "You shall appoint magistrates [and officials for your tribes,] in all your gates..." these are the gates of the heart.

The gates of the heart are the activation of the spirit and the soul of the heart. Every action and emotion opens gates in the heart of a person.

There are 49 pure "faces" and 49 impure "faces." These are energies and thoughts from the good inclination and the evil inclination. And we all need a magistrate (shofet) within so we may judge all actions and heart openings if they are for good...

[Sefat Emet to Shoftim, 1874](#)

שופטים כו' בכל שעריך. פיה מו"ז ז"ל  
כי הם שיעורין דליבא.

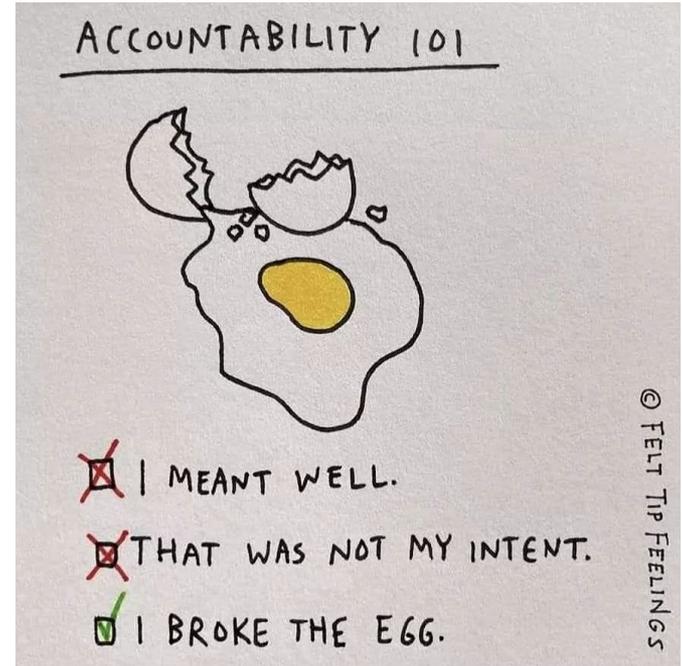
כי השערים בלב הם התפעלות הרוח  
ונפש שבלב. כי בכל פעולה והרגשה  
נק' שער שנפתח בלב האדם.

ויש מ"ט פנים טהור ומ"ט פנים טמא  
והם הכחות ומחשבות מיצ"ט ויצה"ר.  
וצריכין שופט שיהי' האדם שופט כל  
תנועה ופתיחת הלב אם לטוב הוא

# DEFENSIVENESS, the third horseman

Defensiveness is really a way of blaming your partner. What our defensiveness really communicates is that we don't take our partner's concerns seriously and that we won't take responsibility for our mistakes.

The *antidote* to defensiveness is to take responsibility for part of the conflict. We are rarely as innocent as we like to think we are.



# Don't Stonewall Growth

I will not let my failings bring me down, as I know that all of them are necessary, and will serve as springboards for my growth. (SHK 6:9)

...

There is a spark of light and holiness in every failing. The wise ones seek it out and grow from it. (SHK 2:350)

אני לא אפול ממדרגתי משום נטיה זרה,  
כי אדע כי כל הנפילות גם הן נדרשות.

... לא רק בכל דבר של רשות, כי אם גם  
בכל חטא ועוון, בכל הריסה, בכל דיעה  
כוזבת, יש ניצוץ של טוב ושל קדושה  
אידיאלית, שהוא מקיימו ומעודד את הרוח  
לפעולה. צדיקי הדורות יש להם מגע עם  
כל הטוב הפזור על פני מרחבים רבים, כל  
אחד ואחד לפי רוחב נפשו, רוחו ונשמתו,  
ואותו הטוב הם מרחיבים בעבודת קדשם  
המחשבית, האצילית.

# STONEWALLING, the fourth horseman

**Stonewalling** is when one partner is feeling emotionally overwhelmed and tunes the other partner out in an effort to avoid or end conflict. It's emotional flight, not fight and looks like tuning out, turning away, acting busy, or engaging in obsessive or distracting behaviors

The *antidote* to stonewalling is self-soothing. We need to break, calm ourselves and most importantly, avoid thoughts of righteous indignation and innocent victimhood.



# The Four Horsemen of Relationship Apocalypse + Their Antidote

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|                      |                     |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| <b>criticism</b>     | specific complaint  |
| <b>contempt</b>      | small things often  |
| <b>defensiveness</b> | take responsibility |
| <b>stonewalling</b>  | self soothe         |

# How was your day, Honey?



Our relationships are not something we *have*;  
they are something we *make*  
with every choice, every day