



## **Couples Therapy Handout 1 (Dr. John Gottman, 2011)**

### What is “Dysfunctional” in Relationships (Disasters)?

1. More negativity than positivity
2. Escalation of negative affect
3. The 4 Horseman
4. Emotional disengagement and withdrawal
5. Failure of repair attempts
6. Negative sentiment override
7. Physiological Arousal (Fight, Flight, or Freeze)
8. Failure of men to accept influence

### What is “Functional” When a Relationship Goes Well (Masters)?

1. Matched preferred conflict style
2. Dialogue, not gridlock
3. Successful repairs
4. Turning toward, rather than turning away or against
5. Positive affect...serves to down regulate negativity and soothe physiology

### Eliminate the 4 Horseman and Replace with an Antidote

1. Criticism—Gentle Start up
2. Defensiveness—Taking responsibility
3. Contempt—Build culture of appreciation
4. Stonewalling—Self soothing

### Improve Conflict Skills and Goals.

1. Soften Start-Up
2. Accept Influence
3. Make effective repairs during conflict
4. De-escalate
5. Compromise
6. Physiological Soothing/Emotional Self Management

