

Recap of 10/29/17:

(The source for the following (points one thru six) is an article entitled **“Why Marriages Fail”** by Kerby Anderson of Probe Ministries International, www.probe.org. This material was originally published in the book Fighting for Your Marriage and a Christian version entitled, A Lasting Promise: A Christian Guide to Fighting for Your Marriage.)

1. Anderson writes: “Why do marriages fail? While the answers to that question are many, there is a growing body of empirical research to suggest there are four negative risk factors that create barriers to oneness in marriage and increase a couple’s chances for marital failure.”

2. The four negative patterns are: escalation, invalidation, negative interpretation, and withdrawal and avoidance. They are toxic communication patterns.

3. Escalation is defined as negative exchanges which become increasingly hostile and are often begun over minor things. The biblical antidote for escalation is rather than returning evil for evil or insult for insult but to return a blessing (see 1 Peter 3:9; Proverbs 12:18; James 1:26; 3:1ff.)

4. The second toxic communication pattern is invalidation. Invalidation is defined as “...a pattern in which one partner subtly or directly puts down the thoughts, feelings, or character of the other.” The antidote for invalidation is validation, expressed biblically in passages such as Matthew 5:22 and Proverbs 25:20.

5. The third toxic communication patterns is “Negative Interpretations.” It includes assigning negative motives to your mate’s actions and or words, making negative assumptions. The danger in this is that “research shows that in distressed marriages there is a tendency to discount the positive things they see. The antidote for Negative Interpretation is re-assess what you think about your partner’s motives, to push yourself to look for positive evidence. (1 Corinthians 4:5; Luke 6:41)

6. The fourth toxic communication pattern is “withdrawal and avoidance;” physically leaving the room or situation, or “tuning off” or “shutting down” emotionally. “Couples who want to have a good marriage must learn to stay engaged.” Paul urged believers to keep short accounts, to reconcile their difference in the same day if possible (Ephesians 4:25-27).

7. Biblical passages crucial to relationships are: James 1:19,26; 3:1ff and 1 Peter 3:8-12. In the 1 Peter passage we are instructed to return a blessing for an insult. We do that in marriage by praise, thankfulness, benefiting our mate, praying for and asking God’s blessing for our mate. (for more on this concept see Becoming One by Don Meredith)