Creating a Healthy Relationship:

**DO’s & DON’Ts**

~ John Gottman ~

4 DON’Ts and their Antidotes:

**Criticism**

✓ Antidote for criticism is **Complaining Without Blaming**

- Softened start-up helps
  - Be concise
  - Make “I” statements
  - Start with something positive
  - Describe, don’t evaluate
  - Talk about what you need
  - Give appreciations
  - Don’t store things up
  - Restate your feelings in term of the more vulnerable emotions

**Defensiveness**

✓ Antidote for defensiveness is **taking responsibility**

**Contempt**

✓ Antidote for contempt is **a culture of appreciation**

- “I appreciate” exercise: Tell your partner a quality that you appreciate about them. Include a story of something they did that showed you this quality.

**Stonewalling**

✓ Antidote for stonewalling is **relaxation exercises**

- Since stonewalling is a response to flooding
  - Progressive Muscle relaxation exercise or deep breathing exercise can be helpful

5 Things you **DO** on a daily basis:

**Partings:** Make sure that you’ve learned about one thing that is happening in your partner’s life that day—from lunch with the boss to a doctor’s appointment or a scheduled phone call with an old friend.

**Reunions:** Be sure to engage in a stress-reducing conversation at the end of each day.

**Admiration and appreciation:** Find some way every day to communicate genuine affection toward your partner.

**Affection:** Hugs, pats on the back, holding hands, and thoughtful touches on the arm, shoulder, or face – they can all be ways to show excitement, concern, care, and love. Appropriate physical touch fosters a sense of security and belonging in any relationship.

**Weekly date:** Find some time during the week to have relaxing low-pressure time together.

Upcoming “Healthy Relationship” Workshop

Nov 19, 5:00 p.m. @ Ball LLC

This and past inSTALLments can also be found at www.whittier.edu/wellnesscoalition; or sign on to My.Whittier.edu, click on Campus Life ➔ Wellness Letter ➔ Wellness Coalition.