

Last week I wrote about the five major categories of ineffective coping responses that people use when under stress. They are withdrawal, blaming, whining, resentful compliance and confusion. We'll call them The Five Demons of Couples' Communication.

Today we'll consider the first of two basic emotions that are the basis of The Five Demons. Like Abbott and Costello, fear and resentment tend to travel in pairs. These two emotions are the twin pillars of most dysfunctional communication.

It's tough to eliminate resentment because there is often a big part of us that doesn't want to give it up. An enlightened voice within us may believe we should release it, but it's often the less influential voice on our internal board of directors. So we hang on to the resentments. One client argued, "It's my reward for suffering and putting up with so much B.S." But nursing our resentment is like drinking poison and hoping the other person will die.

One big problem with resentment is that it makes us feel helpless. And unless the other person changes, we are stuck in our own misery. To top it off, our resentment makes us so unpleasant, the other person has little incentive to repair the situation.

Right now, in the midst of holiday season, you might feel too busy to pay attention to your marriage or relationship. When you're extra busy or your family obligations are stressing you, that's when you most need to take an introspective look. The more resentful you feel, the more likely you will revert to The Five Demons of ineffective coping responses.

If you are holding onto resentments, what is the price you are paying?

Next time we discuss the mother of all crippling emotions – fear.

Until then,
Pete

P.S. I am pleased to offer 15% off all of our products ordered between now and January 4. The discount will show up as part of the checkout process if you order online. You can also order by phone at 650-327-5915 or toll free 877-327-5915, or by email at admin@coupleinstitute.com. If you've thought of attending Pete's workshop, February is a good time to do it. The 15% discount is worth over \$100. Also, this will be the last workshop in the current location. After we find a new venue, we might need to increase the price. For more information or to register, [visit our website](#)

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