



Improving Your Relationship

Did you know, how you fight as a couple can reveal a lot about you? In fact, researchers in a recently completed 10 year study of married couples were able to predict with 88-94% accuracy whether a couple would stay together or divorce, primarily based on their communication patterns during disagreements.

10 Steps for a Healthy Relationship

- Always Be Your "True" Self
- Develop Deep Communication with Each Other
- Don't Ignore, but Explore Your Differences - Do your personalities blend well?
- Share Similar Interest and Values
- Discuss Your Spiritual Beliefs Together
- Appreciate Each Other's Unique Body Type
- Talk About "The S-&M Factor" (Sex & Money) – two of the biggest destroyers of healthy relationships are the misuse, abuse, lack of or over-use of sex and money
- Try to Get Along With Each Other's Friends-n-Families
 - Stay Away From Negative People
 - Learn to Laugh



How to Fight Fair

Do's

1. **Deal with the Here and Now.** What is the specific problem right now? Anything older than 24 hours is "garbage", so no garbage-dumping! (referring to past mistakes)
2. **Take responsibility.** Use "I" statements as a way to show you are taking responsibility for your own feelings and actions.
3. **Be direct and honest** about your feelings and what you want.
4. **Listen and hear!** Try to deal with the other person's perceptions of the situation as well as your own. Be aware of his/her feelings as well as your own. Check to see whether what you heard is really what the other person is trying to express, and ask him to let you know what she hears you saying.
5. **Attack the issue, not the person.** Name-calling puts people in a position to respond angrily and defensively. This is usually used when a person feels he is losing. Name-calling breaks down communication and destroys trust in the relationship.
6. **Give each other the ability to withdraw or change their mind.**
7. **Ask questions that will clarify, not judge.** A question should never begin with the word "why." That puts people on defensive — and we know that defensiveness stops conversation rather than continues it.

Don'ts

1. **Don't read the other person's mind; and don't expect them to read yours.**
2. **Don't Blame.** No finger pointing.
3. **Don't make comparisons** to other people, stereotypes, or situations.
4. **Don't play games.** Examples of games are; poor me; silent treatment; martyr; don't touch me; uproar; if it weren't for you...; yes, but...; see what you made me do; and if you loved me...
5. **Don't involve other people's opinions of the situation**
6. **Don't make threats** - Also, NO talk of divorce.
7. **Don't say "always" and "never"** – these are usually exaggerations and lead to defensiveness
8. **Don't interrupt.** Also, watch your non-verbal expressions too. Rolling eyes, smirking, yawning etc. all work against fair fighting.
9. **Don't use the following:** swearing, denunciation, obscenities, character assassination, contempt, sarcasm, or taunting.
10. **Don't walk away or leave the house without saying to your partner, "I'll be back".**