

Guidelines for Productive Confrontation

Confrontation can be the sign of a healthy relationship. It is a part of every intimate relationship. Avoiding necessary confrontation can result in walls going up and lonely separateness.

There are times, however, to avoid confronting each other, such as when one or both of you are under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs or you are in an abusive situation. These and other situations may require professional help.

9 Tips for “Fighting Fair”

1. Avoid criticism and sarcasm. Remember, criticism and sarcasm wound people and destroy our capacity to belong to each other.
2. Avoid name-calling and character assassination. These can leave deep scars.
3. Blaming each other is a waste of time, since you can't unspill milk. Work instead at moving forward.
4. Avoid using absolutes, such as “you always” or “you never” or “every time.” They are simply not true.
5. Generally, it is best to finish a confrontation. Even if there are tears, be sensitive, but do not walk away. Continue your confrontation for the sake of your relationship.
6. Third parties such as a parent, friend, child or person at work have no part in your confrontation. The real problem is often miscommunication between the two of you.
7. Staying physically close to each other is often helpful. An affectionate touch helps you know there is nothing that cannot be worked out in love.
8. Work to discover the real issue of your confrontation. But **remember, the issue is never as important as the two of you. Being right is not as important as being in relationship.**
9. Confront for the sake of your relationship, not to win.