



Relationship Conflict Resolution Skills

Most people need help with resolution of conflict skills and less suppression of feelings. Here are 9 helpful skills and concepts to improve your relationship.

- 1. Be Respectful.** Don't call names, use sarcasm or belittle your partner. Never put each other down -- know that to hurt one's partner is to hurt oneself. If you relapse into harsh words then immediately apologize.
- 2. Keep the problem the problem.** Do not personalize it. Attack the problem not the person. Maintain ownership of your part of the disagreement. Use "I" or "we" statements instead of "you" statements.
- 3. Stay on one subject.** If the fight is about a mother-in-law, then stay on that subject until there is some kind of resolution. Don't bring in other problems like money, drinking, etc. Handle one problem at a time.
- 4. Use time-outs as needed.** If tempers are flaring and you find yourself losing control put the argument on "hold" or call a "time-out" and agree to meet back at a specific time when things have calmed down a little. It may help to do some physical activity like walking around the block or taking a shower to calm tempers.
- 5. Listen for understanding.** Make a real effort to try and understand each other. Remember all of us want to be listened to. We want and need to feel that what we have to say is important and that our thoughts and opinions are of value.
- 6. Don't mind read your partner** by assuming that you know what they are thinking or feeling. Always ask your partner what they think and feel because feelings and thoughts change over time.
- 7. Try to see things from your partner's point of view** as if you were walking in their shoes with their feelings and background. It doesn't mean you have to agree with them. When you validate your partner's feelings by acknowledging his/her viewpoint you open the door for the same in return and then both of you will be more willing to solve the problems together.
- 8. Seek to solve the problem.** Work as a team. Don't bring in others (family, friends, etc.) to gang up on your partner. Use this phrase during an argument: "What can we do together to solve this problem? I am willing to do the following..." Then state what you are willing to do and then do it.
- 9. Forgive and accept each other.** Truth can be spoken in love, when partners are bound together in forgiveness. We all need and want forgiveness. Remember the disagreement belongs to both of you.

Work on your own self-esteem. The better you feel the more love you can give and receive.

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