



Twelve Tips for Fighting Fairly

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Arguments are an inevitable and normal part of relationships. When two people begin sharing their lives with one another, they are bound to disagree from time to time and to get on each other's nerves. As your relationship progresses, you will soon learn that arguments can be a healthy, beneficial part of that relationship – as long as you know how to fight fairly. Here are tips on how to fight fairly:

1. Listen Carefully

Do not interrupt your partner. Listen to what he or she is saying and save your comments or reply for when he or she is done speaking.

2. Keep Your Voice Down

Do not raise your voice. Refrain from yelling and shouting because that will only make him or her either feel like a child being disciplined or as though you're on the attack. Keep your normal tone and voice.

3. Nix the Sarcasm

Sarcasm only leads to misunderstandings and/or hurt feelings. Your arguments should not resemble a stand-up comedy routine. Eliminate the sarcasm and you're more likely to come to some sort of understanding – and quicker than you might imagine possible.

4. Watch What Your Body Says

Pay attention to your body language and facial expressions. Crossed arms, a frown, and angry eyebrows tell your partner that you are hostile, which can make reaching a resolution seem impossible. Relaxed or casual body language keeps the tension at bay and raises hope. It tells your partner that you're open to his or her ideas, even if different from your own.



5. No Name Calling

Sometimes, we say things in the heat of the moment that we don't even mean and later regret. You'll be much happier if neither of you ever use swear words or offensive names to refer to the other. Such behavior is immature and just hurts your partner's feelings. In sports there are many rules that prevent one player from intentionally injuring another. In marriage and relationships, similar rules must apply..

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6. Mirror One Another

After you've listened to your partner's position on a certain topic, repeat what he or she said to make sure you understood correctly. This will help you at least to understand what your partner is saying and to clarify any misunderstandings.

7. Agree to Disagree

Sometimes you'll have opposing views on certain topics. You're unique people, and you won't always agree. That's okay. In fact, it's what makes your relationship interesting, and it's probably at least part of what draws you to one another. But you have to be willing to accept your differences and to tolerate them.

8. Touch. Kiss. Hug

Give each other space while you're in the heat of a serious discussion, but continue to touch or kiss or hug your partner at appropriate moments during the conversation. This lets him or her know that you are still connected to one another – and that you still care about him or her.

9. Reaffirm Your Feelings

Say, "I love you" or "I care about you" or "I want to help you" at some point during the conversation. Say it and mean it. Your goal is to show your partner that your love is unconditional. It makes him or her feel secure enough to share their differences and to be open with you about anything and everything without fear of losing your love and affection.

10. Don't Bottle Up Your Feelings

Failing to reveal things that are upsetting you only builds resentment. Eventually, you'll explode – and it will likely be at the wrong time and in an emotional way that will only make a rift grow between you and your partner. You should choose your battles carefully but that does not mean you should let real problems you have fester. Calmly speak up when something is bothering you, so you can discuss the issue like the rational adults you are.

11. Stay In The Present

Stay in the present and resist the temptation to use the situation as an occasion to bring up other issues from the past. It's discouraging to keep bringing up the past. You can't change the past; you can only change today. You can look forward to a better future. Try to keep your focus on what can be done today to resolve the issue at hand and go forward from there. If you get off-topic, on to other issues, stop yourselves and agree to get back on track. You can always come back to other issues later.

12. When Necessary, Use Time-Outs

A time-out is a short break to cool off, calm down and get perspective. Think of it like pushing the pause button on a video. It's an opportunity to restore calm and be more reflective instead of reactive. Use the time-out to reflect on why you feel the way you do. Think about how to express yourself in a positive way. Try to think about the other person's feelings and point of view. Think things through before you speak. Then "push play" again and return to each other to resolve the issues calmly.

Try posting these rules on your fridge door and refer to them daily. Commit them to memory and agree to live by them when you have a disagreement. If you both commit to following these rules, you will notice a significant and positive change in the way you "fight" with each other.

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