



How to Fight Fair

Destructive Fighting Styles

- Apologizing prematurely.
- Refusing to take a fight seriously.
- Withdrawing; evading confrontation; walking out; falling asleep; using silent treatment.
- Using intimate knowledge to humiliate partner; "hitting below the belt."
- Bringing in unrelated issues to argument.
- Being a "pseudo-accommodator" ---openly agreeing with partner's point-of-view, but having private doubts, contempt, resentment and reservations about it.
- Attacking indirectly (i.e.-Carom Fighting, attacking some person, idea, activity, value or object that the partner holds in high regard).
- Setting expectations but not attempting to fulfill them, giving a rebuke instead of a reward.
- Demanding more; nothing is ever enough.
- Withholding anything which would give pleasure or make life easier to partner (i.e.-approval, affection, recognition, material things, privileges, etc.).
- Deliberately preying upon partner's emotional insecurities, anxiety or depression; keeping partner on edge; threatening disaster.
- Being a "Benedict Arnold" failing to defend partner and encouraging attacks from outsiders.



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Constructive Fighting Styles

- Avoid fighting in front of bystanders and have ample time to deal with emotional issues arising from each fight.
- Put partner's argument in own words to understand their point-of-view.
- Clearly define what the fight is about.
- Discover points of agreement and disagreement between each other's positions.
- Define personal areas of vulnerability that are out-of-bounds in fight.
- Define partner's convictions in the disagreement. This allows each to decide how much to yield.
- Offer positive means of improving and correcting conduct in yourself.
- Recognize spontaneous explosion without reason and wait for it to subside instead of reacting with your own explosion.
- Try to learn from fights. Winners are those who learn more than they get hurt.
- Declare a period of time in which no disagreements/fights are allowed. This allows time to make -up and the benefits thereof.
- Be prepared for the next fight. Intimate fighting is more or less continuous. If expected, it is less vicious, shorter in time, creates less injury and offers greater learning opportunities.