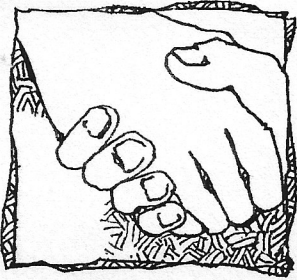


7 Rules for Fair Fighting

- 1. Don't hit. Keep your hands to yourself.**
- 2. Listen. Don't interrupt.**
- 3. No name calling, swearing or yelling.**
- 4. Use "I" messages, not "You" messages.**
- 5. Argue about one thing at a time.
Stick to the point.
Don't bring up the past.**
- 6. If you're not involved in the argument,
stay out of it.**
- 7. Solve the problem.
Don't try to win the argument.
Respect each other's views.**



Do's and Don'ts of Dealing with Conflict

DO

- Take a step back and a deep breath before you go any further. Continue to take slow, deep breaths as you communicate with the other person.
- Check your voice level. Speak softly.
- Check the pace of your speech. Talk slowly and articulate your words to be sure you can be understood.
- Make eye contact. Look the other person directly in the eye.
- Sit or stand at eye level with the other person so that neither of you is above or below the other.
- Check your body language. Try to appear non-threatening, yet open to communication. Uncross arms and legs, unclench your hands, use a relaxed posture, and make sure both parties have plenty of 'personal space.'
- Take the time to think about what the other person is saying before responding.
- Acknowledge the other person's position. Recognize that he or she has needs. Use statements like "I understand what you're saying..." or "Thank you for being honest about the way you feel."
- Use words like 'maybe,' 'what if,' 'I feel,' 'I think,' 'I wonder.'
- Use 'I' Messages. Tell the person how you feel and what you need.
- Repeat and clarify messages. For example, say things like "I think what you're saying is.." or "Could you explain that to me again..."
- Focus on the present — stick to the situation that's causing the problem now.

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DON'T

- Jump into an argument when you're too heated to communicate calmly or rationally.
- Shout or raise your voice.
- Talk too fast. You want to be able to think about what you're saying before you say it, and you want the other person to be able to understand you.
- Continuously look down or away from the other person; this is non-assertive behavior.
- Hover above or sit below the other person. This sends a message of inequality.
- Point your finger, ball your fists, get in the other person's face, or use body language that's in any way intimidating or threatening.
- Interrupt or react defensively to what you think the other person means without taking the time to really hear them out and clarify their meaning.
- Blame the other person for everything without recognizing their feelings or position.
- Use words like 'always' or 'never.'
- Use 'you' messages, telling the other person what's wrong with them instead of what bothers you about the situation.
- Make assumptions or interpretations or draw conclusions about what the other person is saying.
- Bring up all of the problems you've had with the other person in the past, or 'throw the past in the other person's face.'

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