

Conflict: Rules for Fair Fighting

1. **No Winning:** We seek not to win victory over our spouse, but to build the relationship. Placing blame and being right might make you feel better, but it doesn't build anything between you.
 - Eph 5:28 Husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.
 - Matt 20:25 The gentiles lord it over each other, not so with you.
 - Prov. 17:27 A man of knowledge uses words with restraint, and a man of understanding is even-tempered.
2. **No Running:** We will not retreat from conflict since it is a natural aspect to a healthy marriage. Neither will we wallow in anger or give our partner the silent treatment. We will resolve it now or at least set a time in the immediate future for discussion.
 - Eph. 4:26 Be angry, but do not sin in your anger. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry.
3. **Shut Up and Listen:** We will seek to really listen to each other's pain and struggle without interruption or judgment.
 - James 1:19 Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.
4. **Check Your Weapons:** We will be careful to not attack our spouse with deadly emotional force. We will avoid exploding, name calling, cursing, belittling, and harmful generalizations. You're not out to annihilate your spouse and prove yourself right.
 - Eph. 4:29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouth, but only what is helpful for building others up.
5. **Keep it Private:** We will never quarrel or reveal private matters in public. We will also keep our children out of our conflicts. There is no third party in marriage except God.
 - Matt 18:15 If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you.
6. **Take it Down, Not Up:** We will strive to lower our volume instead of raising it, keeping our tone gentle, rather than escalating our defenses.
 - Prov 15:1 A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger
 - Prov 15:18 A hot tempered man stirs up dissension, but a patient man calms a quarrel
7. **Start Softly:** We will calmly give and receive criticism of behavior (not character) in order to build each other up.
 - Eph 4:15 Speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is Christ.
 - Prov 15:31 He who listens to life giving rebuke will be at home among the wise.
8. **Say I'm Sorry:** We will freely offer apologies.
 - Prov. 28:13 He who conceals his sin does not prosper, but whoever confesses them and renounces them finds mercy.
9. **Forgive freely:** Forgiveness means giving up your right to satisfaction, even when they're not sorry.
 - Col 3:13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another.
 - Eph 4:32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as Christ forgave you.
10. **Pray together:** End disagreements with prayer, reuniting with each other before God.
 - James 5:16 Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other that you may be healed.