

Rules for Fair Fighting

RULE #1: NO DEGRADING LANGUAGE

Avoid name-calling, insults, put-downs or swearing.

RULE #2: NO BLAMING

It's pointless to blame each other. Blaming your spouse distracts you from solving the problem at hand. It invites your spouse to be defensive and it escalates the argument.

RULE #3: NO YELLING

If it feels like yelling to your spouse, it probably is. Make a conscious effort to lower your voice.

RULE #4: NO USE OF FORCE

Including pushing, shoving, grabbing, hitting, punching, slapping, restraining, damaging property, and throwing/breaking things. Each of us has a right to be safe & free of abuse.

RULE #5: NO TALK OF DIVORCE

In the heat of an argument, threatening to leave the relationship is manipulative and hurtful. It makes the problems in your relationship seem much bigger than they need to be.

RULE #6: DEFINE YOURSELF, NOT YOUR SPOUSE

Use words that describe how you feel, what you want and what is important to *you* - not what your partner feels, wants, or believes.

RULE #7: STAY IN THE PRESENT

Keep your focus on what can be done today to resolve the issue at hand and go forward.

RULE #8: TAKE TURNS SPEAKING

Let one person speak at a time. When one speaks, the other should be listening—really listening, not just planning their rebuttal. Take turns speaking and listening so that you both have a chance to say what you need.

RULE #9: WHEN NECESSARY, USE TIME-OUTS

Remember: No amount of talking will lead to problem-solving if you are not in a state of mind for solving problems.