

Handling Conflicts

Relationships are wonderful and when we're in a relationship that is going well, there are few experiences in our lives that can match how terrific they are. However, whether we want to admit it or not, there will usually come a time in the relationship when there's going to be some kind of conflict with your partner. This is simply the way that relationships work.

A lot of times, when we have a conflict, it's not something earth-shattering. On the contrary, many conflicts are over trivial little events. But what happens is that it catches us off guard, and before we're even aware of what's going on, we find ourselves caught up in powerful forces that we're not prepared for.

That's why it's important to know how to deal with conflict in a relationship.

What is conflict?

Basically, conflict is when your partner feels one way and you feel a different way.

It can be something as small as what television show to watch...or something as long-term as whether or not to start a family.

Whatever the cause, however, you need to understand how to handle it.

First – accept the fact there's a conflict!

Believe it or not, there are people in the middle of a conflict who don't even recognize there's a problem. They assume that the other person involved is just looking for control of a situation, but in many cases, it's actually one person thinking an entirely different way from the other person.

Therefore, take a deep breath, calm down, and both of you listen to what the other person is saying.

Sometimes, you'll come across two people who simply cannot resolve conflict verbally. Each of them is interrupting the other, never letting a complete thought come across. In situations like that, both of you can just get a piece of paper and a pen and write down what's going through your minds, what you're feeling.

Next, one of you will have to go first and calmly and rationally state your case. The person speaking has to be respectful of the partner's feelings, and the partner needs to sit and listen while the person speaking presents the case.

Then, they can switch places – with the partner speaking and the other person listening.

Once this has taken place, you have to figure out whether or not this is something that the two of you need to agree on. Maybe it's simply a case of personal preferences, and the only thing that you need to do is decide to respect the other person's views or decisions.

Sometimes, though, you'll find yourself with a major decision on your hands, and you'll really need to sit down and analyze everything carefully.

Ask yourself if this decision is so important that you're willing to end the relationship over it. Is this decision more important than being with your partner?

If it isn't, try and find some way that you can reach some kind of compromise solution. Sometimes, when you really sit down and come at a situation from a variety of angles, you come across a solution that isn't obvious at first, but which can be lived with.

What if the decision is serious enough to end the relationship?

If that's the case, you'll have some serious thinking to do. It's possible that you might be able to put the situation on hold for a little while, so that you can think everything through carefully. Sometimes, you'll find that when you put a decision off for a little while, when you come back to it, circumstances have changed and it's easier to make some kind of joint decision

Conflict in a relationship can be poisonous, turning the best relationships into a battleground. Make sure that you remember the importance of the relationship, how you feel about each other, and show the respect and understanding both of you deserve. Don't let the emotions of the moment blind you to what the two of you have, and don't allow stubbornness or the need to be right ruin something that might turn out to be the best thing that you've ever had.

In the end, if you treat each other with respect and with a willingness to hear what the other is saying, you'll find that conflicts, although inevitable, are far from catastrophic.

Kathy Stafford, Relationship Coach

"I show singles how to get married and couples how to STAY married"

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