

## TEN ESSENTIALS ON FIGHTING FAIR

**1. Confront problems** as soon as possible. Don't allow them to fester and cause bitterness like an untreated wound.

*Eph. 4: 26 "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry,"*

**2. Master the art of listening.** If we fail to show others respect by listening to them, we will most likely be shown the same discourtesy. Ask for clarification if you don't understand.

Listen

Reflect in order to check for accuracy

Share your feelings and your side of the issue

Allow your partner to reflect to check their understanding

Remember if you can't present your spouses position as well as you can your own your not listening.

*Prov. 18:13 "He who answers before listening-that is his folly and his shame."*

**3. Limit the discussion** of the conflict to the here and now issue. Don't drag out the dirty laundry of the past.

*Phil. 3:13 "...Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead"*

**4. Use "I" messages** in making your point and expressing your emotions. This allows you to take responsibility for your feelings, and also allows the other person to hear about your feelings without feeling defensive. "You" messages tend to be perceived as attacks and criticism.

*Luke 3:14 "...don't accuse people falsely..."*

*Prov. 3:30 "Do not accuse a man for no reason..."*

*Col. 3:12-14 "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly love, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity."*

**5. Avoid exaggerations** such as "always," "never," etc. These statements are most often untrue, simply because as inconsistent human beings we very seldom "always" or "never" do anything

*Eph. 4:15 "...speak the truth in love..."*

**6. Avoid character assassination** (name calling and put-downs). Pointing out character flaws or demeaning another person will do nothing but create greater disharmony.

*Prov. 11:12 "A man who lacks judgment derides his neighbor, but a man of understanding holds his tongue."*

**7. Use appropriate words and actions** for the matter at hand. Very few arguments are worth fighting at peak volume.

Ask yourself is this issue "too small of a mountain to die on"?

*Prov. 15:1 "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."*

**8. Don't be concerned about winning or losing** the argument. It's better if both persons can be more concerned about resolving the conflict rather than who "wins" or "loses."

*Eph. 6:12 "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the*

*authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."*

**9. Set limits.** Comments which are hurtful or damaging must be avoided.

*Col. 3:8 "But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips."*

**10. Choose to forgive the offender.** All people fail. If we don't give others a chance to start over after a failure or failures, our relationships will suffer. Complete forgiveness may take time, depending on the degree of hurt caused by the other person. However, it's important to have an attitude of forgiveness and keep asking God to help you get to the point where you can truly forgive.

*Eph. 4:31-32 "Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you".*