Centered Connections
Theresa Herring, LMFT

HOW TO FIGHT AND NOT END UP DIVORCED

Conflict isn't inherently bad. In fact, it's inevitable in relationships. How you handle it, however, can make or break a relationship. So you want to **approach conflict with R.E.S.P.E.C.T.**

Respect

Throughout the argument, treat your partner with respect. They are someone you love (not the enemy!).

Examine

Take a moment to understand what is triggering you in the moment. Are you feeling unimportant? Inadequate? Alone? **Understand that this is your stuff, not your partner's**. And then figure out what you need in this moment. Do you need support, empathy, a hug, help problem solving… Get clear on you what you need and then…

Share

You want to share what is triggering you and why. AVOID BLAMING. You want to take ownership of your thoughts and feelings and assert your needs. "I feel ____ because it brings me back to _____. Right now I really need ____." **Focus on sharing, not persuading.** If you're trying to win, you've already lost.

Pause

If you feel yourself becoming overwhelmed, withdrawn, or shutdown, you want to **pause and self-soothe**. Take deep breaths, a time out, or ground yourself using your senses (pick 5 things that you can see, 5 things that you can hear, and 5 things that you can physically feel/are touching with your body).

Engage

Once you have calmed down, you want to re-engage with your partner. **Conflict is an opportunity to promote deeper connection by sharing feelings, thoughts, and needs in a constructive way**.

Compromise

Sometimes you are not going to agree. In fact 69% of couple conflict is irresolvable. **If you two really aren't seeing eye to eye, you want to focus on a compromise**. This means figure out where you can budge and where you can't (your non-negotiables).

Trust

Trust that your partner has good intentions. We often judge ourselves by our intentions and others by their actions. **If you believe that your partner isn't trying to hurt you, you're more likely to have a productive conversation**.

Follow this guide and you are on track to healthy conflict and a happy relationship!
Need more help than this? Reach out

Like Centered Connections on Facebook for free relationship tips and tricks!

Theresa Herring, LMFT
Centered Connections
Evanston, IL