

CONFLICT RESOLUTION



How Do You Do It?

How do you work through the day-to-day differences you have with the people in your life? Your partner? Family? Co-workers?

Most people don't enjoy conflict, but it seems inevitable, especially with those closest to us. Let's face it, you may be able to keep the peace with casual acquaintances. But conflict with spouse or family is unavoidable.

Here's the formula I use, particularly with my spouse: **No yelling or verbal abuse. Be respectful!** When we have a difference of opinion that creates more than just a passing exchange, or a difference that requires resolution, we do five things:

1. We acknowledge the problem and define it so we understand what's really going on.
2. We give each other time to think it through...what outcome do we want?
3. We come back together after the agreed-upon time is up, and check in...are we both ready to talk it out? If yes, we proceed. If no, we agree on a second period of time to think some more. Usually these time-outs are short, a few minutes to pause and reflect before talking.
4. After our second time out, we try again. We keep doing this until we find resolution.
5. When we have a solution, we review what happened. Did we follow our formula? Even when we disagree, we can be respectful of each other, and kind to each other.

REMEMBER... YOU DON'T HAVE TO ATTEND EVERY ARGUMENT YOU'RE INVITED TO.

IF YOU'RE STRUGGLING TO RESOLVE CONFLICT, TRY ONE OF THESE OPTIONS:

1. ASK FOR HELP
2. TAKE TURNS HAVING YOUR WAY ABOUT THE ISSUE
3. COMPROMISE / SHARE
4. LAUGH: IT BREAKS THE TENSION
5. AGREE TO DISAGREE

Taking time out to organize our thoughts allows us to calm our emotions, evaluate our beliefs about the issue, and consider how we could compromise.

- We begin with the belief that we're both well-intentioned and seeking an answer that works, not necessarily the answer we prefer.
- We agree that the issue is on the table, not each other, our relationship, or conflicts from the past.