

## Marriage Mentoring Training on Conflict Resolution

Our goal is to help our Mentorees deal constructively with conflict. Watch for signs in your mentorees to see if they have some difficulty in this area and watch how they deal with it.

There are 4 dangerous kinds of conflict, according to the Parrots. And they seem to build from less destructive to most destructive. If you see any of these signs, you will want to help them relate more constructively.

1. Criticism- Rather than complaining about spouse's actions, they criticize the spouse. Criticism entails blaming. Complaints are ok and begin with I, criticism begins with **You**. I wish we went out more vs. **You** never take me out anywhere.
2. Contempt- Poisons a relationship. The intention is to insult and psychologically abuse their partner and aim for the heart...name calling, hostile humor, mockery. You are so selfish. (name-calling)
3. Defensiveness- It's not my fault...you were the one who was supposed to pay the bill. Becomes reflex and escalates a conflict, doesn't resolve it.
4. Stonewalling....the most destructive. No reaction at all. 85% of stonewallers are men. Its a powerful act and conveys disapproval, smugness and icy disdain.

### Les and Leslie Parrot teach **Good Fighting**

Conflict is natural in intimate relationships so we need to help our mentorees learn how to negotiate through conflict successfully and resolve conflict without leaving scars. Conflict is the price you pay for deepening intimacy. Teach your mentorees to make rules around conflict and decision-making.

1. Don't run from strife...listen share use reflective listening (ref. list. Exercise)
2. Choose battles carefully. What should be changed and what should be overlooked? (nagging vs. toothpaste)
3. Define the issue clearly. Find the source of the tension

4. State feelings directly...use I statements. In situation x, when you do y, I feel z. (see reflective listening sheet)
5. Rate the intensity of your feelings. (see handout)
6. Give up put downs...cultivate politeness. Greet each other hello and give a tender good-bye each night. Show appreciation for a job...regardless if it's the way you wanted it done. Have pleasant conversations at mealtime.
7. Don't dwell on downers...stick to relevant issues..Try to end the fight. Try to calm your partner down...deescalate the situation.

We thought Gary Smalley's 3 steps to a win- win solution in a conflict was helpful.

1. First agree that you will have a no-losers policy in your relationship.
2. Communicate honestly without judgment and listen to the other's feelings, needs and beliefs. Listen to the heart beneath the words.
3. Plate out ideas and alternatives...discuss pros and cons and test each for acceptability.
4. Find solutions that work for both.

**Comfort Circle** by Kay and Milan Yurkovich. (see handout) When your couple has a conflict they need to work out, offer to help them walk-through the conflict using this format. If you need more instruction, call Laura and ask for help with it.

**James 1: 2-4** Dear [brothers](#) and sisters, whenever [trouble](#) comes your way, let it be an [opportunity](#) for joy. For when your [faith](#) is tested, your [endurance](#) has a chance to grow.<sup>4</sup> So let it grow, for when your [endurance](#) is fully developed, you will be strong in [character](#) and ready for anything.