

Fighting Well with the One You Love:

10 Tips to Better Manage Conflict

Sara Marlowe, MSW, RSW

(Adapted from Stan Tatkin, www.thepactinstitute.com)

*In a secure functioning relationship, when in conflict, you take of yourself **AND** your partner at the same time, while remaining collaborative and cooperative.*

Remember, this is the person you love!

- **The way to change the past is to change the present moment and future.** We can't undo what we did, but we can commit to not doing it again in the future. If you talk about the past too much, you can re-injure each other.
- **Lead with relief:** Keep your audience by disarming your partner and taking care when you notice they perceive danger.
- **Move forward only:** Avoid litigating the past. Tell them what you mean now, rather than 'who said what, when.'
- **Work on the problem, not each other.** Take care of problems *together*, rather than pointing fingers and assigning blame.
- **Deal with misunderstandings and injuries immediately** or as soon as possible to prevent them from going into long-term memory.

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- **The relationship is always what you say it is.** Our relationship is in our heads and we make it real by what we declare.
- **Focus on where you are both in agreement or can agree :** Avoid focusing only on where you disagree and accept your partner ‘as is.’
- **Stick to one topic only:** Associations will pop up, but be disciplined and orderly and stick with one topic only
- **Put the kibosh on negativism** because it destroys morale and it's toxic for a team, i.e. - avoid saying things like, ‘Nothing is ever going to change,’ or ‘You are never going to be able to do this.’
- **You must work to maintain SAFETY and SECURITY at all times,** even when you are in conflict. You're **both** responsible for the other person’s safety at all times.

*“Both people feel **safe and secure** only because they **agree to make it so**” - Stan Tatkin*