

### Rules For A Fair Fight

1. Be specific when you introduce a gripe.
2. Don't just complain, no matter how specifically; ask for a reasonable change that will relieve the gripe.
3. Ask for and give feedback of the major points, to make sure you are heard, to assure your partner that you understand what he/she wants.
4. Confine yourself to one issue at a time. Otherwise, without professional guidance, you may skip back and forth, evading the hard ones.
5. Do not be glib or intolerant. Be open to your own feelings and equally open to your partner's.
6. Always consider compromise. Remember, your partner's view of reality may be just as real as yours, even though you may differ. There are not many totally objective realities.
7. Do not allow counter-demands to enter the picture until the original demands are clearly understood, and there has been a clear-cut response to them.
8. Never assume you know what your partner is thinking until you have checked out the assumption in plain language; nor assume or predict how he/she will react, what he/she will accept or reject. Crystal-gazing is not for pairing.
9. Don't mind-rape. Ask. Do not correct a partner's statement of his/her own feelings. Do not tell a partner what he/she should know or do or feel.
10. Never put labels on a partner. Call him/her neither a coward, nor a neurotic, nor a child. If you really believed that he/she was incompetent or suffered from some hopeless basic flaw, you probably would not be with him/her. Do not make sweeping, labeling judgments about his/her feelings, especially about whether or not they are real or important.
11. Sarcasm is dirty fighting.
12. Forget the past and stay with the here-and-now. What either or you did last year or last month or that morning is not as important as what you are doing and feeling now. And the changes you ask cannot possibly be retroactive. Hurts, grievances, and irritations should be brought up at the very earliest moment, or the partner has the right to suspect that they may have been carefully saved as weapons.
13. Do not overload your partner with grievances. To do so makes him/her feel hopeless and suggests that you have either been hoarding complaints or have not thought through what really troubles you.
14. Meditate. Take time to consult your real thoughts and feelings before speaking. Your surface reactions may make something deeper and more important. Don't be afraid to close your eyes and think.
15. Remember that there is never a single winner in an honest intimate fight. Both either win more intimacy, or lose it.

from George R. Bach and Ronald M. Deutsch, Pairing, (New York: Avon, 1970). pp 202-204.

FAIR FIGHTING

DO's

1. Do agree to a fair fight
2. Do clearly state your concern
3. Do stick to one subject ONLY
4. Do stick to your FEELINGS & THOUGHTS
5. Do be honest
6. Do deal with present issues one at a time
7. Do respect the other person
8. Do use good timing
9. Do use humor
10. Do stick to what YOU know or feel
11. Do allow the other person to complete their thought

DON'Ts

1. Don't switch subject mid-stream
2. Don't accuse
3. Don't lie
4. Don't self-project/guess
5. No violence
6. Don't bring up the past or future.
7. No name calling/put downs-hitting below the belt
8. Don't blame others
9. Don't use others as weapons
10. Don't blame others
11. Don't make demands/ultimatums
12. Don't interrupt.

GOOD BOOKS: The Intimate Enemy  
Pairing  
Stop You are Driving Me Crazy