

Healthy Conflict Resolution Skills

1. Don't waste your time trying to make someone agree with your perceptions or opinions. Everyone has the right to see things in their own way, and to form their own opinions. Also avoid right and wrong arguments. Everyone is right coming from their perceptions and their background.
2. Discuss one conflict at a time, not the whole kitchen sink. Make a list of topics to be discussed, if necessary.
3. When discussing a conflict, one person talks at a time, while the other person listens and paraphrases back what they heard to be sure they understand.
4. When you are talking, get to the feelings of the conflict, not the facts or opinions. Are you mad, sad, scared...??
5. Express the feelings in terms of yourself, instead of blaming your partner for your feelings.
Example: "When you talk to me like that, I feel hurt, because it sounds like you are angry with me. I'd appreciate your using a kind tone of voice when you talk to me" instead of "you're ALWAYS yelling at me, you NEVER listen."
Formula: When you..... I feel
I'd appreciate if you would
6. Healthy conflict resolution is based on both people taking responsibility for their part. Whenever you have a strong reaction to something your partner does or says, you can almost guarantee that the present situation is bringing up an issue that you have not resolved from your past. Ask yourself "When have I felt this feeling before?" When both people own responsibility for their individual reactions and take time to resolve their own emotional wounds brought up by the conflict, the present conflict becomes easy to resolve. This may involve professional assistance.
7. Use the conflict as an opportunity to practice your spiritual values and disciplines. As you communicate, put yourself in each other's shoes and practice showing unconditional love for each other. Imagine the hurt child inside your partner's tough exterior and practice loving that inner child.
8. Remember that your partner is not responsible to meet your needs. Ask for what you want, but don't demand or expect that they fulfill it.
9. Let your partner respond with which of your needs or wants they can meet comfortably. If they cannot give you what you want, let them suggest some other ways that they can show their love or caring for you.
10. Healthy conflict resolution means continuing to communicate, listen, paraphrase and discuss possible solutions until you find a win/win solution. Be patient!