

# 24 Tips for Fighting Fair in Marriage

## Right now . . .

- Sincerely commit your life to Jesus Christ as Lord.
- Consider marriage a life-long commitment.
- Always agree to listen to each other's feelings, even if you disagree with their appropriateness.
- Commit yourself to honesty. (Be honest but emotionally controlled—Proverbs 29:11 says, “A fool always loses his temper, but a wise man holds it back.” NASB)
- Determine to attempt to love each other unconditionally, each partner assuming all responsibility for resolving conflicts. (The 50/50 concept seldom works.)
- Agree on topics that are “out of bounds” — ones that are too hurtful or have already been discussed.
- Commit yourselves to carefully learning and practicing these guidelines.
- Agree to call “foul” when one of your accidentally or purposefully breaks a guideline. (Never counterattack if your mate fails to follow the guidelines.)

## Before a “fair fight” . . .

- Consider all factors in a conflict before bringing it up with your spouse.
- Confess any personal sin in the conflict to Christ before confronting the other person.
- Allow your mate some time to think about the conflict before discussing it—but never put it off past bedtime. (Ephesians 4:26)
- Aim for conflict resolution, not for a win. Then you both win and remain on the same team.
- Pray about each conflict before discussing it.

## During a “fair fight” . . .

- Limit the conflict to the here and now. Never bring up past failures; they should have already been forgiven.
- Limit the discussion to the issue at the center of the conflict; focus on it not on attacking each other.

## Eliminate these phrases from your vocabulary . . .

- “You never. . .” or “You always. . .”
- “I can't.” Instead, always say “I won't.”
- “I'll try.” This usually means “I'll make a half-hearted effort but won't quite succeed.”
- “You should. . .” or “You shouldn't. . .”

Use “**I feel. . .**” messages, expressing a personal response to the words or behavior that aroused the conflict. Example: Say, “I feel angry toward you for coming home late for dinner without calling me first,” not, “You should always call me when you're going to be late for dinner.”

**Never downgrade your mate's personality.** Proverbs 11:12 tells us, “He who belittles his neighbor lacks sense.” (NASB)

**Don't voice why you think your mate does something** (unless asked); stick to how you feel about what your mate does.

**Don't try to read your mate's mind.** If you're not sure what was meant by something said, ask for clarification.

**Learn to handle anger appropriately.** Anger is not the same thing as hatred or vengeance. It should be constructive, not destructive.



**Consider your mate an instrument of God working in your life, even if he/she is not correct!**

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