



Fair Fighting Principles

1. Criticism and sarcasm wound people and destroy the capacity for our hearts to reach out to each other: Proverbs: 15: 1 – 4 (Amp.): **1A SOFT answer turns away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger. 2The tongue of the wise utters knowledge rightly, but the mouth of the [self-confident] fool pours out folly. 3The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch upon the evil and the good. A gentle tongue [with its healing power] is a tree of life, but willful contrariness in it breaks down the spirit.**

2. The blame game is futile. Work on moving forward, you can't change the past, and blame only denotes your defensiveness and attempts to be prideful and egotistical about the issue. **Pride goes before a fall – God exalts the humble and brings down the proud.**

3. Even if you are angry or upset, try to stay physically close with looking at each other or give an affectionate touch which tenderizes our hearts and reminds us the issue doesn't negate our love, and is not as important as your relationship or the two of you.

4. If you need to separate for a "time out" to regain your composure do so, with the idea of coming back together when you cool off rather than taking your love and body away to punish your spouse or withdraw your spirit. However, finish the fight at another planned time. If you don't separate the feelings and emotions will continue to build, contributing to undiffused anger and feelings and potential blow-ups. Proverbs says: **"He who controls his anger is more powerful than he who rules a mighty city".**

5. Never fight if you are on medication or under the influence of alcohol or drugs. In fact, eliminate these self-medications completely – they are bad for your health and your reasonableness in an argument. Realize that the misuse of these things is pressing into "escapes" that will not help in the long run. Instead press into each other until the warm feelings that are buried under your current emotions subside. Ask God to give you wisdom, grace, and love that is beyond your capacity, to understand your mate.

6. Do not call your spouse names, use vulgarity, or assassinate their character. If these thoughts are in your mind, it is because you have let your frustration and anger rise too high – anyone can get out of control. Our words are either inflammatory or healing – choose the later and if you cannot, cool down until you can. **"The tongue is powerful like a rudder that directs a mighty ship and it is also like a flame that can set a whole forest on fire".** On an anger scale of 1-10 with 10 being the most intense – stop at 4.

7. Fight to get down on a feeling level and understand your spouse and for clarification – shift to "deeper meaning" communication techniques until your anger/emotions can be expressed and therefore subsides. If you are just trying to win or be the best debater or persuader, you have lost the reason for the discussion and what your marriage is really all about.

8. When we want to prove a point, we often use untrue absolutes like "you always", "you never", or "every time". Nobody does anything that often or all that inclusive so these words are chosen to give strength to your argument, and again you have lost the right reason for the discussion by shifting to "winning" with untrue exaggerations, rather than trying to **understand your mate and resolve the issue at hand.**