

7 TIPS TO DEFUSE

FIGHTS

AND IMPROVE YOUR
MARRIAGE

“YOUR MARRIAGE IS
MEANT TO BE ENJOYED,
NOT ENDURED...”



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Intro

Your marriage matters.

No one enters a marriage relationship with the intention of simply becoming “roommates.” But, without knowing how to deal with conflict in a healthy, biblical way, we can find ourselves in that situation without knowing how we got there.

It’s our hope that this resource gives you practical ways to navigate the tensions or disagreements common to all marriages with biblical love. Remember that there are no perfect marriages because there are no perfect people.

What separates a good marriage from a bad one is the commitment that exists between husband and wife, and the grace of God flowing through people who are committed to one another.

Don’t be misled by the world’s definition of love. The biblical definition is vastly different. The world’s definition of love is based on feeling alone, but God’s Word is very clear that love is a choice.

It chooses to bear all things, believe all things, and hope for all things.

Rush

There is Always Time for Your Spouse

We've been conditioned to cram as much as we can into the limited amount of time we have each day. And, while, it may be okay to rush out the door and eat breakfast on the go, or rush to get through a "to-do" list, rushing through an argument is a fast way to hurt your marriage.

Don't

While you might be a pro at fixing your hair or applying makeup on the go, never try to rush through an argument in the car.

Having a "cargument" is never a good idea. The lack of eye contact and countless distractions are compounded by the approaching destination. Rushing an argument with your spouse can have devastating impacts.

Do

Take the time to work through each and every argument. Really tune in and focus on what your spouse is saying and feeling. Show them you care by putting down the distractions and dedicate your time to them. You can't control when an argument happens, but you can treat it seriously and avoid rushing through it.

Threaten

Hurt people, hurt people.

Let's think about that. Out of hurt, people lash out at one another to share the pain. And having an argument with your spouse can hurt. Sometimes, out of this pain, we can lash out and say things we don't really mean.

Don't

It's important to avoid threats during heated arguments. Threats can come in a variety of forms, but they are all adding fuel to the fire. Don't threaten to trash his coveted golf clubs. Don't threaten to call her mother. Don't threaten to expose an embarrassing habit. Most importantly, don't threaten the relationship itself.

You're married. You know exactly what hurts your spouse. Don't leverage your intimate knowledge against them.

Do

Use your intimate knowledge for good. Communicate in ways you know are effective and show them love that only you can.

Your special knowledge of each other can build bonds of trust like no other. Knowing that you can confide in your spouse will open up a deeper, more loving marriage.

Exaggerate

Inflating the facts inflates the problem.

Many couples don't even realize they're guilty of exaggerating during an argument. Even if you're trying to make a point, choose words that accurately define the problem.

Don't

In the heat of an argument it is easy to exaggerate. Saying hot button words like "always" or "never" are easy ways to amplify the issue. Stay focused on the problem, and be honest to yourself. Exaggerating the frequency or extent of a problem can be perceived as accusatory by your spouse.

Do

Be specific; avoid using extreme terms. Not only does inflating the issue misrepresent your spouse, it can actually distort your own perception of the problem over time.

Punish

Punishment Doesn't Produce Results

Punish is defined as: to inflict a penalty or sanction on (someone) as retribution for an offense, especially a transgression of a legal or moral code. We all hold a moral code, and sometimes it's crossed. It takes more control to not retaliate.

Don't

Some quarrels lead to couples "punishing" one another. Withholding physical intimacy, or giving a silent treatment in order to express your pain is not healthy. In fact, it can amplify the animosity and bitterness.

Punishments don't have to be obvious, passive-aggressive punishments can also have devastating effects.

Do

Be clear with your partner and explain your pain points. Work on a solution together. You certainly don't have to tolerate abuse or unhealthy behavior, and you have the right to take care of yourself. As you continue to work through the conflict, share the other positive moments and celebrate victories together.

Gossip

There is a difference between talking and gossip.

Working through a marital issue can be lonely. And there is a tendency to seek outside affirmation.

Don't

One common mistake couples make is to “bad mouth” their spouse to friends or family. Exposing their shortcomings or complaining to others can add to the problem.

Complaining about your spouse has long lasting effects. When the issue has passed and you've moved on, the people you told won't.

Do

Get advice, counseling, and/or help. It's healthy to talk through challenges and get new perspective. Getting advice from trusted sources is always helpful, just be careful to avoid the “bad mouthing.”

Let it Fester

The Devil's Foothold

How do you deal with anger? Attempting to “bottle up” your hurt or anger is like a tea kettle that’s boiling and will spill over at any moment.

Don't

Don't avoid an issue with your spouse. Keeping your feelings bottled up only extends the argument. The allure of ignoring your problems is short-lived.

Ephesians 4:26 and 27 spell it out pretty clearly. “Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.”

Do

Take a break, calm down, then with a clear mind address the issue promptly. Make a conscious effort to put out fires when they are small and manageable; left to fester, problems can become a bigger blaze.

Get Off Topic

Changing the Topic Won't Change Anything

We get it. Conflict isn't fun and we typically want it to be over with as quickly as possible. But, trying to change the subject and pretend nothing happened won't change anything

Don't

It's very easy to get off topic during the heat of an argument. Don't bring up past issues. Don't bring up other people. Don't bring unrelated issues into the argument. Comparing your spouse to other people or dredging up the past does not benefit either of you.

Do

Keep focused on the problem at hand. It's easy to get off topic when you're upset, but staying on topic can defuse most arguments before they explode.

Conclusion

Tips

And to close, here are 5 powerful tips to keep in mind. Following these simple tips can make a huge impact and vastly improve your outcomes:

- 1 Listen
- 2 Feelings are always valid
- 3 Take responsibility
- 4 Accept outcome
- 5 Pray together

We hope you can use these simple do's and don'ts to reduce the damage or potentially remove some arguments all together. Marriage is a beautiful thing, and it is meant to be enjoyed, not endured.