



Keep Your Communication Effective

1. When possible, prepare the setting before a disagreement.
2. Remember, your spouse is *not* your enemy.
3. Allow for your gender and personality differences.
4. Maintain your boundaries.
5. Respect your spouse's boundaries.
6. Show love and respect to your spouse.
7. Listen before responding.
8. Clarify anything you do not understand.
9. Use "I", not "you" statements when presenting a problem.
10. Do not criticize.
11. Work to solve the problem, rather than attacking your spouse.
12. Acknowledge your part in contributing to the problem.
13. Stay on the subject; do not bring in other issues.
14. Do not seek to "win" the disagreement.
15. Do not argue in front of your children.
16. Fight fair; do not manipulate, bring up the past, exaggerate, use the silent treatment, sarcasm, name calling, attacking their character or use anger to overpower your spouse.
17. Use a "time out" when necessary and set a time to resume the discussion.
18. Offer possible solutions.
19. Plan for implementation of your solution.
20. Seek mediation when necessary.