

Healthy Conflict Resolution

Researcher Sue Johnson wrote, “nothing brings people together like a common enemy.” The writer continued that she helps couples focus on their “Demon Dialogues” as the enemy, not each other. The demon dialogues, as you may guess are those conversations that hurt your relationship rather than build it up; whether it is blaming, getting defensive or shutting down. Ask your spouse to work with you to deal with communication problems – they are your enemy rather than each other...



Constructive Conflict

Conflict is inevitable; the key is to keep conflict healthy. We define conflict as: *a state of divergent views, wants or desires between two or more people*. James 4:1 says; “What causes fights and quarrels among you, don’t they come from your desires that battle within you?”

To move to a point of healthy conflict resolution, we must begin with the foundation – the word of God. There are 4 levels of conflict resolution that build on each other to help people and especially couples solve conflict in constructive ways.

Level 1: Biblical principles

- Putting others first – Mat. 20:24-28
- A Christ-like attitude – Phil. 2:3-5
- Build each other up – Eph. 4:29
- Be quick to listen – Jas. 1:19
- Gentle answers – Prv 15:1

Level 2: Collaboration – working as a team; 5 ways to resolve conflict...

- Work out a compromise
- Die to self & let spouse have his or her way.
- Pray and wait for God’s guidance.
- Maintain healthy boundaries and allow God to work in the situation.
- Seek mediation.

Level 3: Healthy Communication

- Stick to the subject
- Listen before responding
- No “you” statements
- Remain engaged, don’t yell or scream
- Don’t bring up the past
- Don’t criticize

Level 4: Communication Tools

- ABC method* (Michael Speakman); I understand... I feel... I would like...
- Mirror – Validate – Empathize* (Zach Whaley); Validate means to communication that another’s feelings and responses are legitimate and understandable. (Sue Johnson)

Practice and work on it. It does not come naturally!