

CONFLICT RESOLUTION:

Problem Solving/Conflict Resolution

Ten Steps for Resolving Conflict

All couples have differences and disagreements. Studies show that the amount of disagreements are not related to marital happiness as much as how they are handled. Happy couples do not avoid disagreements; they resolve them while remaining respectful to each other, thereby strengthening their relationship. This Ten-Step Model is a simple but effective way to resolve conflict while avoiding common and destructive patterns. Use this model with an ongoing issue in your relationship, as well as for future issues.

1. Set a time and place for discussion.

Date: _____ Time: _____
Place: _____

2. Define the problem—be specific.

3. List the ways you each contribute to the problem.

Partner 1: _____

Partner 2: _____

4. List past attempts to resolve the issue that were not successful.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____

5. Brainstorm—Pool your new ideas and try to list 10 possible solutions to the problem. Do not judge or criticize any of the suggestions at this point.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____

5. Brainstorm (continued)

6) _____
7) _____
8) _____
9) _____
10) _____

6. Discuss and evaluate each of these possible solutions. Be as objective as possible. Talk about how useful and appropriate each suggestion feels for resolving your issue.

7. Agree on a solution to try.

8. Agree how you will each work toward this solution. Be as specific as possible.

Partner 1: _____

Partner 2: _____

9. Set up a meeting to discuss your progress.

Date: _____ Time: _____
Place: _____

10. Encourage each other as you see effort being made toward progress. Express appreciation for those efforts.