

Conflict Resolution Skills Checklist for Couples

1. ___ Take a break during the conflict. It's time for each of you to cool off.
2. ___ Admit when you are wrong. It moves you closer to resolution.
3. ___ Show empathy and it better be real! It shows you are really listening.
4. ___ Find the humor in the situation, without belittling or using sarcasm
5. ___ Just shut up and reach out and embrace your lover. Touch gently.
6. ___ Outlaw the word "but". It's a non-starter and sets back the conversation
7. ___ Utilize the 5 second Quiet Rule frequently and take a deep breath
8. ___ Keep your gestures slow moving. Slow down the cadence of your voice
9. ___ Dial down the volume of your voice. Make it more quiet than normal
10. ___ Keep things in perspective. Every second you fight, you are making withdrawals from the marriage trust bank.
11. ___ Be the strong, quiet one. Take it on the Chin. Let the person unwind to release anger and emotion. Then talk.
12. ___ Get in touch with your "real" feelings. An imposter may have temporarily taken you over during the heated discussion.
13. ___ Create a clear moment - when the smoke has cleared, agree you are both losers in the fight. No one can be declared the winner. Even if your spouse is wrong, allow them to salvage self-respect in that moment.
14. ___ Move to another environment to change the vibe - After cooling off, agree on a time and place to discuss problem. Choose a setting that is comfortable.
15. ___ One fight at a time. Stick to the topic at hand
16. ___ Don't talk over each other. When it's your turn to talk, describe the issue honestly and clearly. Generalizations and blanket statements create openings for divisiveness, so avoid them.
17. ___ Don't speak in riddles or camouflage the real issue. Your spouse is not a mind reader.
18. ___ No hitting below the belt or fouls. Don't escalate things by yelling, using aggressive posturing, raising sensitive topics. Don't label or

make personality based statements about your spouse (eg. “you are awful, depressing, boring, crazy, neurotic, etc)

19. ___ Strive for balance in your discussions. Ensure each person has equal time to make their points and share their feelings. Don't dominate the dialogue.
20. ___ Utilize communication feedback loops to slow down chaos, anger, and heated atmosphere. Both of you should repeat what the other said and show empathy and understanding.
21. ___ Agree to a No Fight List. After the fight, there must be a solution...a path forward. Vow you won't allow the topic that triggered the fight to be a subject of a future fight. Put it on the No Fight List. Post on the bedroom closet door and let it be your reminder not to damage the relationship
22. ___ Don't talk about your fights with others
23. ___ Suspend fighting if alcohol is involved
24. ___ Never, ever succumb to physical violence. If you feel the urge or you are afraid, leave the area immediately.
25. ___ Allow for crying. It's an honest and healthy release of emotions and can diffuse conflict. But don't fake crying.