

conflict as soon as it arrives so that it can be settled as quickly as possible. Be willing to state your needs clearly.

❑ **Avoid using absolute words.** Should, Always, and Never are words which are off limits. They typically indicate an exaggeration of actual reality. Truth is more accessible when these words are avoided.

❑ **Do not use accusatory language.** Practice framing your statements beginning with "I" rather than "you". For example, you might say "I feel frustrated when you do not come home on time because I do not know how to plan for dinner" rather than "You are so inconsiderate. Why do you come home late every night"? "I" statements keep others from getting defensive immediately.

❑ **Do not mock or disregard any solutions**

**which are presented.** At first, all solutions should be considered. In later stages of conflict resolution, you can objectively discuss the pragmatics of each suggestion. If someone presents a possible solution and it gets rejected, he/she may be hesitant to continue the discussion.

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# Conflict Resolution



## *Rules for Fighting Fairly*

*by Jennifer Brady*

## Final Jeopardy

### Category for today:

## Relationships

**Answer:** The tensions that come when the needs and drives of one person are at cross-purposes with the other person.

**Question:** What is conflict?

Whether or not you were able to correctly answer the question, I am certain that you are able to identify with the concept of conflict. In a world of different personalities, beliefs, perspectives, and experiences, there are bound to be times when disagreements arise. If your life is free from conflict, then it is most likely that you have little or not contact with others. Conflict, in itself, is not necessarily the problem. In most cases, *the*

*way we respond to conflict* determines whether or not a problem occurs. Max Lucado reminds us that "conflict is inevitable, but combat is optional".

Take a minute to review any conflicts you have encountered this past week. How did you deal with the conflict? Was it helpful or destructive? Did you feel a resolution was reached or is the situation still bothering you? Did you avoid the person or the problem? Did you attack the person?

Although conflict is not pleasant, there are some basic guidelines which can help resolve the problem with the least amount of pain or negative consequence.

### Six Suggestions for conflict resolution:

❑ **Attack the issue, not each other.** Refrain from using critical words or tone. If complaints are presented,

back them up with facts rather than assumptions. Keep focused on the problem at hand. "Speak the truth in love". (Eph. 4:15)

❑ **Deal with one point of conflict at a time.** Any additional "hot issues" which are brought into the conversation divert your attention away from the present conflict. You will not benefit by trying to solve every conflict at one time.

❑ **Focus on the present, not the past.** Deal with past issues or problems at another time. Your focus and your feelings will become clouded if you reopen past wounds or problems.

❑ **Allow each person a chance to speak without interruption.** Bite your tongue if you must! An agreeable solution cannot be met if every party involved does not feel like they have had a chance to be heard.

❑ **Use active listening,** which calls for you to put aside your own point of view and see the problem from the perspective of another. Reflect back to the other person the feelings and concerns they are sharing. This allows you to check your understanding as well as shows the other person that you are listening to them.

❑ **Be humble.** Although you feel you are right and the other person is wrong, this may not be the case. Humility will allow you to recognize the positive components of your solutions as well as the suggestions of others.

### Four faux pas' of conflict resolution:

❑ **Don't avoid conflict with the silent treatment.** Just because you avoid a bad situation does not mean that it disappears. Deal with