

Let's Talk: Managing conflict in committed relationships

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Hi, my name is Robert. Let's talk about managing conflict in committed relationships.

Why is there conflict?

Why is there conflict? Well, we're all different, so no matter how close we are or how connected we think we may be to one another, we all have our own ideas about how things should be. We have our own opinions, whether we verbalize them or not, and we have our own thoughts and own values about things.

Conflict can be healthy

So some things to keep in mind about conflict. One, conflict is natural. We all have them at some level. Conflict can help a relationship grow. You can learn to work out the problems and also learn about each other along the way. What matters is how you resolve that conflict. So let's talk about some tips about managing conflict.

Conflict is normal

Tip number one: don't quit after the honeymoon is over. We all love that honeymoon stage in our relationship when things are wonderful and everyone's perfect and the birds are singing. But the reality is that the honeymoon stage is a temporary stage and helps to create that initial bond, but again, it's temporary. The reality is that real life brings real challenges and we have to step up to meet that challenge. And also know that disagreements don't mean that your significant other isn't the one. As I mentioned, we're all different. We all have our own thoughts and feelings and so disagreements are part of it. The important thing is that we use problem solving skills to compromise.

Face the issue

Tip number two: don't let things build up. It can be good to overlook annoyances every once in a while, but if you allow that to continue and let it build up then resentment will build up as well and

you might explode over something that was really kind of minor. It's often better to address things as they come up, as uncomfortable as it may be.

Keep perspective

Tip number three: sit down and talk each week. Talk about what went well and how you can continue doing those things. Talk about what didn't go so well and how you could do things differently. But keep perspective. Not everything is as important as it may seem. Monday's argument may end up being less critical on Friday.

Own your feelings

And finally, tip number four: Use "I" language to give feedback so that it doesn't sound like an accusation. Start your sentences with "I," not "you." So for example, "I felt embarrassed when you shared that personal information about me" versus, "You shouldn't have shared that." See how that lands a little differently? It's important to own your own feelings and to take responsibility for them.

Remember you're a team

So to summarize: seek compromise, not victory. It's not about winning. And work together as a team. Also, acknowledge each other's strengths and talents, because we all have different strengths that we bring to the table and they can also help the relationship grow. And take time for yourself to grow as an individual. Be patient with yourself and with each other. And finally, if you need some help, go seek it. We all need a little help sometimes. Until next time, keep talking.

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