

The Conflict Play (Constructive vs. Destructive)

Conflict can have a root in differing perceptions; opposing beliefs, interpretations, expectations, values; disturbing feelings; competing wants or interests; or offending behaviors. Conflict is inevitable in marriage and is not inherently bad. How we handle it determines if it is destructive or constructive conflict. It can strengthen the marriage relationship.

1. Check all the following behaviors you have used in conflict situations with your teammate. Share them with your teammate.
2. Select two of your teammate's behaviors that do the most to hinder positive conflict resolution for you. Discuss them with your teammate.

Destructive Conflict involves behaviors of:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Changing topics to avoid resolution | <input type="checkbox"/> Presuming negative intentions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Digging up the past | <input type="checkbox"/> Shifting blame to your teammate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Expecting everyone to do it your way | <input type="checkbox"/> Storing up hurts to use as a weapon |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Going to bed with unresolved anger | <input type="checkbox"/> Using cutting words or sarcasm |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interrupting | <input type="checkbox"/> Using physical violence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lying to each other | <input type="checkbox"/> Using swear words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Making negative comparisons | <input type="checkbox"/> Using extreme or irrational tactics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nagging | <input type="checkbox"/> Yelling at each other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not cooperating if don't get your way | <input type="checkbox"/> Walking away or refusing to discuss |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Name calling | <input type="checkbox"/> Others? _____ |

Select the constructive behaviors that would be most helpful for you if they were to be implemented by your teammate.

Constructive Conflict involves behaviors of:

- Praying together before, during or after addressing the conflict (2 Ch 7:14; Jer 29:12; Mt 5:44)
- Accepting responsibility for your role in the conflict and apologizing (Ps 51:1; James 5:16)
- Using "I" statements to share your truth in love (Pr 12:17, 16:13, 23:16; Eph 4:15)
- Listening actively to ensure understanding (Pr 18:2,13,17; James 1:19)
- Forgiving each other from the heart (Mt 6:14, 18:21-35; Luke 17:3-4)
- Speaking gently and tenderly to your spouse (Pr 15:1; 2 Cor 6:11-13, 7:2; Col 3:19)
- Responding compassionately and humbly (Pr 18:12; Mt 23:12; Eph 4:32; 1 Peter 3:8)
- Others? _____

Conflict Play

I agree to eliminate my destructive behaviors that hinder positive resolution of our conflicts and replace them with constructive behaviors. If I use these destructive behaviors or fail to use the agreed upon constructive behaviors, my teammate has permission to bring this to my attention by saying _____

I will apologize, ask for forgiveness, and then continue with the discussion.

Husband _____ Wife _____

Date

Date

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