

4 WAYS TO *Fight Fair* IN MARRIAGE



THE DO OVER

The Do Over is very effective when you use words that you shouldn't. In the heat of the moment if you or your spouse say something in a tone or with words that are harsh, simply ask for a do over and express yourself taking the emotion and adversarial word out.

THE SCALE

Some of us are more expressive than others. For the expressive spouse every issue can sound important. For the unexpressive spouse no issue sounds important. When communicating with it is critical to know at the outset how important this issue is to each of you. The more important the issue the higher a priority it will be for you. Use the Scale approach in important conversations by assigning a numerical value of 1 – 10 to the subject. This is particularly effective for busy couples who mention things on the fly. To make sure you are heard you can say, “Hey hon, I know you are busy but this is a 9 to me.” Or if you are the busy spouse you can say, “Honey I am really pressed today is this a 4 or a 9 to you?”

THE SPEAKER/LISTENER

This technique is perfect when you and your spouse need to address a tough topic that has the potential to escalate into a fight. Using this technique will ensure that you both have a conversation with equal opportunity to express and listen. One person speaks at a time. The speaker holds a pen or pencil or another object showing that they “have the floor.” After he/she speaks, the other person repeats back by paraphrasing what was just said. When the speaker feels he/she has been heard and understood, the spouses switch roles.

R.E.S.T.

The R.E.S.T. Worksheet is a tangible way to communicate through reoccurring conflict that threatens to become a habit. Start by REVIEWING the problem, EVALUATING your options, SOLVING the problem, and TRACKING your progress. Each time tough conflict occurs, print out the worksheet and work through it together. The process provides clarity and collaboration in communicating toward a solution.