

## 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.