

# Couple's Activity Worksheet

## House on the Rock Family Ministries

### July 4, 2009

The second task of the first season of marriage is learning how to resolve conflict.

**Balancing of Power** – Even when two people are in “love” conflict is inevitable. Each partner has to overcome their desire to be the one in control. Couples need to understand that conflict isn't always bad! Learning how to resolve conflicts and fight fairly is a vital skill in marriage. When couples resolve conflicts they reveal their true selves and allow each other to talk through issues and feelings which will deepen intimacy. It is only when couples avoid conflict that they run the risk of losing the feelings of intimacy.

To get you talking about you're doing in this area ... please take this unscientific test to get you thinking about how well or not so well you are doing in resolving

Give yourself a score as follows: 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = very often.

<i><b>behavior</b></i>	<i><b>score</b></i>
<b><u>We fight.</u></b>	-
<b><u>We name call.</u></b>	-
<b><u>Things get out of control when we argue. (One of us gets nasty or abusive.)</u></b>	-
<b><u>There are bad feelings for a long time afterward</u></b>	-
<b><u>Past issues from your current relationship come up during disagreements.</u></b>	-
<b><u>There's frustration even before we deal with problems.</u></b>	-
<b><u>We forget what we're fighting about but continue to fight.</u></b>	-
<b><u>One of us must win.</u></b>	-
<b><u>We place blame.</u></b>	-
<b><u>Neither of us listens to the other.</u></b>	-
<b><u>TOTAL (Add up your scores.)</u></b>	-

Pebbles of Truth is a ministry of House on the Rock Family Ministries ([www.hotrfm.org](http://www.hotrfm.org)).

This worksheet is designed to complement the Pebbles of Truth radio feature heard on WJTL Saturday, July 4, 2009. If you missed the spot, or want to hear it again, you can listen to it on our website <http://www.pebblesoftruth.com>.

## Fighting Fair Score Evaluation

### What the scores mean:

**10 to 20 total points:** Hello there! If you're a "perfect 10" check for a pulse in your relationship. Is there any life in there? Maybe you are able to talk about the difficult and important things very well, but if you're not talking, you don't have much of a relationship. It really does take a little spice to keep any relationship alive. Up to 20, you probably have created a balance that allows each of you to express yourselves in a positive and constructive way. You have a relationship that is all too rare these days. Cherish what you have and remember to keep right on talking and solving those problems before they get in the way of your growth. Communication like this keeps friendships alive and flowers on your pillow. Romantic passion finds more room in hearts that aren't full of anger and frustration.

**21-34 total points:** We all want a little excitement in our lives but this is dangerous territory. If your score is at the high end, you may be heading into long term trouble. It may be fun and hot to make-up but be aware that if your words are harsh and mean spirited, they can wound like a knife to the heart...forever. One mean word usually draws another like angry bees swarming. You have a choice not to sting. Change the course of you fights by seeking to understand your partner rather than just defending your position. Understanding is powerful even when you don't agree. We all feel better and safer when we are understood. The majority of problems don't even need to be solved...we just want to know that our partner cares enough to listen and understand.

**35 – 50 total points:** Nobody wins these ongoing fights. You have to change before someone gets hurt any more. Maybe you're fighting because it's the only thing you know how to do or maybe it's the only time you get any attention. Even at that, you probably still feel lonely and trapped. It's time for you to get help from a pastor, counselor, therapist or other professional.

Abuse, either verbal or physical by any party is unacceptable. If you think you might be in an abusive relationship, please get help immediately. Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233 right away. They will give you confidential assistance.

Please note that this is not intended to be a scientific instrument but rather an indicator. We recommend that you think about the outcome and use your best judgment of how to use the information.

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## How to Fight Fair and Help Your Relationship Even in Conflict

No matter what we call it—conflict, fighting, arguing, quarreling or disagreeing--most families need more honest resolution of conflict and less suppression of feelings. This can be accomplished in a fair and positive way by following these nine guidelines.

1. **Be Respectful.** Don't call names, use sarcasm or belittle your mate. Never put each other down -- know that to hurt one's partner is to hurt oneself. If you relapse into harsh words then immediately apologize.
2. **Keep the problem the problem.** Do not personalize it. Attack the problem not the person. Maintain ownership of your part of the disagreement. Use "I" or "we" statements instead of "you" statements.
3. **Stay on one subject.** If the fight is about a mother-in-law, then stay on that subject until there is some kind of resolution. Don't bring in other problems like money, drinking, etc. Handle one problem at a time.
4. **Use time-outs as needed.** If tempers are flaring and you find yourself losing control put the argument on "hold" or call a "time-out" and agree to meet back at a specific time when things have calmed down a little. It may help to do some physical activity like walking around the block or taking a shower to calm tempers.
5. **Listen for understanding.** Make a real effort to try and understand each other. Remember all of us want to be listened to. We want and need to feel that what we have to say is important and that our thoughts and opinions are of value. Remember most of the message is in the non-verbals ... and men listen for her feelings ... ladies for his facts.
6. **Don't mind read your partner** by assuming that you know what they are thinking or feeling. Always ask your partner what they think and feel because feelings and thoughts change over time.
7. **Try to see things from your partner's point of view** as if you were walking in their shoes with their feelings and background. It doesn't mean you have to agree with them. When you validate your partner's feelings by acknowledging his/her viewpoint you open the door for the same in return and then both of you will be more willing to solve the problems together.
8. **Seek to solve the problem.** Work as a team. Don't bring in others (family, children, friends, etc.) to gang up on your partner. Use this phrase during an argument: "What can we do together to solve this problem? I am willing to do the following..." Then state what you are willing to do and then do it.
9. **Forgive and accept each other.** Truth can be spoken in love, when partners are bound together in forgiveness. We all need and want forgiveness. Remember the disagreement belongs to both of you.

**Work on your own self-esteem. The better you feel the more love you can give and receive.**

And after the issue is resolved ask yourselves this question: What new thing did we learn about each other as a result of this "confrontation?"

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