

Week 20

Five Fights That Everyone Has - Fight #1

Factors That Lead to a Harsh Start-up

1. Stress:

High stress leads to increased levels of adrenaline and the stress hormone cortisol. When these combine with a brain that is already overloaded with worry, this leaves us less capable of good emotional control.

What might have been "I've done the dinner dishes every night this week. Could you take over tonight?" becomes "Why can't you ever clean up the *%#! kitchen? You're such a slob!"

2. Resentment:

When we haven't been asking for what we need, expecting our spouses to read our minds, and we believe they are choosing not to meet those needs, resentment builds until we burst.

3. Turning Away:

Sometimes, when we have asked for what we need, and our spouse has been nonresponsive - either turning away or turning against, we resort to trying to get our spouse's attention with a "mallet." We feel that getting any response, even an angry one, is better than being ignored.

4. We Don't Know Any Better:

If the harsh start-up is the only way we know how to start a conversation, we may not even realize that it needs to be changed.

The takeaway? It is difficult to respond to a harsh start-up in any other way than defensively.

Next week: The Correct Way to Open Up a Conversation