

Week 21

Five Fights That Everyone Has - Fight #1

The Correct Way to Open Up a Conversation

From an attack/defend position, there is no communication, no connection, no understanding, and no positivity.

The most successful negotiations begin without blame, without criticism, and without contempt. This decreases the spouse's defensiveness and allows the message to be received better. It also increases the success rate for a positive outcome.

Then, once the idea has been successfully brought up, it is important to listen well. Speak only to ask clarifying questions in order to better understand your spouse. Paraphrase your spouse's point of view. Only when this can be done to your mate's satisfaction is it appropriate to take the next step.

Validate your spouse's position (I can see how you might feel that way. I'm beginning to better understand how you feel.) even if you don't agree. Remember, validation does not equal agreement.

Then, switch roles with the second spouse expressing their point of view and the first spouse seeking understanding.

At this stage, the goal is simply understanding and giving your spouse the opportunity to be fully heard and understood. No persuasion has been attempted, nor has arguing your point of view taken place.

Next week: The Antidote to the Harsh Start-up