

Week 27

Five Fights That Everyone Has - Fight #2

Small Repairs Prevent Major Damage

What is a Repair Attempt? Any comment or action that counteracts the negativity in a fight and prevents a conversation from escalating. It can be anything that shifts a conversation toward the positive.

Examples can range anywhere from an outright apology to an empathetic remark or a statement of admiration. It can even be something humorous or something goofy. Specific examples might include statements such as: "I had no idea that you felt that way. I do apologize." to "I have always appreciated your ability to see beneath the surface of an issue." "I understand how gut-wrenching that must feel." would also qualify.

However, what determines the success of a repair attempt is *not* how it is made, but how it is received. Therefore, people who are friends or emotionally connected are more likely to experience successful repair during conflict.

To figure out how likely a repair attempt is to resonate with your spouse, ask yourself the following questions:

How strong is my connection with my spouse going into this fight?

How much quality time have I been able to spend with him/her lately?

How much have I been turning toward his/her bids for connection?

Have I been able to set aside distractions and respond to my spouse's attempts to connect, or has life been getting in the way?

The responses to these questions hold the answer to your capability as a couple to successfully navigate conflict and succeed in marriage.

Repair is about meeting each other in the moment. For that to happen, both spouses need the kind of knowledge about each other that comes from a daily habit of "turning toward."

The takeaway? If you and your spouse have been experiencing escalation in conflict, look at the flow of your days outside of conflict. Can you find more time to just be with each other and catch up on life? Can you make it a point to watch for your spouse's bids for connection and turn toward them?

Next week: The Language of Fighting Right