

Week 34

Five Fights That Everyone Has

Fight #4: The Standoff

Mistake: Competing to Win

In game theory, a zero-sum outcome is one in which a win by one person equals a loss by the other... In Poker, for instance, the number of chips you win is how many I lose. However, research has proved that many perceive nuanced and complex situations as zero-sum, even when they are not.

In conflict, we are vulnerable to this pattern of thought. Often, we try to win because we wholeheartedly believe that our way is the right way or the only way. **What we know about relationships is that if one person wins and the other person loses, both spouses lose!** As a matter of fact, the zero-sum approach to conflict not only hurts the marriage, but it damages physical health, especially in men.

The takeaway? The zero-sum dynamic is never going to benefit you. 84% of couples entering marital therapy struggled with chronic inability to find compromise. Zero-sum thinking is a trap that any couple can fall into at any time.

To sum it all up, research shows that the most successful couples, and the ones who do best in conflict, are those who can accept influence from each other.

Next week: Yielding to Win