

Week 36

Five Fights That Everyone Has - Fight #4

Collaborative Gain - Toward True Compromise

Having influence comes from being influenced, and so does cooperative gain. This is not a zero-sum trap!

The tool we will use to achieve compromise is called The Bagel Method. The purpose of The Bagel Method is to help couples in conflict find a true compromise, one that feels good to both parties.

Finally, 36 weeks into this series, we are at the Persuasion Phase of conflict, in which we are able to advance our point of view!

To do this, create a small circle within a larger circle, giving the appearance of a bagel on its side. Identify the non-negotiable aspects of your dream and write them in the inner circle. Write the flexible areas of your dream in the outer circle. There is often room for both dreams, depending on the flexibility of the spouses.

The Bagel Method is really about accepting influence and getting to compromise. When you pare down your dream to its essential core, and there is still some overlap with your spouse's essential components, it is time to re-examine your dreams and do the hard work of increasing areas of flexibility. Seek help, if necessary.

In relationships, we are not opponents. In the arena of love, we are best off not trying to win for ourselves, but by thinking for two. Instead of thinking, "What's in it for me in this situation?" we need to be thinking "What's best for us?" Our conflicts should have a sense that both spouses ultimately have each other's best interests at heart, even though we're disagreeing. In the end, our capacity to compromise successfully is based on our ability to trust.

Next week: Trust and Commitment