

Week 39

Five Fights That Everyone Has - Fight #5

Signs That You Need to Address a Past Issue

Researchers have found that people remember unfinished business 90% more accurately than a task they have been able to take to completion.

What are the implications for our marital fights?

1. When we have unfinished business with each other, such as not resolving a painful issue, we retain a blazingly clear memory of that fight. That fight is as vivid and sharp as if it happened yesterday. Plus, fights stored in long-term memory often contain trauma. When that memory is accessed, we often become flooded and feel as if the original fight is happening again.
2. The longer the fight remains unprocessed in our memory, the more likely it is to become distorted. The way we remember things happening becomes more biased in our favor.
3. Eventually, we end up with one fight and shared event for both spouses, but with two very different memories of what took place.

So, if we don't process the fight with our spouse, it won't go away. It will fester.

In summary, a bad fight left unprocessed will be like a pebble in your shoe. You can't just keep walking with it in there, limping along in pain. You must stop, sit down, and remove it.

Signs that you need to address a past issue:

1. Talking about it leads to more conflict.
2. Fighting about what actually happened in the fight.
3. You avoid the topic entirely and are talking and connecting less.
4. You fight more about unrelated stuff.
5. You are experiencing big reactions that seem to appear out of nowhere.

Next week: How to Process a Fight