

LEARNING TO FIGHT FAIR

Setting Up The Rules

- ▼ Agree to stick to one issue at a time.
- ▼ Agree to deal with the issue as quickly as possible then move on to other things.
- ▼ Agree that other people should not be part of the discussion. The two of you are the only ones who need to agree on the issue and resolve it.
- ▼ Agree to attack the issue, not each other.
- ▼ Agree on when to stop the discussion, and decide together when to resume.

Playing By The Rules

- ▼ Be aware of each other's feelings. Don't allow the "issue" to interfere with your respect for one another.
- ▼ Recognize when you've exhausted an issue. If you find yourselves repeating the same thing over and over, it's probably time to move on.
- ▼ Use "I" messages and feeling statements instead of "you." "You" statements may only make your spouse feel attacked.

- ▼ Give your full attention to the issue at hand. Turn off the TV or radio. If necessary, find a place to be alone with little interference.

The Rewards of Fighting Fair

Once you master the art of fighting fair, you begin to appreciate the benefits and rewards of a healthy relationship. Fighting, when done appropriately, is viewed as a healthy part of relationship building. The trick is to learn to master the game.

- ▼ Fighting, when handled in a positive way, can lead to greater intimacy.
- ▼ Fighting allows couples to gain insight into each other's feelings.
- ▼ Fighting brings couples closer together.
- ▼ Fighting helps in developing an awareness and respect for each other's needs.
- ▼ Fighting helps your relationship grow.

There does not have to be a winner and loser in every battle. When you master the art of fair fighting fair, both partners are winners.