

# Rules for Fair Fighting

## **RULE #1: NO DEGRADING LANGUAGE**

Avoid name-calling, insults, put-downs or swearing.

## **RULE #2: NO BLAMING**

It's pointless to blame each other. Blaming your spouse distracts you from solving the problem at hand. It invites your spouse to be defensive and it escalates the argument.

## **RULE #3: NO YELLING**

If it feels like yelling to your spouse, it probably is. Make a conscious effort to lower your voice.

## **RULE #4: NO USE OF FORCE**

Including pushing, shoving, grabbing, hitting, punching, slapping, restraining, damaging property, and throwing/breaking things. Each of us has a right to be safe & free of abuse.

## **RULE #5: NO TALK OF DIVORCE**

In the heat of an argument, threatening to leave the relationship is manipulative and hurtful. It makes the problems in your relationship seem much bigger than they need to be.

## **RULE #6: DEFINE YOURSELF, NOT YOUR SPOUSE**

Use words that describe how you feel, what you want and what is important to you - not what your partner feels, wants, or believes.

## **RULE #7: STAY IN THE PRESENT**

Keep your focus on what can be done today to resolve the issue at hand and go forward.

## **RULE #8: TAKE TURNS SPEAKING**

Let one person speak at a time. When one speaks, the other should be listening—really listening, not just planning their rebuttal. Take turns speaking and listening so that you both have a chance to say what you need.

## **RULE #9: WHEN NECESSARY, USE TIME-OUTS**

Remember: No amount of talking will lead to problem-solving if you are not in a state of mind for solving problems.