

WHY CAN'T WE JUST GET ALONG?

Good Conflict Resolution...

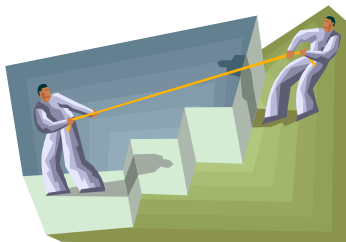
Successful conflict resolution is the single most important skill that a couple can develop in order to have a successful marriage, according to leading marriage expert and researcher, Dr. John Gottman, Ph.D.

Gottman's research shows that it is how couples communicate while resolving conflicts that determines if their marriage fails or succeeds. Couples with successful marriages begin such discussions in a positive manner, stick to fixing only solvable problems, find workable solutions, and quickly repair any damage done to the relationship during a fight.

On the other hand, couples whose marriages are struggling

tend to begin conversations in a negative way, criticize and attack their spouse personally, act defensively, don't take responsibility for their actions, don't repair damage done after a fight, and rewrite the history of their relationship in a negative light.

In a successful marriage, couples have a structure to their fights. First they set an agenda. Second, they listen to each other's perspectives and persuasive arguments. Thirdly, they come up with a resolution to the issues at hand.



Four keys to improving your marriage during times of conflict according to Gottman, are:

1. Learn to stay calm during a disagreement.
2. Be non-defensive by listening and being positive.
3. Validate your spouse's ideas and feelings
4. Master the communication skills involved in having a fair and smart fight.

Although compatibility may play a role in falling in love, it's how couple's resolve conflicts that determines if the love in the marriage fades or grows stronger.

By Jennifer Reisel, MSW, LCSW

RESOURCES—

Web pages to enjoy...

www.marriagemissions.com

www.marriagetools.com

Books to enjoy...

Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work
by John Gottman

The Power of Two—Secrets to a Strong and Loving Marriage
by Susan Heitler

Getting the Love You Want—A Guide for Couples by Harville Hendrix (A workbook is also available for this resource)

SOMETHING TO PONDER.....

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body.

Colossians 3:12-15.

Forgiveness does not mean ignoring what has been done or putting a false label on an evil act. It means, rather, that the evil act no longer remains as a barrier to the relationship. Forgiveness is a catalyst creating the atmosphere necessary for a fresh start and a new beginning. It is the lifting of a burden or the canceling of a debt.

Martin Luther King Jr.

UPCOMING EVENTS...

Theology on Tap

Join single and married adults in their 20s and 30s for this four week speaker series designed to answer many of your questions. Theology -on-Tap runs from July 9-August 3, 2006. All sessions begin at 7:00 p.m.

You'll hear engaging presenters, have an opportunity to ask questions about your faith and Church, and meet new people in a fun, relaxed atmosphere.

Topics include:

- Deus Caritas Est: Unpacking Pope Benedict's First Encyclical
- Dei Verbum: Back to the Biblical Buffet of Vatican II's nourishing Entrees and Side Dishes
- Heaven, Hell, Purgatory and Limbo
- Understanding our Jewish Roots
- Lost! Finding Your Way in the Bible

For a complete list of sites, topics, presenters and directions, go to www.crossconnected.org or www.archmil.org First time? Call 414-769-3362



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