



Resolving Conflict in an Intimate Relationship

Spend a few minutes reviewing a recent disagreement with your partner that did not have a satisfactory outcome...

Now answer the following questions:

- What were you thinking?
- What did you feel?
- Did you experience the need to defend yourself? If so, what defensive behavior did you use? Angry verbal attack? Silence? Refusal to listen?
- Did you turn the situation around and blame him or her?
- Were you able to look at the issue objectively?

- Did you stick to the cause of the conflict or drag in other times or examples to support your position?
- Did you feel hurt or unfairly victimized?
- Did you find you were always being made to feel that you were the one in the wrong?

Close your eyes and picture the scene again, only this time avoid blaming anyone. Don't drag in old conflicts or behaviors; stick to the issue and see how you could have resolved the conflict by using a more positive approach and really considering the other person's views. Create a satisfactory outcome. Finally, make yourself a promise to use this approach the next time you get into an argument or conflict.

To build on your relationship:

- Value it
- Learn to be content with the one who shares your life—searching mentally for someone better or different rarely works. The grass on the other side of the fence isn't any greener; it's only your perception.
- Avoid comparisons.
- Exercise tolerance—most people don't set out to cause aggravation, to upset or hurt, but we are all human with all the frailties that go with being human.
- Use forgiveness—it offers wonderful healing.