**Fair Fighting? What Does That Look Like is an interesting question.**

Fair Fighting? What Does That Look Like is an interesting question. How do we fight? Are we respectful, or must we win at any cost?

Conflict is healthy and an essential part of intimacy. But if we fight unfairly, we run the risk of losing intimacy, causing resentments, and losing our relationship.

We may not always communicate respectfully and healthily. Each partner must look at how they may do disrespectful behaviors. Some unhealthy behaviors may include - belittling, being self-righteous, name-calling, yelling, hitting, threatening to end the relationship, or saying hurtful remarks to our partner. It is helpful to look at the feeling that may come from the way we fight unfairly. Do we feel fear, anxiety, or shame? Are we modeling behaviors that we would want our children to follow?

Figuring out our new behaviors and general rules are the key – Here are just a few suggestions on ways to fight fair:

* We won’t start arguments after 11 pm or before 9 am – since we are both too tired or not awake to fight fairly
* Using I Statements to express our needs, feelings, and boundaries.
* Having a time limit on the arguments, and when time is up, we agree to reschedule a time to continue the dispute.
* We can call a time-out or take breaks.
* We can agree to avoid dramatic exits and to refrain from physical abuse.
* We agree not to threaten divorce or permanent separation.
* We will not name call, shame, cause damage, use offensive language
* If one of us needs an individual time-out to get in touch with feelings, to think about things, or to feel safe, we can say, “ This is not about my leaving the coupleship or avoiding the conflict issue, but I am taking a break and will be back. Can we meet in one hour, or tomorrow morning.
* If we can’t fight fair, we use a sponsor couple or therapist to discuss the disagreement.
* Some couples have “insolvable issues” Not every situation has to be solved. Agree to disagree

The goal is to express and hear the anger in a healthy way — the ability to resolve conflict and fight fairly is a great gift of intimacy.

Discuss ways you have fought and the positive techniques you have used to change the dynamics to make it a healthier discussion of hearing each other.

Paraphrased from RCA 12 Step Program pg 347- 352