



HALF FULL



social science for raising happy kids



How To Fight

HERE ARE THREE THINGS THAT COUPLES IN HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS DO TO RESOLVE CONFLICT POSITIVELY. REMEMBER, WHAT IS GOOD FOR YOUR PARTNERSHIP IS ALSO GOOD FOR YOUR KIDS.

- (1) *Sugar-coat your complaints a little bit*, like you would with a good friend whose feelings you don't want to hurt.

- (2) *Calm down already*. Take a break from the discussion if it gets too heated. Agree on a time to get back together and re-open discussion. Then go do something to get your mind off the fight for a little while. If you know how to meditate, this is the time to do it. Whatever you do, don't go off into some corner to sulk, or plot out your winning arguments. Come back to the discussion calm.

- (3) *Master the art of compromise*. This means you need to accept the influence of your partner, even if at first you think he or she is being totally irrational. Researcher John Gottman recommends the "Aikido principle: Yield to win." This is the simple fact that if you want to "win" an argument, you cannot simply counter everything your "opponent" says: this will only escalate the fight. You want your partner to agree with at least some of your argument; one way to do this is to find something you agree with in what he or she is saying **first**.

For more information, see *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work: A Practical Guide from the Country's Foremost Relationship Expert* by John M. Gottman & Nan Silver.