



## **FAIR FIGHTING RULES**

**Rodgers Christian Counseling**

10430 Park Rd Ste 200, Charlotte, NC 28210

704 364-9176

Rodgerscc.com



1. No threats during the argument.
2. No blanket or labeling judgments, such as “you are stupid,” “thoughtless,” “domineering” and so on.
3. Stay on topic. Save other topics for other arguments. Focus on specific behaviors.
4. Cannot interrupt, stay on same eye level. Check to make sure you have heard the other correctly before responding.
5. Cannot use “never” or “always.”
6. Must stay in the present tense- past tense reference is usually utilized to prove one point to “win.” Just because we acted a certain way in the past does not necessitate that we will act that way in the future. Deal with here and now issues. What is in the past can’t be changed.
7. Don’t argue in the dark.
8. Cannot walk away or leave the house while you are arguing without the other’s permission.
9. No finger pointing- it makes the recipient feel lectured to.
10. Take responsibility for change.
11. Take responsibility for feeling the way you do. Rather than saying, “You make me so...,” try “I am mad,” instead. It is enough to take responsibility for the messages you are sending (“I” language), rather than speaking for the other person (telling them what they are feeling or thinking). Instead, say what you feel about specific behaviors (e.g. “I feel hurt when you are late and don’t call. I would like for you to call me when you are running late”).
12. If we suspect an argument is developing, we will write down the topic or problem. This can help families to stay on the topic and help them to manage (control) their own process.
13. Over-dramatization (or Greek Tragedy) is not helpful. This makes decisions life and death issues, whereas the reality is that few decisions revolve around our existence or non-existence.
14. Each person has the right to take time out to collect thoughts through written materials.
15. Know what you are fighting about, what is the real issue- petty or more serious?
16. Approach it with a problem-solving attitude.
17. Don’t say things that are so critical or attacking that the other has no recourse but to run away or retaliate.
18. Don’t store up feelings and then gunny-sack (dump the entire bag of accumulated resentments at once).
19. Be honest- yes, it sometimes hurts. Check out assumptions. Just because your partner and you have been living together a long time, you can never be sure what she/he is feeling or thinking at any specific moment. People grow and change and are variable. Moreover, just because someone loves you, they can’t necessarily know what you want.
20. Who is right? Neither. There are only differences, not right/wrong views. Don’t try to win but try to solve the problem. Approach with the idea that both partners will win and both will benefit and neither one will be harmed.