

Guidelines for Good Conflict Resolution

This exercise will help you discern the kind of marriage partners the two of you may be. It is a list of what you and your partner should be doing when you have disagreements.

Read each statement. Then on each blank line, record the number that corresponds to how often you and your partner practice this rule for effective conflict resolution. Use this scale:

- “I never do this” = 4**
- “I seldom do this” = 3**
- “I sometimes do this” = 2**
- “I frequently do this” = 1**
- “I always do this” = 0**

	You	Mate
1. When a disagreement or problem arises, I focus on what is happening and what I should do to correct it instead of trying to understand what my partner does.	_____	_____
2. When a problem arises, I am ready to admit that I may be part of the problem. I focus on what I am doing wrong, rather than on what my partner is doing wrong.	_____	_____
3. I realize I cannot change my partner; that he/she must want to change or all my efforts will compound the problem rather than solve the problem.	_____	_____
4. I realize that love is not primarily a feeling, but actions calculated to serve, please and help my partner in a God-honoring way.	_____	_____
5. I focus my attention on changing my own behavior, attitudes, reactions and responses toward my partner. I plan specific, attainable, repeatable, positive change I can make.	_____	_____
6. I am constantly working to develop and maintain a good communication system. I know that relationships are hindered when there is not communication or the wrong kind of communication.	_____	_____
7. I am working to develop and maintain many commonalties with my partner, including common projects, common interests and common recreational activities. I do a variety of activities with him/her. I am creative in the expression of my love and appreciation of him/her.	_____	_____
8. I recognize and allow for differences between my partner and me. I know men and women tend to view things differently.	_____	_____
9. I regularly practice the Golden Rule as stated in Matthew 7:12. I treat my partner as I want to be treated.	_____	_____
10. I major on the positive qualities of my partner and our relationship rather than focus on the negative. I emphasize our commonalties rather than our differences. (Philippians 4:8)	_____	_____
11. I practice the principle laid down in Luke 6:34-35. I give and serve, expecting nothing in return.	_____	_____
12. I keep current. I deal with one problem at a time. I don't continue to have reruns on arguments from the past. I forgive and forget. (Matthew 6:34; Ephesians 4:26)	_____	_____
13. I try to maintain a close relationship with God through Jesus Christ. (John 14:6; 1 John 4:21; Matthew 22:37-39; Ephesians 5:21-33)	_____	_____

After you finish this exercise, count the number of 0 and 1 answers you gave and mark the number on the appropriate line below. Next, count the number of answers you gave with the numbers 2, 3, or 4. Record that number on the appropriate line below.

	You	Mate
Number of 0 and 1 answers	_____	_____
Number of 2, 3, and 4 answers	_____	_____

This exercise describes thirteen principles for good conflict resolution in your relationship with your partner and in your dealings with other people. It describes how you can be the kind of marriage partner God wants you to be. If you honestly answered several of the statements with a 2, 3, or 4; plan how you can change in order to answer those statements with a 0 or a 1. The more 0's and 1's you have, the better will be your relationship with your partner and with others. Chances are that after you are married, you will begin to treat your spouse the way you treat others.