

# Rules of Engagement

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# The Alignment

## ACTIVITY SHEET



Everyone has disagreements from time to time. However, if disagreements and quarrels are frequent, intense, and not handled well, they can strain and even destroy relationships. Hence, learning effective conflict resolution and problem-solving skills is an important way to safeguard your relationship.



### SESSION OBJECTIVES

**This Rules of Engagement session is designed to help you:**

- (a)** better understand the nature of disagreements and quarrels
- (b)** learn effective conflict resolution skills that promote unity
- (c)** develop and implement effective problem-solving strategies

# My way versus yours

When ideology, understanding or viewpoint differs, how do you respond? What you think, typically triggers an emotional response. How you feel, in turn influences your actions. When emotions get in the way of rational discussion, couples often resort to attack and defence tactics. When frustration levels rise, battle lines can be drawn. If you are not careful, words can become weapons, and you may end up wounding the one you love.



## How effective do you think you are when speaking and listening to your fiancé?

THINK	FEEL	ACTION	HIM	HER
They don't get it. How can they even believe that? It's just not right.	<b>INDIGNANT</b>	Fight for what you believe is right.		
What they are saying is incorrect, but they'll be mad if I correct them.	<b>ANXIOUS</b>	Tip toe around the topic, nod in agreement, try change the topic.		
They never listen to me. What's the point in even trying to explain?	<b>UPSET</b>	Take offense and shut down or withdraw from conversation.		
They're driving me crazy. It's so unreasonable what they're saying.	<b>FRUSTRATED</b>	Speak in a flustered manner, with an exacerbated tone.		
I can't seem to get a word in. Even if I do, it only makes things worse.	<b>HELPLESS</b>	Disconnect from discussion. Stop communicating. Retreat within.		
They interrupt or dismiss anything I say. I can't get my point across.	<b>ANNOYED</b>	Raise voice, use sharp words or forceful actions.		
Their ideas are so immature, basic or lacking in intelligence.	<b>SUPERIOR</b>	Talk at them, not to them. Control the conversation or educate.		
I don't quite understand but it sounds so compelling. I hate that.	<b>INSECURE</b>	Instead of arguing the point, you attack their character.		
I'm unlikely to win this argument. I hate losing. They made me so mad.	<b>ANGRY</b>	Dismiss any opposing ideas and shut down the conversation.		

**NO ARGUMENT IS EVER REALLY ABOUT THE TOPIC, RATHER, FRUSTRATIONS FLAIR BECAUSE OF THE EMOTION BEHIND THE TOPIC.**





**AS YOUR EMOTIONS INCREASE, YOUR INTELLIGENCE DECREASES. AS A CONSEQUENCE, YOU MAY END UP MISTAKING YOUR LOVED ONE FOR THE ENEMY. BUT YOUR FIGHT IS NOT WITH YOUR FIANCÉ; YOUR BATTLE IS NOT AGAINST FLESH AND BLOOD, BUT RATHER...**

**“...against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places”.**

Ephesians 6:12 (NKJV)

**THE BEST WAY TO WIN ANY BATTLE IS TO COME INTO ALIGNMENT.**

# Effective problem-solving.

When resolving arguments, dealing with disagreements, or managing misunderstandings, your primary objective should not be to 'get your way', rather to 'pave the way' for a peaceful and successful resolution.

## 01

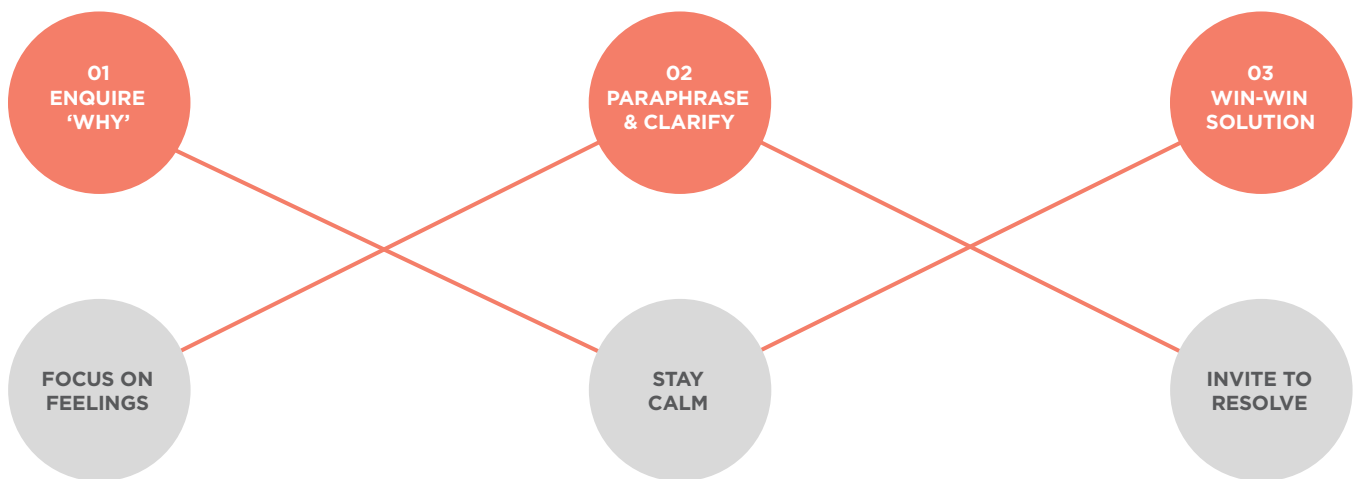
So instead of "Why?!", simply enquire, "Help me to understand, why do you feel so strongly about this?"

## 02

"So, If I understand you correctly, what you're saying is that you feel xxxx because xxxx... Is that right?"

## 03

"OK, so what kind of a win-win solution do you think we can come up with that will help you feel better about this issue, but that will also help me xxxx..."



**01 Seek to understand why your partner holds so strongly to their particular view. Communicate with a tone that conveys a genuine desire to see from their perspective.**

Stay calm as you enquire - manage your own emotions. Leave frustration at the door.

**02 Paraphrase (summarise and repeat) their emotional reasoning with respect.**

Identify the feeling that's fuelling their thought (i.e. the why behind their what). In doing so, you'll not only identify the real challenge, but you'll validate their emotional experience. You still may not agree, but you'll convey, "what you're saying is important".

**03 Work towards a mutually beneficial win-win solution and remember to ultimately prioritise connection rather than correction or winning.**

Discipline yourself - Don't offer advice, propose solutions or tell them what you think is best. Rather, get them to make the first offer on the table. This extends grace and generosity, and also effectively fast-tracks a resolution. Whoever bargains second has an advantage.



IN MARRIAGE, BECAUSE WE  
ARE TO BECOME “AS ONE”,  
IF ONE PARTY LOSES, WE  
BOTH LOSE! THEREFORE...

**“Catch all the  
foxes, those little  
foxes, before they  
ruin the vineyard  
of love...”**

Song of Solomon 2:15 (NLT)



## DISCUSSION POINTS

Identify one or two things related to your wedding day, perhaps preparation or a decision to be made (e.g. who is going to be invited, where it should be, what kind of cake, or budget for the dress). Take turns sharing your preferences and take time to understand each other's perspective. If you come across any hidden lumps or bumps, practise using the 3-step problem solving plan to smooth things out.

HIS VIEW	HER VIEW	OUR VIEW › WIN-WIN



### NOTE: EXERCISE CAUTION

Talking about issues that are potentially divisive requires maturity and wisdom. Rather than arguing, quarrelling or fighting, this is a time to practice your 3-step problem solving plan. The goal of this exercise is to learn effective conflict resolution that will ultimately serve to project your marriage in years to come. Remember, learning a new skill takes time. So be kind and extend grace.