

Conflict Resolution

Out-of-Control Anger

Yelling . . . Looking and feeling out-of-control
Words are spoken to hurt the other rather than **to solve the problem**
Wanting to physically strike something or someone

1. If Person A or B needs to cool down, take a “time-out.” But first, agree upon a time to meet later when you think you’ll both be able to respectfully communicate the reasons for your anger, and solutions or requests for change. (Undo old habits—role-play **before** a conflict.)
2. Initially, during the “time-out” **move around physically**. E.g., Go for a walk, clean out the garage, etc. Deepen your breathing—let your abdomen rise and fall.
3. Later, while alone, imagine, in detail, the positive outcome of your conversation. If you cannot even **imagine** what a positive outcome might look like, and feel like, then take “time-out” until you can.
4. Concise, clear communication is essential. Clarify your thoughts and feelings by answering the five questions on the worksheet on the following page.
5. Just before you meet, review the single problem that you have identified. Prepare to offer solutions and to be open to your partner’s solutions. Then, imagine in vivid detail, the positive outcome of your conversation. Finally, imagine an extreme exaggeration of this positive outcome.

Persons A & B: At the agreed upon time, set aside an hour to communicate your feelings and your view of the situation in a respectful manner, and especially, in a **respectful tone** of voice. Make your meeting pleasant. E.g., Face one another on either end of a couch and enjoy a relaxing beverage. **Don’t rush one another.**

Person A: (After both complete a centering prayer) Express three things that you truly appreciate about Person B. Include former and recent actions. Next, share your worksheet answers. Then, put away the written material and express direct, clear communication of your anger, frustration, or **hurt**.

Clearly describe **one** specific problem. Focus on the identified problem only. Person B listens with interest and loving intent and then rephrases A’s communication—both the feelings and the content. E.g., “**Correct me if I’m wrong but it sounds like you’re feeling**... And, it sounds like you’re saying... **Is that correct?**” If not, then Person A expresses the feelings and problem with even greater clarity, conciseness, and kindness. Person B rephrases again.

During discussions, **express empathy** even if you have *unknowingly* hurt your partner.

Conclude by expressing three things that you truly appreciate about Person B. Then, reverse roles. Finally, brainstorm win-win solutions together.

Conflict Resolution — Worksheet

Answer the following questions to clarify your thoughts and feelings and to create a positive climate for conflict resolution:

- 1** Describe in detail, the **positive outcome** of your conversation. How do you both look physically? How do you act and feel once this problem has been resolved?
- 2** What emotion is your anger covering up? Hurt? Betrayal? Insult? Outrage? Discouragement? Loneliness? Fear? Frustration?
- 3** What is the real source of your anger? What has happened or has not happened? Clearly describe **one specific** problem.
- 4** What is the unfulfilled need that you have?
- 5** Focus on the identified problem **only**. What constructive, alternative actions can you or your conflict resolution partner take? Brainstorm possible solutions.

NOTE: If either you or your partner is not experiencing respect and trust (E.g., An attacking, hurtful approach or a sullen, uncommunicative approach is taken), then **this problem** must be resolved **before** the identified problem can be. A counselor who is well-recommended may be able to assist you.

Romantic Relationships

Exercise A — UNDERSTANDING YOUR RELATIONSHIP

TOPIC OUTLINE

What Do You Have In Common?

Admiration

Love . . . Respect . . . Support

Validation . . . Problem-Solving

Emotional Health

Growth & Change . . . Intellectual Compatibility

Friends . . . Family . . . Community

Responsibilities & Chores

Other Subjects Addressed in Dream & Life Coaching

Parenting

Communication

Conflict Resolution

Perceptions

Conflict Resolution Skills

Physical . . . Sexuality

Romance

Relationship Weaknesses

Relationship Strengths

Meditation for Guidance

Dream Insight

Dream Description

What Do You Have In Common?

Are X's values compatible with your own? Elaborate.

Do you have compatible goals? Do you have one-year relationship goals? Five-year, ten-year, twenty-year, and post retirement? Elaborate. (You and X may also want to compare your answers on the *Goal Visualization Exercise & Creating An Inspiring Life Mission*.)

Do you share similar views concerning political issues? Elaborate.

Do you share similar views concerning spiritual matters? Elaborate.

Are your daily habits compatible? (Eating, Sleeping, Exercise, TV, Computer use, Personal cleanliness, Neatness, Socializing)

Are your hobbies compatible? (Drumming, pets, messy paints, etc.) Elaborate.

Do you have a majority of shared interests? List them.

Do you have interests that, though differing, add to your relationship? Elaborate.

What are your dissimilar interests? List them.

Admiration

Does X admire you—Intellectually? List the ways. Elaborate.

Does X admire you—Spiritually? List the ways. Elaborate.

Does X admire you—Physically? List the ways. Elaborate.

Does X admire you—Emotionally? List the ways. Elaborate.

Do you admire X—Intellectually? List the ways. Elaborate.

Do you admire X—Spiritually? List the ways. Elaborate.

Do you admire X—Physically? List the ways. Elaborate.

Do you admire X—Emotionally? List the ways. Elaborate.

Love

Does X find you uniquely lovable? List the ways. Elaborate.

Do you find X uniquely lovable? List the ways. Elaborate.

Is X someone who consistently shows you tender love non-verbally? (Facial expressions, gestures, posture, affectionate actions, etc.) Elaborate.

Is X someone who happily takes on the role of care-giver when you are very fatigued, blue, ill, or just in need of lots of TLC?

Is X someone who frequently expresses passionate love? Elaborate.

Is X someone who expresses passion in ways you absolutely love? Elaborate.

Respect

Is X someone who consistently shows you deep respect verbally? Elaborate.

Is X someone who consistently shows you deep respect non-verbally? (Facial expressions, gestures, posture, actions, etc.) Elaborate.

When others are around, is X someone who is animated with others and polite to you, but, when you're alone, acts very differently toward you? Elaborate.

Support

When times are tough, does X encourage rather than blame? Elaborate.

List the ways you have praised X today. List the ways X has praised you.

Does X encourage you in your creative interests, friendships, outlook, etc.? Elaborate.

Validation

Does X validate your emotions? Elaborate.

Does X often tell you that you're foolish to feel as you do? Does X scoff at what you say? Elaborate.

When you express various emotions, does X respond to you and express empathy or joy through words and gestures? Elaborate.

Problem-Solving

Does X take a "Can do" attitude to solving problems? Elaborate.

Does X tend to blame you when there is a problem? Elaborate.

Does X frequently make encouraging comments while you are solving a problem?

Does X remain kind when you are working together on chores? Does X often try to lighten things up with humor you enjoy? Elaborate.

Does X remain kind when you are solving a difficult or tedious problem together?

Does X remain kind when s/he experiences a delay or frustration of any kind? Does X try to lighten things up with humor you enjoy? Elaborate.

Emotional Health

Is X generally predictable—moods, behavior, attitude? Elaborate.

Is X honest and open? Elaborate.

Does X have integrity? Elaborate.

Is X someone you deeply trust? Elaborate.

Is X tender-hearted? Elaborate.

Is X someone who knows how to laugh and have fun? Elaborate.

Is X emotionally healthy? Elaborate.

Does X know how to enjoy life? Elaborate.

Can X see life's positive possibilities? Elaborate.

Is X disciplined in most areas of life? Elaborate.

Growth & Change

Is X someone who is growing spiritually? Elaborate.

Is X someone who is growing intellectually? Elaborate.

Does X bring novelty and change to your relationship? Elaborate.

Is there too much or too little change? Elaborate.

Does X take some risks and challenge and stretch her/himself? Elaborate.

What are X's three key gifts? Does X actively develop the gifts s/he has? Elaborate.

Intellectual Compatibility

Is X stimulating intellectually? Elaborate.

How long does X like to discuss ideas? Do you feel it is enough? Elaborate.

Does X discount your ideas? Elaborate.

Does X truly listen to your ideas and discuss them with humor, warmth, and respect?

Friends

Are most of your friends shared? Do your friends love & admire you both? Elaborate.

Does X have friends that you enjoy a lot? Does X enjoy your friends? Elaborate.

Does X have friends that you admire a lot? Does X admire your friends? Elaborate.

Do you or X spend so much time alone with friends that discord results? Elaborate.

Family

Are your families of origin a natural fit? Elaborate.

Spiritual seeking through church, prayer, meditation, poetry, reading ...

Spiritual expression through community action, the arts, church, writing ...

Approach to physical fitness ...

Emotional support ...

Intellectual interests ...

Political values ...

Community

How is X involved with the community? How are you? Elaborate.

Responsibilities & Chores

Does X often avoid doing unpleasant tasks, pass them off to others, or share them? Elaborate.

Are chores allocated (or will be) according to gender stereotypes? Elaborate.

Chores that you typically do (or anticipate doing)	Time spent each week
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Total time —	

Chores that X typically does (or anticipates doing)	Time spent each week
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<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
Total time —	

Chores that are shared equally (or will be shared equally)—in respect to time:

When you compare notes, is this division of responsibilities a source of discord or satisfaction? Elaborate.