

10 TIPS FOR COUPLES WHO WANT TO QUIT QUARRELING

1. Trade your pride in for humility.

Nobody is right 100% of the time, so stop pretending that you're the exception to this rule. Be willing to look at things from your spouse's perspective. **Put at least as much effort into understanding the other's viewpoint as you put into articulating your own.** How many marriages have been destroyed by the stubborn refusal of either or both parties to humbly extend such basic considerations?

"Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." – Proverbs 16:18

2. Give up the right to have the last word.

Have you ever known (or been married to) someone who insists on always having the last word? It can be super-annoying, can't it? Don't be that person. Once you have gently explained your point of view, **challenge yourself to remain quiet and voluntarily grant that last-word privilege to your spouse.**

"To keep your marriage brimming, with love in the wedding cup, whenever you're wrong, admit it; whenever you're right, shut up." – Ogden Nash

3. Stay calm, especially when your spouse is stirred up.

It's almost inevitable that your spouse will occasionally do or say something that irritates you, yet it's important to keep those feelings of annoyance from turning into anger — particularly when the irritation is mutual. The Bible warns us not to let our anger control us ([Ephesians 4:26](#)).

It is bad enough when one of you gives into anger; **if you both lose your temper at once, the potential for damage is doubled**, so take a deep breath, count to ten, and do whatever it takes to keep a cool head.

"A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger." – Proverbs 15:1

4. Don't belabor the point.

Make it your aim to communicate your thoughts clearly and concisely. That is a goal over which you have some measure of control. Convincing the other person to agree with you completely or to abandon their viewpoint in favor of your own, isn't — and if you make it your goal, you will be setting yourself up for frustration and disappointment.

"You don't need to drive it in and break it off." – Advice given to me whenever I'd persisted on getting a point across.

5. Be quick to apologize.

"Be ye angry, and sin not. Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." (Ephesians 4:26) That's how the Bible advises us to deal with our anger. That gives you only a few hours to bury the hatchet before bedtime, so **if you've had a spat, don't wait for your spouse to make the first move toward reconciliation.** Accept whatever blame belongs to you and apologize without pointing fingers.

"Love means never hesitating to say you're sorry." – My edited version of Erich Segal's famous quote

6. Forgive without being asked.

You should forgive your spouse freely, as frequently as you are asked to do so (Matthew 18:21-22), but don't feel like you have to wait for an apology before extending forgiveness. When you forgive — even (especially) if it is unsolicited — you **protect your own heart from bitterness and resentment and keep your conscience clear toward God**, who promises to forgive us as we forgive others (Matthew 6:14-15)

"A happy marriage is the union of two good forgivers." – Ruth Bell Graham

7. Anticipate problems in advance.

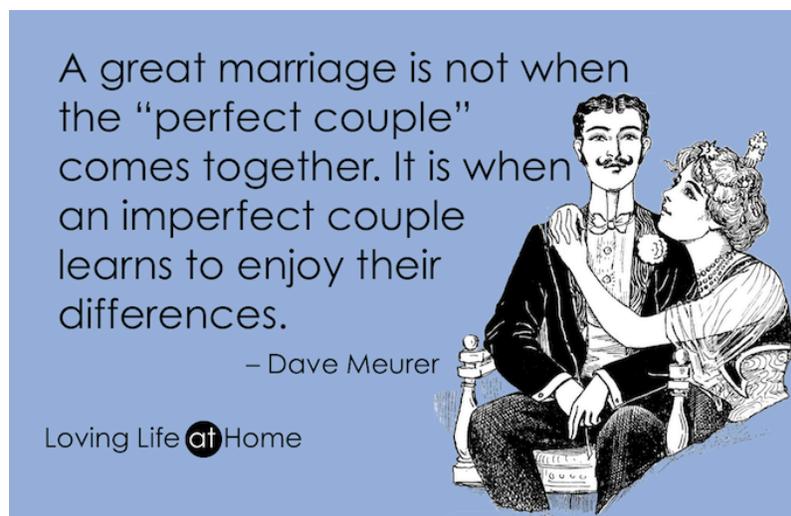
With a little forethought, you can resolve many problems before they crop up. **Identify common argument triggers and agree on an appropriate course of action beforehand.** If you know that it puts your husband on edge when the house is a wreck, try to keep things neat for his peace of mind. Or if you know that your wife doesn't like for you to look at his phone while driving, pull over when receive a call or when sending texts.

"The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with." – **Proverbs 17:14**

8. Embrace your differences.

Men and women are inherently different, not only in the way their bodies are made, but in the way they think and act and in what they value. *"Different is not necessarily wrong, it's just... different."* **Stop trying to change your spouse to be more like you and learn instead to embrace those differences.** Adapt to them. Be grateful for them. Celebrate the fact they exist. Life would be pretty boring if they didn't.

"Vive la différence!" – Popular French saying which means long live the difference (between the sexes)



9. Confront sin carefully.

Of course, not all differences in behavior are a matter of taste, preference, or opinion. Sometimes our differences are rooted in sin. If such a power is at play in your marriage (and to some degree, sin rears its ugly head in every relationship), you may need to address the matter with your spouse. **Do so in a firm but loving way, and pray for wisdom and the right words to say before you broach the subject** (James 1:5). Be specific. Don't generalize. Seek forgiveness for anything you've done that may have contributed to the problem (see #5 above), then leave room for the Holy Spirit to work in your spouse's heart, convicting of sin and drawing unto repentance (2 Corinthians 7:9).

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." – Galatians 6:1

10. If you must argue, argue naked.

There are several advantages to having a difficult discussion in the nude: First, you are less likely to storm out of the house in the middle of it, slamming doors as you leave. Second, being naked puts you both in an exposed, vulnerable position, and tempers are less likely to flare when that is the case. Third, if you don't have any clothes on, you are one step closer to making up when peace is restored. And fourth, **seeing one another naked may inspire you to skip the argument altogether and enjoy some physical intimacy instead.** Once all the resultant endorphins are circulating in your system, you may find the things that were irritating you earlier no longer even matter to your post-sex brain. So it's a win-win!

"Make love, not war." – Slogan coined by the hippie generation of the 1960's.