



An Often-Forgotten Piece of Conflict Resolution

When we get in a conflict with another person, we often go on the defensive. We ready ourselves with our reasons, our opinions, and our certainty that we are right! However, most of us give very little thought to the **atmosphere** in which our conflicts happen. When you have a conflict with someone, is it frightening? Even if you are not frightened for your physical well-being, are you frightened for your emotional well-being?

Specifically, are you afraid that your loved one will insult you, call you names, or yell? Will he or she bring up past issues? Will you be unfairly accused? Will he or she withdraw their love?

Or will you have a calm, mature discussion between equals? Will you both listen and try to truly understand the other person? Will you put your defenses aside for the sake of seeking a solution?

Why the Atmosphere Matters

If you are experiencing the first description above, you probably dread any conflict, even a small one. And with good reason. However, if the second description is true of you, chances are good that you don't run from conflict. Of course you don't enjoy it, but you know it is a necessary part of a close relationship, and you are confident that the problems can be worked out without either person getting battle scars.

The atmosphere in which conflict occurs matters. It makes a difference. Conflict left unresolved will grow until an explosion occurs, or apathy occurs, both of which are destructive to relationships.

What is your atmosphere? For your part, do you make it safe for your spouse to come to you with problems? Do people know they can come to you with a difference of opinion or something that needs to be settled, and they will be treated with respect? Do you approach it as if you are part of a team, looking for a solution?

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Help is Available!

When I work with couples, one of my favorite topics to work on is conflict resolution. I teach a ten-step model for resolving conflict in a safe, calm atmosphere. I love to see the difference it makes in couples' lives. It impacts how they relate to each other in those touchy moments when feelings are on the line. It enables couples to really move forward with the tools they need to handle conflicts when they arise in the future (and they will.)

It has been said by many relationship experts that having conflict is not the problem; the way the conflict is handled is often the problem. When you work to create a safe and calm atmosphere, you can face conflict with confidence.



About the Author: *Carrie Hoffman is a professionally trained Life Coach, specializing in helping couples build and maintain a strong marriage during their busiest parenting years. She provides coaching for couples and has spoken at numerous moms' groups in the Denver area. If you enjoyed this article, visit www.EmbraceLifeCoach.com to receive a FREE Special Report "How to Speak so Your Spouse Will Listen." You can also contact Carrie at Info@EmbraceLifeCoach.com or 303-916-7845 for a complimentary consultation if you are curious about relationship coaching.*

