Kiss & Make-up; Keys to a Friendly Fight

Written by Nadine Toren

Television personality and AZfoothills.com columnist Nadine Toren is scouring the area, finding savvy Valley features, bringing readers "on the scene." Every day she'll introduce you to celebrities, athletes, and give you an inside look into local events and hot spots. She'll touch on topical issues, and keep AZ fans posted on all the big talkers around town.

Having trouble in paradise? Check out how you can successfully manage the occasional argument with your man.

Kiss and make-up…that's the beauty of getting in a verbal brawl with your baby.

A little tiff here and there is inevitable; in fact, an occasional friendly fight is actually healthy among couples, according to many experts.

"You can't keep your issues bottled up," said Joann Cohen, Valley relationship consultant.

Yep, most of us are guilty as charged—we've all had our issues "explode" one way or another. However, we can breathe easy; infrequent fights are normal.

Joann Cohen runs a Scottsdale-based relationship consultation business. She's constantly sought out by Valley girls and guys in need of assistance dealing with the downs of a marriage or partnership. She says successful couples cannot avoid sporadic disagreements, and they actually necessary in addressing crucial issues.

"You have to keep things constructive and not get crazy," said Cohen.

Her advice: leave the psycho comments and emotional tears on the doorstep. Instead, determine effective "rules" of fighting.

"Don't be jealous of your friend who says she never fights with her husband. She is not immune to divorce."

Turns out, Cohen says studies show the style of fighting mechanism can predict how likely your happily-ever-after will end in divorce.

The study surveyed more than 300 couples over 16 years. By the 16th year, Cohen says 46% opted for divorce, while 54% remained in marital bliss.

The study identified the fighting style most likely to result in divorce was when one person acted constructive, and the other person withdrew. She says constructive fighting (an A+ technique) is when couples resolve issues in a calm, collected manner; while those who withdraw disconnect either emotionally or physically.

"The style you'll want to avoid completely is destructive fighting; that is screaming, throwing things, slamming cupboards, etc. This is what commonly leads to divorce."

But of course, our favorite love expert is coming to the rescue. Cohen has four key tips to having (and getting through) a successful fight.

1. No name calling. While this seems obvious, we all know what happens in the heat of the moment. Remember, once the words are out, there's no taking them back. As difficult as it may seem, try truly thinking before you speak.

2. Don't attack your partner. Truth be told, you know what makes your man (or woman) tick. Instead of provoking a messy situation, stick to the issue and don't be mean.

3. Attempt understanding the other person's view. When someone feels they are being heard, you will often get a much better result. Rather than trying to prove yourself right, ask questions so you can comprehend what your loved one is conveying.

4. Respect one another's "cool-off" time. If things get too heated, take a break and revisit the issue when you're both calm and ready for an effective conversation.

And of course, all good arguments should conclude with a happy ending. (NO, that's not the kind of happy ending I'm referring to.) Kiss, make-up, and free yourself from the former fuss.

For more information on relationship dos and don'ts, visit: www.joanncohen.com

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