

## Disagreements: Resolution and Reconciliation

In marriage (as in all relationships) disagreements and misunderstandings, great and small, create discord in our lives. It is important to remember that conflict is a part of life, and that its resolution must be a cooperative effort between the two of you, and God. The decisions you make together - and *how* you make them - with God's help through prayer, should be a sign of your love and respect for each other.

1. **Use the word "we"** - How are **we** going to work out this problem **together**. In this way, you are not setting yourselves in opposition to each other.
2. **Humility and courage** - "What have we been doing that makes us not able to solve this problem?" Sometimes this means admitting a fault or weakness and having the courage to change, or ask forgiveness.
3. **How do I contribute to conflict?** Do I: interrupt, get defensive, attack the other, withdraw and give the "silent treatment," or manipulate the situation - or the other person?
4. **Imagine a number of ways to resolve the conflict** - look at the viability of various solutions, talk with each other, and be willing to compromise.
5. **Take time out** - if a resolution is slow in coming, and tempers are flaring, it may be a good idea to take some time to cool off, to re-think the situation, **alone**. Time out doesn't mean the conversation is over; it means we're holding off on further discussion until we can get our bearings, and come back with a clear head. It may mean one of you goes out for a walk, or you go to separate rooms in the house and just "chill out." Before you separate, agree on a time to come back together and finish the discussion - but don't wait for too long. Allowing things to go on for too long only leads to hurt feelings or repressing conflict until there's a big "blow-up." If you can, try to resolve things before the day is over.
6. If you are trying to make a big decision and really need help, there are two important things you can do: **pray together about it, and seek the counsel of someone you trust** (a friend, priest or other clergy, etc.)

*Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if one has a grievance against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do. And over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection. Col 3:12-14*