

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