

# humantold

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## **Fair Fighting Rules**

Amicable conflict that finds compromise and resolution can be growth-fostering for relationships. However, the following list may help you avoid unproductive tactics.

### **Identify the reason(s) why you are upset**

What does the reason represent or mean from a bigger picture? Are there common themes? Does the theme trigger past pain? Could you be looking at this in a distorted manner?

### **Take responsibility for your feelings and words using “I-statements”**

I feel \_\_\_\_\_, when you \_\_\_\_\_. Starting with I rather than you, is a way to reduce the sense of accusation and focus more on asserting your experience. Make sure you are truly stating a feeling after your I-statement: “I feel you aren’t doing what you said” is not an I-statement.

### **No contemptuous or degrading language**

Avoid personalizing, don’t put down, swear at, or name-call the other person. Are you trying to hurt the other person’s feelings with the goal of making them feel as bad as you?

### **No shouting or raising of voice**

Are you trying to win the argument by being the loudest or convey your frustration through volume? Are you trying to intimidate the other person by making them nervous or on guard?

### **Stick to one issue at a time**

Avoid bringing up issues from the past. Stick to the current topic at hand and the facts associated with the one issue.

### **Breathe calmly**

Taking deep slow breaths can help you remain calm, allow the other person to speak, and give yourself a moment to think about what you are going to say or do.

### **Avoid interrupting until the other person has completed their thought**

Be careful not to interrupt the other person until they have completed their thought. You may need to use a timer to give each person a fair amount of time.

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## **Listen to the other person's perspective**

Truly listen to what the other person is saying rather than thinking about what you want to say next. Be willing to let go of what you wanted to say next, because ultimately that might change.

## **Assert by being clear and specific**

Instead of over-focusing on the negative "what is not working," try flipping that into "what you need more of" or what you want to change."

## **Be willing to compromise**

Let go of finding the perfect solution, or the completely equal solution as these do not exist. As long as there is some give and take on both sides. Remember you can also "agree to disagree."

## **No stonewalling or shutting down**

Sometimes people check-out or shut down during an argument rather than continuing to try and communicate. If you are tempted to do this, ask yourself why. Is the other person able to "out talk you," or do they process things faster, leaving you frustrated. If so, use "immediacy," which points out the struggle you are having. For example, "I want to share with you why I'm frustrated, but I feel like you are not willing right now to hear my side of the story."

## **Either person may take a time-out at any time**

It is never a bad option to stop or pause in the moment and cool off. The goal is to make sure that afterwards you come back to communicate and don't just use this to avoid.

Peterson, J. (2019, June 6). Certified Anger Management Treatment Professional: Skills Workbook. Eau Claire, WI; Pesi Inc.