

Couples Conflict Resolution Worksheet

A structured way to argue without shredding trust. Use when emotions are high but the relationship still matters.

Ground Rules (Read First — Yes, Really)

- One person speaks at a time
- No interrupting, correcting, or rebutting
- This is **not** about winning or proving who's right
- Pause if either person becomes flooded

If you can't follow these yet, you're not ready for the worksheet. Regulation first, repair second.

Step 1: What Happened? (Shared Reality)

Each partner completes **their own column**, then compares.

Partner A - What I saw/heard (observable facts only):

Partner B - What I saw/heard (observable facts only):

Differences don't mean someone's lying. They mean two nervous systems were present.

Step 2: What Did I Feel?

No commentary. Just name it.

Partner A - Feelings: - Intensity (0-10):

Partner B - Feelings: - Intensity (0-10):

Step 3: The Meaning I Made (The Inner Narrative)

Say the quiet part — without weaponising it.

Partner A

"In that moment, it felt like you were saying/doing ____."

Partner B

"In that moment, it felt like you were saying/doing ____."

These are perceptions, not verdicts.

Step 4: What Was Triggered?

Past experiences matter here.

Partner A - This reminded me of: - Old fear it touched:

Partner B - This reminded me of: - Old fear it touched:

If nothing comes to mind, slow down. Triggers are sneaky.

Step 5: What I Needed (Then or Now)

Needs are not criticisms.

Partner A - What I needed: - What would have helped in that moment:

Partner B - What I needed: - What would have helped in that moment:

Step 6: My Contribution (Ownership Without Self-Destruction)

No "but you..." allowed.

Partner A - What I did that escalated, shut things down, or confused matters:

Partner B - What I did that escalated, shut things down, or confused matters:

If this section is blank, defensiveness is still in charge.

Step 7: Impact (This Is the Hard Bit)

Listen. Don't fix.

Partner A → Partner B

"The impact on me was ____."

Partner B → Partner A

"The impact on me was ____."

Then reflect back:

“What I hear you saying is ____.”

Step 8: Repair Attempts

Small, realistic, repeatable.

Partner A - One apology or acknowledgment I can offer: - One change I'm willing to try:

Partner B - One apology or acknowledgment I can offer: - One change I'm willing to try:

Promising perfection is pointless. Promising effort is useful.

Step 9: Boundaries & Agreements

Not rules. Agreements.

- One boundary that needs respecting going forward:
 - One agreement we're making about how to handle this next time:
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Step 10: Closing the Loop

- What helped this conversation stay safer than usual?
 - What still feels tender?
 - Do we need to revisit this, or can we pause and return later?
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Final Note

Healthy couples don't fight less — they repair faster. If the same conflict keeps repeating, it's not because you're failing. It's because something hasn't been fully heard yet.

(And yes, this takes practice. Awkward, imperfect practice.)