

Believe it or not, all humans engage in disagreements. We tend to think we need to avoid any kind of disagreement in the name of peace, but on this side of perfect (earth, where it is NOT perfect) that's just not possible.

There's a whole range of emotions that come up when you're at odds with someone, especially your spouse.

We all have our own past experiences, trauma, and patterns that we bring to "the fight," and most of the time, that's not a good thing.

So if we're going to have disagreements (it's inevitable), don't you think we should learn how to have them in a way that doesn't decimate "our opponent," but instead helps us together come to an agreement, or at least a consensus?

There are concrete things we can do to manage our runaway emotions so we keep the objective of keeping a healthy relationship as our main focus, and not the disagreement.

Here are 7 things we can do:

1. Stay CALM (but don't tell the other person to calm down - remember, you don't want to baptize a cat!) We spoke about this on Tuesday!

Agree in advance not to lob bombs at each other. Any rules you set need to be agreed upon.

2. Take a break if you are too heated up - or your partner. Remember the word "let's," not "you." *Let's take a break - I'll take a bath to calm down, etc.*

3. Use non-defensive language. "You always" will NEVER make friends and influence people - it's actually a firestarter! To do this, think about the stuff you love about your spouse. Mirror back what they're saying. NO *YEAH BUT'S!*

4. Don't BLAME! If you're raising an issue, talk about how you feel, for example: *When you did X, I felt Y.* No eyeball rolling. It's not what you say so much as HOW it's heard.

5. Remember ALWAYS, you or the other person isn't inherently bad - something may have occurred that you take issue with, but they're still the same person. The DID something, they AREN'T something. There's a difference!

6. Validate - we ALL want to be understood. You can do this by saying, "Yes, I know this is important to you," then give that sentence space to be responded to.

7. Listen, mirror, and respond in a way that says **I'm listening to you because our relationship is important and I'm giving you my attention.** DO NOT just be waiting for them to take a breath so you can continue on with your own point of view. Their point of view is important to them - remember that. Listen to understand and not just to reply.

This is hard to do - BUT, this is how emotionally intelligent people work things out through a minefield of emotion - especially anger.

Practice - think - process...and LOVE.

Love is, above all, the language of hearing each other and loving each other, even in the tough times.

This is how Wise Women roll!