



Taking the conflict out of the argument

All arguments have an element of conflict. Managing the level of conflict is essential to keeping an argument healthy and under control.



Phase 1**Sparking the argument****Ask yourself:**

How did the argument start?

Was it fanned by small actions, such as:

- using an aggressive or confrontational tone of voice?
- feeling tired or stressed?
- not listening to each other?
- bringing up past issues?

Phase 2**Extending the argument****Ask yourself:**

How do you act during an argument?

Do you:

- bottle things up and then have a rant?
- get overwhelmed by your feelings?
- sulk or give the silent treatment?
- keep baiting and going at your partner?

These actions tend to fan the conflict.

Phase 3**Stepping backwards****What you can do:**

By taking a few actions you can step back and reduce the conflict.

During an argument you can try:

- taking a break
- listening to your partner
- saying sorry
- offering affection

Phase 4**Moving forwards****What you can do:**

Stay focused on the positives.

Think about:

- what brought you together in the first place?
- what keeps you together now?
- what good times have you had together?

keep these in your mind and focus on them rather than the argument.

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