

## **Conflicts in Marriage**

The typical concept of a couple's relationship revolves around support, understanding, happiness and warmth. In reality, people in intimate relationships desire being close to their partners yet also yearn for personal autonomy. This need to have simultaneous agreement and disagreement with the other partner results in conflicts of needs, opinions, interests and values.

Conflicts exist in society as a taboo associated with anger and wrongness which opposes the idea of harmony and love. Ironically, it is very natural for any couple in an intimate relationship to experience conflict. They can vary from minor insignificant differences to serious fights that can either weaken or strengthen a couple's relationship. As a result, it is important to differentiate between negative and positive conflict.

A rational explanation behind the existence of a conflict taboo is the thought of negative conflict. Negative conflicts encompass destructive behaviors that are usually unhealthy and bad for relationships. These conflicts cause what most people describe as resentful, hostile and demolishing. They negatively affect a couple's intimacy, well being and even physical health.

Repressed anger is a type of negative conflict. It is defined by the "unconscious suppression" of anger which is conveyed in various ways. One method can be saving up irritation until they explode. Other ways can include depression, boredom and overeating or even more violent methods such as verbal or physical abuse.

Another type of negative conflict is passive-aggression which is communicating resentment indirectly rather than frankly. Individuals in intimate relationships usually mask their rage by nagging, being sarcastic or procrastinating their promises to their partners. Passive-aggression is widely associated with what is referred to as "the silent treatment". The silent treatment is when one partner ignores the other or claims that things are fine while non-verbally signaling that they are not.

Negative conflicts between couples can work on diminishing an individual's self-esteem. For example, being the couple's scapegoat does not build up anyone's self-esteem. Scapegoating is when one partner is particularly being blamed for almost every mistake that

occurs. Another method that diminishes self-esteem is when one partner denies, criticizes and is sarcastic about the other partner's definition of reality.

Despite the negativity that surrounds the idea of conflicts in relationships, conflicts can indeed be good. Positive conflicts are the differences that arise between partners that work on building intimacy and boosting each partner's self-esteem. Unlike negative conflicts, positive conflicts can be productive because they create deeper understanding and respect.

Conflicts play a role in clarifying differences between couples that are often underground. These clarified differences invite new solutions in order to deal with those discrepancies. As a result, each party will get a chance to actively participate in finding a solution that is fair to the other partner.

In addition, conflicts deal with small issues to avoid them turning into more serious conflicts. Couples that do not regularly deal with small conflicts will most probably find themselves culminating rage and resentment towards each other. Dealing with small issues can help induce honesty, openness and mutual satisfaction that will strengthen the communication between both entities.

Although it feels as if conflicts disturb the intimacy between couples, but it is often otherwise. Conflicts can be approached as "two equals working together to solve a problem". Thus, it can improve and strengthen the relationship by boosting each partner's self-esteem and confidence. By remaining equals, couples can help maintain mutual respect and trust.

It is widely known that conflicts in relationships are unavoidable. No matter how small the problem is, it can be conveyed as a painful struggle and threat to both partners in the relationship. However, ignoring and bypassing conflicts will not make them fade away. As a result, individuals should learn how to deal with their problems in order to grow and define their power as equals.

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