



## Truths about Conflict

- Conflict in marriage is inevitable and normal. All couples have conflict. But it's how you handle that conflict that is important.
- The decision to use conflict creatively to enhance your relationship is a *conscious choice*.
- Creative use of conflict views conflict as a "growth area". It is an opportunity to grow as a couple.
- When a couple uses conflict creatively, they move closer to one another rather than pushing each other further apart.

Learning to resolve conflict can help build a sound and satisfying marriage.

Couples are attracted by both their similarities and their differences. Many of the differences are seen as "assets" early in the relationship. Over time, some of these "assets", when experienced on a regular basis, can become "liabilities" and cause irritation or conflict.

Anger is a normal response to conflict. Anger isn't bad – but it can be bad if used in hurtful ways.

Anger is powerful. It's a source of energy, like gasoline, that is explosive and destructive if mishandled. However, this same energy, properly managed, has enormous potential for constructive uses. That energy can bring a couple closer together.

## Exercise: How Anger Affects YOUR relationship

Find a time and place where you can talk privately as a couple. Individually, answer the following questions. When you are finished, share your answers with your partner.

1. Recall a situation in which you have been irritated or angry with your partner. (Choose a small conflict for this exercise – not the big, scary, chronic ones).
2. In addition to anger, list other feelings you had.
3. What things make you vulnerable to irritations and conflicts? Fatigue? Traffic snarls? Stress?
4. How do you typically behave when you're angry?

After you have each shared, is there some change you are personally willing to make in the way you handle anger? If so, can you each agree to help each other make that change?

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## CREATIVE USE OF CONFLICT

"I feel like our marriage is coming apart when we get mad at each other!"

"Does conflict mean our marriage is on the rocks?"

"We fight all the time. What is wrong with us?"

Conflict in Marriage! The pages that follow are designed to help you look at conflict in your relationship, to understand it, and to learn how you can use it to make your marriage better!

Creatively use conflict to bring you closer? Yes, you can!

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