

Resolving *Conflict* for our Marriage

Marriage is a union between 3 persons (husband, wife, and most importantly GOD), so including God when resolving conflict is imperative. This approach to resolving conflict is rooted in prayer and a focus on being selfless as Christ has called us to be. Our hope and prayer is that you might find the Holy Spirit working through your marriage as you practice P.R.A.Y. when resolving conflict in your marriage.

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Resolving Conflict with P.R.A.Y.

P – Part Ways – TIME OUT.

R – Reconnect with your spouse.

A – Apologize for hurt feelings or wrong doing.

Y – Yes Me – Yes, it is me that needs to make an effort.

When to use P.R.A.Y.

1. Conversation has turned unto a disagreement
2. One spouse is frustrated, upset, or angry about something and “we need to talk”
3. An important decision needs to be made and we appear to be thinking about it differently.
4. You are feeling that your spouse is obviously wrong

General Communication No-No's

When practicing P.R.A.Y. there are some general communications No, No's that we recommend you follow:

- Lying/Exaggerating/Withholding
- Disrespect – degrading of other, name calling, treating like a child
- Blaming – you, you, you; its your fault
- Lecturing/attacking
- Not Making Time – not making time to work through differences, even ones that seem small to you
- the word “JUST” it's a 4 letter word; If you would just...

P – Part Ways – TIME OUT. Take a time out from each other.

Once a conflict or disagreement has been identified, take a time out from each other. Depending on the situation you might only need 5 minutes or you might need a couple hours. Agree on the length of the Time Out before hand. Use this time to clear your mind and calm down. Suggestions during this time are: praying, journaling, talking to yourself, reflect on your feelings/scripture, evaluating underlying issues.

- DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE DISCUSSION IS EXCALATED or VOLATILE before taking a time out. Let this be a proactive time out to avoid escalation or volatile conversations
- If at any point in the process of P.R.A.Y. you find the situation escalating or getting volatile, return to P and start the process over.

Suggested Scripture/Prayer:

Phil 4:6-7 “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

1 Cor 13: 4-8 “Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.”

Prayer for Resolving Conflict

Lord, I pray for an end to this conflict and a breaking of the hold strife has on us. Take away the hurt and the armor we've put up to protect ourselves. Lift us out of the pit of unforgiveness. Speak through us so that our words reflect Your love, peace, and reconciliation. Tear down this wall between us and teach us how to walk through it. Enable us to rise up from this paralysis and move into the healing and wholeness you have for us. This we pray, in your Holy and Precious name. Amen.

- from Stormie Omartian 's book ‘The Power of A Praying Wife’

Prayer for your Spouse

Heavenly Father, in the beginning, you yourself instituted the sacrament of marriage. Bless _____ in her/his role as my wife/husband. Grant her/him the grace to persevere in Love for me. Help me to be the support she/he needs today and always, so that she/he may see Heaven. May my eyes see her/him as you see her/him and may I look past her/his failings to see her/him as your child and my life partner. May we as a married couple choose you as the foundation of our marital love, and may you strengthen our marriage to withstand all types of suffering. Grant that I may die of myself and trust in your divine plan for our marriage. Help us to be truly one, as you designed. This I pray, in your Holy and Precious name. Amen.

R – Reconnect with your spouse. Use Descriptive Feelings and XYZ Statements along with Speaker/Listener Technique.

This is the time to understand your spouse’s feelings and concerns as well as an opportunity for your spouse to do the same for you.

James 1: 19-20 “Take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry, for man’s anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires”

Proverbs 15:1 “A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.”

Remember...

- Make sure it is SAFE for your spouse to share.
- Your spouse is not your enemy.
- Feelings are not wrong.
- Listen respectfully and carefully, work to understand your spouse’s point of view.
- No Problem Solving.
- Don’t interrupt your spouse - Take Notes if it helps you listen.

Descriptive Feelings from Marriage Encounter

Category	Ways to Describe the feeling	Example
Intensity	Rate feeling from 1-10	“My feeling is a 10”
Taste	Sour, sweet, bitter, etc	“My feeling would taste sour like a lemon.”
Touch	Scratchy, soft, prickly, etc	“It has a softness like silk”
Color	Red, blue, black, etc	“My anger is red hot”
Sound	High pitched; screech; thunder, etc	“It sounds like a singing bird on a spring morning” or “like fingers on a chalk board”
Physical reaction	Sick, chilled, giggling, etc	“It was like an upset stomach”
Similar Past Experience	Childbirth, riding a bike, etc	“My feeling was excited, like the time our child took their first step”
Nature Scene	Beautiful sunset, crashing waves, etc	“My joyful feeling has all the colors of a sunset at sea”
An image	Hitting a home run, etc	“I feel excited, like a kid who hit his first home run”

R – Reconnect with your spouse (continued)

Using XYZ Statements

The XYZ statement is a way of communicating with your spouse that focuses on how a situation makes you feel. It helps avoid blaming, assuming and accusing.

It works like this: you state the topic or scenario (X), follow it with the context in which the scenario takes place (Y), then finish with how this makes you feel (Z). Let's look at a few examples:

Examples of Ineffective & Effective with XYZ:

Ineffective: "How come you never help with the dishes? We both work all day, you know!"

Effective with XYZ: "When you don't help me with the dishes (X) after we've both worked all day (Y), I feel frustrated and unappreciated (Z)."

Ineffective: "You bought a new flat screen TV without consulting me? Don't you realize we have more important bills to pay?"

Effective with XYZ: "When you make a large purchase like that (X) without asking for my input first (Y), I feel frustrated and disrespected (Z)."

Ineffective: "When you come home and are a slob..."

Effective with XYZ: "When you come home and toss your jacket on the sofa..."

Also, Positive Communication: Finally, what's wonderful about the XYZ statement technique is that it can be used for positive situations and feedback too, which can lead to greater closeness between you and your partner.

For example: "When you asked for my opinion about getting a new TV (X), even though I know your heart was set on buying one right away (Y), I felt appreciated and loved (Z)."

Resource: ezinearticles.com

R – Reconnect with your spouse (continued)

SPEAKER-LISTENER Technique

RULES FOR BOTH OF YOU:

1. **The speaker has the floor.** Use a real object to designate the floor. *(Might seem funny, but typically you are irrational in your argument so you need something tangible to keep the course)* If you do not have the floor, you are the Listener. Note that the Speaker keeps the floor while the Listener paraphrases, keeping it clear who is in which role all the time.
2. **Share the floor.** You share the floor over the course of a conversation. One has it to start and may say a number of things. At some point, you switch roles and continue back and forth as the floor changes hands.
3. **No problem solving.** When using this technique you are going to focus on having good discussions. You must consciously avoid coming to solutions prematurely.

RULES FOR THE SPEAKER:

1. **Speak for yourself.** Don't mind read. Talk about your thoughts, feelings, and concerns, not your perceptions or interpretations of the Listener's point of view or motives. Try to use "I" statements, and talk about your own point of view.
2. **Talk in small chunks.** You will have plenty of opportunity to say all you need to say, so you don't have to say it all at once. It is very important to keep what you say in manageable pieces to help the Listener actively listen. A good rule of thumb is to keep your statements to just a sentence or two, especially when first learning the technique.
3. *****Stop and let the Listener paraphrase.** After saying a bit, perhaps a sentence or two, stop and allow the Listener to paraphrase what you just said. If the paraphrase was not quite accurate, you should politely restate what was not heard in the way it was intended to be heard. Your goal is to help the Listener hear and understand your point of view. *(Very important; what we hear and what the other feels maybe very different)*

RULES FOR THE LISTENER:

1. **Paraphrase what you hear.** To paraphrase the Speaker, briefly repeat back what you heard the Speaker say, using your own words if you like, to make sure you understand what was said. The key is that you show your partner that you are listening as you restate what you heard, without any interpretations. If the paraphrase is not quite right (which happens often), the Speaker should gently clarify the point being made. If you truly don't understand some phrase or example, you may ask the Speaker to clarify or repeat, but you may not ask questions on any other aspect of the issue unless you have the floor.

R – Reconnect with your spouse (continued)

SPEAKER-LISTENER Technique

2. **Don't rebut. Focus on the Speaker's message.** While in the Listener role, you may not offer your opinion or thoughts. This is the hardest part of being a good Listener. If you are upset by what your partner says, you need to edit out any response you may want to make, so you can continue to pay attention to what your partner is saying. Wait until you get the floor to state your response. As Listener, your job is to speak only in the service of understanding your partner. Any words or gestures to show your own opinions are not allowed, including making faces. Your task is to understand. Good listening does not equal agreement. You can express any disagreement when you have the floor.

Additional Helpful Thoughts for Using this Method:

When using the Speaker-Listener Technique, the Speaker is always the one who determines if the Listener's paraphrase was on target. Only the Speaker knows what the intended message was. If the paraphrase was not quite on target, it is very important that the Speaker gently clarify or restate the point and not respond angrily or critically.

A key point: When in the Listener role, be sincere in your effort to show you are listening carefully and respectfully. Even when you disagree with the point being made by your partner, your goal is to show respect for and validation of his or her perspective. That means waiting your turn and not making faces or looking bored. Showing real respect and honor to one another is the goal. You can disagree completely with your mate on a matter and still show respect. In fact, we are told in scripture to show respect no matter what (See: [1 Peter 2:17](#)). Just wait until you have the floor to make your points.

Two more points—first, when using the Speaker-Listener Technique, it is important to stay on the topic you mean to discuss. Many issues in marriage can become involved in one conversation, but you'll do better on important matters if you try to stay on the issues at hand. Also, don't try to problem solve prematurely. Focus on having a good discussion where you can get the issues on the table.

Advantages of Using the Speaker-Listener Technique:

This technique is designed to help couples keep a tight rein on their tongues. That's why it works. When you choose to use it, you are making the choice to limit the defensive responses that come naturally and to submit yourself to a more caring, disciplined approach to understanding your mate. You are unleashing your ears and reining in your tongue. Keep in mind that although these rules are simple, simple does not always mean easy. Structure can make it easier, but sometimes it just takes hard work to communicate well.

Resource: Marriage Missions – Speaker Listener Technique

A – Apologize for hurt feelings or wrong doing

I AM SORRY is very powerful. Even if you believe that you are not in the wrong, find something. Make it truthful, but find something. “I am sorry for having hurt you,” or “I am sorry for not respecting your feelings,” etc,

During Part Ways (P) and Reconnect (R), when you are truly trying to understand your spouse and working to be a servant spouse, you will feel compelled to apologize and this will become a more natural step in the process of P.R.A.Y. But at first, this may not be so natural and you may need to fight yourself internally to say the words ‘I AM SORRY’ outloud. This is humility.

Y – Yes Me – Yes, it is me that needs to make an effort

It is a human reaction to expect the other person to change to accommodate our needs. “After all we would not be fighting if they would just change?” BUT we are called to be selfless and more progress is made in our relationships when we spend more time on reforming ourselves than worrying about the other person’s reform.

Marriage is not 50/50 as much of the world might lead us to believe. Marriage is 110% on either side. Am I giving my 110% toward my spouse, my marriage and this issue? How can I do more?

Instead of praying for the other person to change, try praying to see your spouse as God sees them and to change and soften your heart to be a more holy servant.

Suggested Scripture/Prayer:

Matthew 16:24 "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me".

Catechism of the Catholic Church

1999 The grace of Christ is the gratuitous gift that God makes to us of his own life, infused by the Holy Spirit into our soul to heal it of sin and to sanctify it. It is the *sanctifying* or *deifying grace* received in Baptism. It is in us the source of the work of sanctification:⁴⁸

*Therefore if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself.*⁴⁹

2000 Sanctifying grace is an habitual gift, a stable and supernatural disposition that perfects the soul itself to enable it to live with God, to act by his love.

2013 "All Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of charity."⁶⁵ All are called to holiness: "Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."⁶⁶

*In order to reach this perfection the faithful should use the strength dealt out to them by Christ's gift, so that . . . doing the will of the Father in everything, they may wholeheartedly devote themselves to the glory of God and to the service of their neighbor. Thus the holiness of the People of God will grow in fruitful abundance, as is clearly shown in the history of the Church through the lives of so many saints.*⁶⁷