














Deep Talk

	I don't know what to say when we disagree			One of us talks and the other just looks bored
I say things that I am sorry for later		I know we could really share - we just don't know how		
My partner storms around when disagreeing				Too many dead ends – we don't want to hear the other
	My partner just does whatever they want when we disagree	When I have a suggestion, they won't listen at all	It affects us both for days	

Deep Talk

You will disagree. It will happen. How it goes from there will be the key to happy living and building a stronger family.

Remember – two heads are better than one? This means you two!

You and your partner will have many, many ideas about building plans and how to do a project. When you add them together, there are so many more possibilities than if only one of you were to tackle it alone. So, remember this as you encounter the surprise of an idea that is outside your own mind's eye.

When your partner comes up to you and says, “I think we should build the patio first,” and you are starting the demolition of the wall that day, you might get miffed about the interference. That is natural, but it is very natural to have many ideas when there are two of you. Since you may be startled by sudden ideas that conflict with your own plans, it is important to keep in mind that having different points of view is an asset.

So, what to do? Well, a good first step is to pause. An unpleasant surprise can startle the brain, setting off many electrical impulses across the nervous system. In its confusion, the brain is likely to experience some anxiety that may interfere with clear thinking. So, first, take a breath before acting or speaking. And give your brain a chance to settle down, letting all your circuits flow smoothly open. Give this breathing process a chance to take effect in your brain before you take the next step in communicating.

Startled?

First Aid when startled with project conflict

If you are midway in action on your project, you would profit by pausing and taking the time to evaluate your plans. Unfortunately, the suddenness of conflict with its accompanying **Startle** can happen at the most productive time of the day – when your energy is strong and you would be able to accomplish much of a task – if only you could proceed. Unfortunately, if the information you encounter reveals that you are out of sequence in a project, you might be wasting work and resources if you do continue working just that minute. So, it is wise to take a break, even a tiny one. (Just a side note — it is a good idea to plan and discuss the day's work the night or day before so you can get right to it the next day.)

Renovation Psychology: Putting the Home Team to Work

Timing is important. If you have good momentum on the project and you are ambitious and active at the time that the conflict is encountered, maybe the best course is to change tracks and go work on something else that is productive and not controversial. At least this way you can get something accomplished. If so, save the talking for later when you are not so ambitious, and also when you have had a chance to think more.

OK, oh! – it is happening now!

So, let us imagine the time has arrived that you two have a conflict and you need to settle a question. First – settle yourself down and get your brain thinking well. When excited and disturbed, the brain has limited use of its capacity. Yet after you calm down your breathing returns to normal, you will have your full mental capacity back. Do the things that will get you to that place (not using alcohol) – activity that lets you dissipate your energy, or internal dialogue that lets you finish sputtering. Try looking over the project to

gain perspective on the point of view you have glimpsed in those opening words of your partner that set you into a spin. After calming, you may indeed see the merits of their point of view. It can be easier to discuss later if you try to incorporate their view into your own while grappling with your own thoughts.



Steps for Fair Play when you disagree

DIY– How to do it yourself

1. Take turns listening.

You will each do better if you get a turn to speak without interruption. Listening involves more than silence. The active listener repeats what is heard, asks for more detail, and seeks to hear the reasons why the speaker holds that view.

2. Speak about the project, not the person.

When the word “YOU” is used, people can become defensive and tempers can flare. No need to get steamed up. Stick to the facts and plans.

3. Keep the pace loving.

Notice what the other needs and continue to nurture and care for each other while discussing the issue. Offer food and beverages. (BUT NOT alcohol!! That will surely end the fair play.) Notice each other’s moods – and be sure to rest, play, or take breaks as needed.

4. Start with the problem.

Getting an idea of what each of you is talking about is important.

Do you both see the problem as the same concern? Clarify what the concern is and you will eliminate a number of disagreeable moments. (Remember Emily Letella? “What’s all this about violins on television?” — Sorry, Emily, it was, “Violence on Television.” Emily’s reply, “Never mind.”)

You will often find out that the other’s concern is more manageable than you had imagined or feared in your first reaction.

5. Brainstorm solutions.

In this step of fair play, no one owns an idea. All ideas are put out on the table and can be recombined in many ways. In the end, creativity brings fruit but you won’t know whose tree it grew on. Write ‘em down, even the crazy ideas.

6. Evaluate solutions, not people.

Having cut loose from owning the answers, you can then be objective about their value and implications. Look at each of the options that arose from brainstorming and see what might come of them.

7. Choose among the options together.

It is not about either of you, but about a new solution.

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Talking about the different ideas

So, here it is now, later – and you two are beginning to talk through your different ideas about the project. Excellent. Life has such moments.

How you handle these moments will either be an asset or a liability. It is in how you handle things, not in the outcome, that strength is developed in your family. If one or the other of you must win, your partnership suffers, as do both of you. It is hard to understand, but important to grasp the value of fair play in this process. The process you share here is much more important than winning, by far.

So, like any well-played game, you need to be ready for play and prepared for the game. Are you rested? Need food? Thirsty? Take care of these things before or during the fair play. If you are irritated, take some time to neutralize your thoughts before coming together so that you can listen to each other better. If such needs arise while playing, go ahead and call a timeout to address them. Things will go much more smoothly in the end.

Getting your Home Team in tune

Going through these steps for any conflict that arises can start a pattern of resolving issues that will have an effect on the magnitude of future ‘startles’. Eventually you will have more calm reactions when your partner enters the scene and indicates that you are not on the same page. You will both come to have more confidence that there is a GAIN from blending your ideas when such events occur.

You may wish to refine these steps for your own tastes. What’s your style? Many **Home Teams** have their own approaches – see how you can use these skills to create your own.

Notes from Deep Talk

You can start with some specifics

Maybe there are some items you need some Deep Talk on?

Name two:

- 1.
- 2.

What would be some good places and times for your partner to consider one of these topics?

Prepare ahead - what are some variations on the items that could get some conversation going ~ some different ideas in the mix?

Invite your partner to consider some Deep Talk

Arrange a convenient time

Prepare some comforts for the occasion (non-alcoholic).

Get started

Consider the ideas on the table.

Come up with some nick names for the ideas that are not negative.

Get going

Say at least one positive about each idea that your partner has contributed (even if they were just joking).

Get rewarded

Be sure to reward yourselves for cooperating with each other in Deep Talk, even if you don't finish.

(No substances, but Yes, it can be R-rated.)