

At All Cost, Avoid Saying These Things to Your Wife During a Fight

When I was young, like most teenagers, I could be brash and blunt with little wisdom to guide my words.

One particular night, I was out with a group of friends (guys and girls) when a female friend and I started to make fun of each other. The verbal jousting quickly got competitive, even heated.

Finally, I said something regrettably cutting, hurtful and humiliating towards her. What I said is unimportant, but immediately after saying it, I wanted to grab it all back. The worst part about it was that before I said it, I thought about it, calculated its impact and even then, I still said it. I cared more about winning than I did about her at that moment. Thinking about her running out of the room crying still makes my stomach sink.

Words have a powerful impact, particularly in relationships. In marriage, the impact is even deeper because of the level of intimacy. Words are released at close range by the person in life whose opinion matters most. In the midst of a disagreement, we have the power with the words we choose to either escalate or disarm the situation.

Saying the wrong thing can be like pushing an escalation button. With that in mind, here's what not to say to your wife during a fight:

'At Least ...'

This is normally an attempt to quickly move beyond the issue at hand with a superficial silver lining. It belittles

something she feels is important, disregards her feelings and ultimately, it lacks empathy. Anything that follows these two words will only serve to deepen the conflict and disconnection.

'I Don't Care.'

If this one comes out in the heat of an argument, it can cause significant damage. It will end all communication for the night. These three words have actually started more conflict in our house than anything else I've said. She might want help with a decision or my opinion. I say, "I don't care," meaning, "I don't have an opinion. I could go either way." What she hears is, "I don't want to do this with you. I don't care about you."

'You're Being Ridiculous.'

She might be. She may be swept up in so much emotion and hurt that she is ignoring all reason and facts. However, she's not going to be able to see it at this moment no matter how clearly you explain it, but especially if you say it this way. All it will do is throw gasoline on the crazy. It's best to listen and acknowledge her feelings. Reason with her later when she has calmed down.

"I May Have Done That, But You ..."

This is nothing more than a deflection from taking full responsibility and making amends. Throwing an accusation at her while she's doing the same will only intensify the conversation, because it shows our desire to win rather than reach a resolution. When we have done something wrong, we need to show leadership by owning it and apologizing. This disarms the fight.

'Other People Wouldn't React the Way You Are.'

Never compare your wife to anyone, particularly other women.

It devalues her as a person and it will rub some significant insecurities lurking below the surface. And if you ever compare her to your mother, it was nice knowing you. {eo}

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