

Fight for Your Marriage, Not Your Pride

In Tony and Lauren Dungy's newest book, *Uncommon Marriage*, they look back on the challenging time when they were building their dream house together. Making sure all the details were lining up just right between the builders and contractors led to moments of tension in their marriage.

Coach Dungy writes, "During this time, we were reminded that sometimes it's best to apologize even when we don't think we caused the disagreement. When that happened, one of us would choose to say, 'I love you. Now let's move forward.' That's not easy to do, especially when emotions have gotten heated. It goes against our human nature, but it works when minor disagreements crop up."

Following Coach Dungy's example, here are three steps to take when you and your spouse stumble upon moments of conflict:

1. Identify what the conflict is really about. It's important that you and your spouse recognize together what the conflict is. If you become upset when your husband is late for dinner again, the root of your anger may be that you feel your husband has higher priorities than spending time with you.

Be sure to communicate the conflict for what it truly is, not just what it appears to be on the surface. Only then can it be worked at and resolved. If you keep having the same old marriage fights, identifying what the conflict is really about will help keep conflict at bay.

2. Realize what is worth fighting for. Like Coach Dungy writes, our human nature longs to be right in everything—no matter how insignificant the issue. But when it comes to arguments with your spouse, be sure you have a clear mind to understand what's worth fighting for. Is it more important to

fight about whose turn it was to wash the dishes? Or to show love to your spouse by cleaning the dishes regardless of whose turn it was? Fight for your marriage, not your pride.

3. Come back in love. Instead of resolving to give your spouse the silent treatment when an issue seems impossible to solve, I encourage you to instead treat them with love. At the end of the day, it doesn't matter who was right or wrong. What does matter is that you chose to take the high road, ask for forgiveness and let them know how much you love them. Giving forgiveness can be challenging, but it is the best way to come back in love.

What are some insignificant conflicts in your marriage that you need to let go of in order to love your spouse well? We would like to hear your story in a comment below.

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