

The Relationship Project

#3 - The six conflict resolution skills a relationship can't do without!

We all know that not doing the laundry regularly leaves us with an enormous mess! Same goes for the dirty laundry in relationship.

Don't wait forever to bring up an issue with your partner... make it part of your lifestyle to bring up issues in a productive way rather than avoid it because it feels uncomfortable. Tension escalates and we tend to build stories around our hurts and misunderstandings that hijack our emotions. Sound relationships work from taking responsibility for attempting to get better at communicating.

Begin by learning to practise not telling your partner they are wrong! You simply feel differently about the topic!

It's your responsibility to Skill up!

Gottmans research reveals that discussions usually end on the same note they begin. How a partner raises an issue in the first 3 minutes of the conversation, is crucial to resolving conflicts.

Here are 6 skills enabling the road from conflict to resolution:

- **Start softly.** Awareness of your tone of voice and facial expressions. No harsh attacking. Listen intently. Feedback clearly what you heard and make sure you have heard exactly what was said rather than your own interpretation.
- **Accept influence.** There are two points of view. Each has a right to complain but not blame. This is how to do it well! Focus on expressing your feeling verbally with clarity and respect. This means not attacking. Express your view starting with 'I feel' rather than 'you are'.
- **Make effective repairs during conflict.** Don't leave a conflict unresolved or with a threat. Repair happens when each person feels heard and acknowledged for their emotional experience no matter what it is. It is not anyone's place to tell the other person that shouldn't feel like they do.
- **Continue to de-escalate by keeping yourself in check emotionally.**
- **Show some empathy and compassion...** this gives rise to soothing feelings. It helps maintain connection. It is the number one factor in relationship success.
- **Compromise otherwise you will remain in seperate corners of the ring.** Your relationship is likely to be short lived or inauthentic if you don't.



DEENA THOMPSON is a relationship counsellor and coach at Health in our Hands. She focuses on relationship communication through the Imago Dialogue protocol. She knows being able to fully express and be listened to when bringing up an issue is a vital building block in sound relationships.

GET IN TOUCH

Deena Thompson

0438 811 117

deena@youmewe.net.au

Deena works as an Individual and Relationship counsellor at [Health in our Hands](#) 38 Burleigh Avenue, CARINGBAH