**COMPASSIONATE & CONSTRUCTIVE CONFRONTATION**

*Handout after the Presentation*

**1. Choose a time to talk that is mutually acceptable.**

Both must be ready & willing to talk, but not postpone a needed conversation forever.

Below is sample conversation, but use your own words and sound natural.

**2. Start with affirmation.**

Something positive to create a friendly atmosphere, like: *“Honey, I care deeply about you*

*and want our relationship to be great for both of us. That’s why I want to talk with you.”*

**3. Reveal your negative feeling in a positive way.**

*“I’m angry at you about something, but I love you, and I don’t like being angry at you.*

*So can we talk about it?”* (Instead of anger, you may be feeling hurt, sad, upset, frustrated, neglected, abandoned, afraid, etc.)

**4. Be honest, but identify & describe the issue causing your emotional pain in a calm & gentle way.**

Skip your whining child or controlling parent voice; use your adult voice.

Arrogance, accusation & verbal attacks arouse defensiveness & resentment.

Humility, gentleness & respect invite empathy.

You’ll be able to talk about the issue calmly instead of heatedly arguing about it.

**5. Listen to each other to understand, not to reply & rebut.**

Explain what you think and how you feel; then invite your spouse to do the same.

(Don’t be quick to take a position…because then you’ll feel a need to defend it.)

And then LISTEN to each other! You’re not listening to win the argument.

You’re listening to solve the problem for both of you.

*“Honey, I’ll tell you how I feel, and I’d like to know how you feel…when such & such happens or doesn’t happen.”*

**6. Ask questions until you understand fully what your spouse is saying.**

You’ll know when your spouse says, *“Yes, that exactly what I think and how I feel.”*

Fully understanding a person’s views is not the same as agreeing with them.

But feeling understood goes a long way in keeping your relationship reconciled while trying the resolve the issue.

You can’t resolve anything…until you trust each other’s goodwill.

DIALOGUE QUESTION: **How do I feel about the way we handle disagreements?**

**How can we do it better?**

Ed & Emily Kast

CONFRONTATION EXPLANATION & PRESENTATION

**ED:** Love is not sweeping problems under a rug. If you’re struggling with a discomforting disagreement…or if you really think your spouse is way out of line about something, true love…CONFRONTS and does not ignore or avoid an issue that’s dividing you. This is constructive, compassionate confrontation. As the Bible puts it, it’s speaking the truth to one another in a loving way. We owe each other both love & honesty.

**EMILY:** When there is conflict, which is inevitable, Exploders blow up, and Stuffers clam up. That’s lousy conflict management! Exploders do a lot of confronting, but they need to learn how to do it calmly and respectfully. Stuffers need permission and encouragement to speak up honestly.

**ED:** Does your spouse even know how unhappy you are? Intimacy makes a marriage, and stuffing your pain starves intimacy, which sends your marriage into a death spiral. A recent study revealed that a #1 factor in successful marriages is…resolving problems promptly….

Remember, love is not just an affectionate feeling; it’s a deliberate, rational decision to do the right thing for both of us, not just for me…and doing it promptly.

The Handout we’ll give you is a pattern to confront lovingly and effectively. We’ll run through it now.

**EMILY:**

1. **Choose a time to talk that is mutually acceptable.**

You don’t wanna talk with someone who’s not ready or willing to listen & talk. On the other hand, postponing a needed conversation forever is not acceptable either. We’ll be giving you sample conversation. But use your own words.

**2. Start with affirmation.**

Something positive to create a friendly atmosphere, like: *“Honey, I care deeply about you and want our relationship to be great for both of us. That’s why I want to talk with you.”*

**ED:**

**3. Introduce the issue in a positive way.**

*“Joe or Mary, I’m angry at you about something, but I love you, and I don’t like being angry at you. So can we talk about it?”*

**2**

**4. Be honest, but identify & describe the issue calmly & gently.**

Get out of your whining child voice or your controlling parent voice, and get into your adult voice. If you vent a grievance with heated accusation or hysterics and blame your spouse for the whole problem, you’ll arouse your partner’s primitive brain to fight or flee or freeze in defense. On the other hand, if you’re calm & non-threatening, you’ll activate your partner’s reasonable brain (these are different parts of the brain), and he or she is more apt to listen willingly & empathetically. You’ll be able to talk about it calmly…instead of heatedly arguing about it.

**5. Listen to each other to understand, not to reply & rebut.**

Listening with your full attention…is one of the most powerful ways you can affirm your spouse. Listening is the most important part of communication!

You’re not listening…just to poke holes in your partner’s position. You’re not listening to win the argument (that’s my temptation). You’re listening to solve the problem for both of you.

*“Honey, I’ll tell you how I feel, and I’d like to know how you feel…when such & such happens or doesn’t happen?”* (BTW, if it’s a very sensitive subject, frankly it’s better to write about it…before talking about it. That way you can calm down, think it thru, and choose your words carefully…before opening your mouth and putting your foot in it.)

**EMILY:**

**6. Keep asking questions until you understand fully what your spouse is saying.**  You’ll know…when your spouse says, *“Yes, that exactly what I think and how I feel.”* Feeling understood, even if your spouse disagrees with you, goes a long way in keeping your relationship reconciled…while trying the resolve the issue. You can’t resolve anything…until your trust each other’s goodwill.

When you’re both on the same team, attacking the problem instead of each other, you can work together and do whatever it takes to resolve any issue with a win-win solution. Well, almost any issue. Some problems will end in compromise (each losing a little) or simply accepting what the other person wants -- allowing him or her to have a few crazy whims & quirks.

**ED:**

That’s right; you get the quirks…along with the perks in marriage! And sometimes…you just have to agree to disagree…and have the humility to realize that even when I think I’m 100% right…I may not be. None of us is infallible. We have a question for us:

**How do I feel…about the way…we handle disagreements?**

**And, how can we do it better?** *(Distribute Handout.)*

Ed & Emily Kast, June 2019