

3 Ways to Calm an Argument with Your Spouse

There aren't many things that are worse than getting in an argument with your spouse that just keeps escalating. No matter what either of you try to do, you seem to be at a stalemate. Or worse, things are starting to get a little ugly.

Luckily, there are several ways you can defuse heated conflict with your spouse. Doing so will give you both the opportunity to step back, regroup, and come back to the discussion with a fresh perspective. Let's dive in.

1. Slow your response time.

Many of us struggle with the impulse to jump right in and make our case before our spouse is even done talking. Rather than listening to understand, we listen to respond. So it's important to slow your response time so you have a better chance of understanding what your spouse is trying to say.

Here are a few ways you can be a better listener and respond to your spouse more appropriately:

- Practice active listening
- Face your spouse and make eye contact
- Eliminate distractions while you're talking
- Ask clarifying questions
- Repeat your spouse's concerns and verify you understand

2. Take a break.

If you and your spouse are in the middle of a heated argument and you can't seem to find common ground, take a break (Time Out). It may seem counterintuitive, but walking away for a little while can help you both clear your heads and mull over the situation before it morphs into something you can no longer control.

Conflicts aren't always easy to resolve quickly, and if you've been together for any length of time, you understand what we mean. It's perfectly acceptable for conflict resolution to take time. So use your ability to take a break, get some air, and sort things out before coming back together to continue the conversation.

3. Write a letter.

Sometimes, verbal communication can get difficult to navigate. If you and your spouse are having a hard time talking things out without getting overly emotional, try writing down your feelings and exchanging letters.

Think through what you're writing, and once you've put it together, hold it for at least 24 hours before giving it to your spouse. That will give you a chance to make sure everything you wrote is both loving and rational. Writing your feelings or position down will give each of you a new perspective on your position in the conflict.

Getting your thoughts onto paper might also help you sort out how you really feel about a conflict. Writing can untangle a mess of thoughts and feelings. You might find that there are more commonalities between you and your spouse's opinions than you realized.