

INSIGHTS THAT MY CLIENTS HAVE TAUGHT ME

FIGHTING FOR OR FIGHTING WITH?

M. K. Doc Downing Ph.D., LMFT

Fighting for your relationship and fighting with your mate are not necessarily the same thing. What would make your relationship better, for your mate to do what you want them to do? What do you want to achieve with your fighting? Do you want to convince the other person that you are right or do you want to be close? Is what you are doing getting you what you want in the long run?

Most fights between couples are about trying to get the other person to change so that you can be happy. "She does not meet my needs. If only she/he would do... then I would be happy." Once you have made someone, other than yourself, responsible for your happiness, you have made yourself into a victim. That is giving the other person a lot of power. What you are saying is I can't be happy unless that person does. . . ." With that declaration you have just made yourself into a victim! Anytime that person wants you to be miserable all they have to do is to not give you what you think will make you happy. You just tied your happiness to someone's behavior; they now control your emotional state.

He, who angers you, controls you!

What are your expectations that your partner is not meeting? "If only he would. . . ." "She should. . . ." What did you do to make yourself happy before you met that person who was supposed to make you happy?

For some women, they do not see themselves as complete without being in a relationship. For some men, they do not see themselves as OK unless they are having sex on a regular basis. Expectations are, for both men and women, where a lot of the manipulative fighting starts.

The solution is in the concept that ***the only person you can change is yourself!*** Trusting someone else to make you happy is risky business at the best that will ultimately end in anger and frustration. (The alternative to this is to make yourself happy and invite others into your happiness.)

There are a number of false beliefs/expectations that will compound the conflict problem. These beliefs fall into the same category with, "*The earth is flat.*" From your

seat on the back porch, the earth may appear flat, but it is false just as these following beliefs are false.

- (Women) If you love me you would know what make me feel loved.
- (Women) If I have to tell you what I need/want then you are doing it because I told you not because you love me.
- (Women) If I keep loving you, even when you emotionally and/or physically abusive, someday you will see how much I love you and love me the way I love you.
- (Women) If I become a clone of him, he will love me.
- (Men & Women) If I am perfect (right) then you will not be angry at and leave me.
- (Men & Women) Sex is instinctual; good sex will just happen if we love each other.
- (Men) Women really want the strong, silent man. (John Wayne or Rambo type.)
- (Men) Women go for the bad boys who treat them rough.
- (Men) Sharing my feelings, will make me appear weak.
- (Men) It is my way or the highway.

For many people their beliefs are their reality. Reality is what you get use to and to change your reality will invariable result in stress and anxiety, so many people find it easier just maintain the old realities even when they are not working. "I don't understand why she called the police; I was just being a little rough the way women like it."

Once you check out your beliefs/expectations about and for the other person, then it is time to look at what you are trying to accomplish with your fight. All behaviors have purpose. What is the purpose of your fight? Are you trying to fit the other person into your mold (belief/expectation) for them, so you can be happy? Lots of luck, because you are fight **with** instead of fight **for** your relationship and the fighting will never end.

In fighting for your relationship there are no winners or losers. There is no right or wrong. There would be:

- Empathy, putting yourself in someone else's shoes and trying to feel what they must be feeling at that moment. "If I had said that what would I be feeling and thinking?"
- Listening and reflecting back (paraphrasing) to the person your guess as to what they meant by what they said, as well as your guess as to what they would be feeling. "I hear you saying that you feel . . . and that means to you . . ."
- Only one person talking at a time.
- Time outs
- Problem solving where neither person losers.

What does fighting for your relationship look like?

M. K. Doc Downing Ph.D.
Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist
Doc@MKDocDowning.net
<http://www.mkdocdowning.net>

M. K. Doc Downing Ph.D., Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist is an author of books and articles on relationships and parenting. You can find him at the 2GetHelp Therapy Center located in Fresno, California. If you would like to be on his mailing list, he may be reached at Doc@MKDocDowning.net.

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