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## **Chapter 4 Fighting Fairly**

### **MWO 4 Roster**

- 4-1 Judging our Fights
- 4-2 Fighting for Love
- 4-3 Take a Risk
- 4-4 Rules on Handling Marital Conflict
- 4-5 Improving Marital Negotiations
- 4-6 Let's Have a Fight
- 4-7 Follow-up Work-Out Plans for Fighting Fairly

### **Prologue**

••• Joshua and Lois Durite always prided themselves on how they never had fights like their married friends did. Josh would wonder aloud why so many couples fought like cats and dogs and still remained happy together. Lois was deathly afraid of a fight. She had been raised in a family where her parents fought fiercely. The Durites had no fights even up to the point of their decision to separate•••

Learning to fight fairly is the goal of the exercises in this chapter. Being able to handle differences of opinions in honest and open ways so as to reach resolution is a skill which you and your partner will explore in these exercises. Avoiding a fight is a sure fire way to get your marriage in hot water. On the other hand, lots of fighting with no constructive end can be deadly.

## 4-1 Judging our Fights

Read the following criteria for judging marital fights. Judge your fights with your spouse by putting a rating on each of the 20 criteria. Use the following rating scale:

1= rarely 2 = infrequently 3 = often 4 = frequently 5 = always

| Rating |  |
|--------|--|
|        | [1] One or both of us attack each other's competency when we fight.  |
|        | [2] One or both of us dig up past history of hurts when we fight   |
|        | [3] One or both of us remains silent when we fight.  |
|        | [4] One or both of us call each other ugly and vulgar names.   |
|        | [5] One or both of us attack the other below the belt when we fight.   |
|        | [6] One or both of us choose to pick a fight just as we are about to go to sleep.  |
|        | [7] One or both of us pout and sulk after we have had a fight.   |
|        | [8] One or both of us pull support and commitment away from the other if the fight's decision goes the wrong way.        |
|        | [9] We openly fight in public settings and/or in front of our families and/or children.                                  |
|        | [10] The decibel level of our fights is so high that I am sure that our neighbors hear us.                               |
|        | [11] One or both of us flies off into a rage or temper tantrum when we fight.  |
|        | [12] One or both of us believe that it is important to avoid a fight and to keep the peace at any price.                 |
|        | [13] One or both of us makes every attempt in our fights to change the other partner to think, act and feel like "I do." |
|        | [14] Solutions or closure are hard to come by in our fights.   |
|        | [15] One or both of us resort to over-use of intellectualization or rationalization when we fight.                       |
|        | [16] One or both of us give in when we fight.  |
|        | [17] One or both of us believe that fighting between spouses is dangerous for the health of a marriage.                  |
|        | [18] One or both of us cry when we fight.  |
|        | [19] One or both of us do not listen to the other when we fight.   |
|        | [20] We have a tendency to go to bed angry at night after we have had a fight.   |

### Scoring and Interpretation

To score this inventory, add up the ratings you gave to the 20 criteria and put this on the appropriate blank. To get our Couple score, add your score to your spouse's, divide by two and, if a fraction, raise the fraction to the next whole number. The following is the Interpretation of this Inventory's score:

| <b>Score</b> | <b>Rating</b> | <b>Interpretation</b>  |
|--------------|---------------|--|
| 20-25        | Superior      | You two fight well. This Work-Out should assist you to improve your sparring.  |
| 26-30        | Outstanding   | You two fight fine. This Work-Out should give you some tips to improve your ring performance.  |
| 31-35        | Good          | You two sometimes have bumpy fights. This Work-Out can get you two in shape.   |
| 36 or above  | Fair          | You two have experienced too many knock outs. You are wobbly on your feet. You both can use this <b>Work-Out</b> to get back into the fight. You may already be so beaten that you need a doctor. Professional counseling help may help. Bring your <b>Marriage Work- out</b> if you do seek outside help. |

**In your Journal Record Your Personal Notes on this Exercise**

## 4-2 Fighting for Love

### A. Desired Distance Activity

To do this activity, you and your partner should face each other approximately 12 feet apart. As you continue to talk you are to walk up to your partner until you make physical contact. Then you begin to slowly back away until you reach a distance from your spouse in which you feel comfortable continuing your conversation. At this point measure with a tape measure what this distance is. Repeat this exercise with your partner doing the walking and backing up. Then measure the partner's desired distance.

1. Do you and your spouse have the same desired distance?
2. Is your distance closer than that of your spouse's or vice versa?
3. When you made physical contact did you feel ill at ease and stop talking?
4. How comfortable were you and your spouse in doing this exercise?
5. Do you find that the partner who desired more distance is the one who is more likely to initiate a fight? If yes, why do you think this is so?
6. When you fight what is the average distance between your body and that of your partner?
7. Do you two have problems in maintaining the intimacy in your relationship? If yes,  
Yes No [1] what interferes?  
Yes No [2] Children  
Yes No [3] Sex  
Yes No [4] Your Spouse's work  
Yes No [5] In-laws  
Yes No [6] Lack of motivation  
Yes No [7] Lack of interest  
Yes No [8] Continued arguing  
Yes No [9] Too close too often  
Yes No [10] On the road too much  
Yes No [11] Social life too active  
Yes No [12] Inability to communicate at a feeling level

If you answered Yes to any of the above then you should continue on with this chapter. If you answered No to all of the above then consider yourselves one of the blessed generation who are either awfully lucky or too unaware to see the truth.

In maintaining a healthy marital relationship, partners need to establish a healthy oneness or intimacy with one another. However, such oneness can create tensions and the fear of being swallowed up or over taken by the other. In all healthy relationships

constructive, healthy, normal expression of aggression through fighting acts as a defense against such engulfment.

Contained, constructive and intelligent fighting regulates the intensity of intimate involvement by occasionally creating relief from it. It makes intimacy controllable. Such fighting, enables partners to locate "optimal distance" from each other- the range where each is close enough not to feel "left out , " yet free to engage in personal thoughts and independent actions uncontaminated by the other's encroachment or over-powering.

## **B. Identifying Hidden Issues in Your Fights**

### **1. Identify the Hot topics in Your Relationship**

A. List the hottest five topics you and your spouse frequently fight over

#### **Five Hot Topics:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Which of the above hot topics arouse most hostility and negative feelings in me?

Which of the hot topics arouses most hostility and feelings in my spouse?

B. What are we willing to change in ourselves in order to settle each of the five hot topics of argumentation in our married life?

| <b>Hot Topic</b> | <b>Change I must make</b> |
|------------------|---------------------------|
| 1.               |                           |
| 2.               |                           |
| 3.               |                           |
| 4.               |                           |
| 5.               |                           |

C. List barriers for each of the five hot topics which prevent or have prevented us from making the desired change:

| <b>Hot Topic</b> | <b>Barriers to Change</b> |
|------------------|---------------------------|
| 1.               |                           |
| 2.               |                           |
| 3.               |                           |
| 4.               |                           |
| 5.               |                           |

D. When we fight over these hot topics what are our normal responses? Check those which apply:

- Emotional flare up and explosion
- Silence
- Pouting
- Verbal attack on partner
- Verbal debating
- Intellectualization and rationalization
- Giving in
- Anger or rage
- Dropping the issue as soon as it comes up
- Diversion - switching the subject quickly

## 2. What are perceptions of our fighting?

A. Do we view fights as:

- Challenge to the security of our marital relationship
- A threat to our security
- A chance for revenge against each other
- An opportunity to ventilate our disappointment in our choice of spouse or state of our marriage
- A chance to ventilate pent up emotion

OR

- A chance to identify areas in our relationship needing change
- A growth opportunity for our relationship
- An expression of honest concern for issues preventing optimal marital satisfaction
- A projective device to identify underlying feelings or concerns which are blocks to good communication
- A problem solving exercise to assist one another to probe alternatives and to understand each other better

B. The next time we get into a fight we need to ask ourselves the following questions, before engaging in all out warfare:

- Is this a legitimate problem we have with one another?
- Whose problem is this anyway? Is it mine, hers/ his, someone else's, his parents, my mother's, society's, the government's etc.
- What emotional gain do I get from this fight? A masochistic chance to feel hurt; a sadistic chance to put my partner down; a chance to say hurting things under the guise of a legitimate problem solving session; a release of feelings that have been building up, etc.

- How important is this specific fight to our future happiness and growth? What is at stake? Does this issue have real meaning to me or is it part of a habit I have fallen into of picking fights with my spouse?
- Am I over reacting? Am I being fair? Am I being honest with my feelings? Am I exaggerating my position?
- How is my partner reacting? Am I pushing my partner too far or too fast? What price am I going to have to pay for this fight? Am I giving my partner a chance to speak and give opposing points of view? Am I being open and listening to my partner? Is this issue worth my partner's anger, retaliation or hurt feelings?
- Is it important for me to win in this fight? Is it important for my spouse to win? What are the possible consequences of each of us holding out to win? Am I so caught up in the winning that the real issues are being lost?

### 3. What Behaviors do we Exhibit in our Fighting?

A. In fighting with each other we often find ourselves very busy in telling the other:

(Check which are true with us)

- How to act
- How to think
- How to look
- How to manage the finances
- How to raise the children
- How to have sex
- How to treat others
- How to talk
- How to dress
- How to shop
- How to argue
- How to feel
- How to breathe
- How to \_\_\_\_\_
- How to \_\_\_\_\_
- How to \_\_\_\_\_
- How to \_\_\_\_\_
- How to \_\_\_\_\_

B. In looking at the above list, ask yourself honestly: Am I trying to get my partner to change into the image and likeness of me? How comfortable am I with the differences in my partner? What would happen if my partner remained unique, independent and different from me?

List the unique differences you have from your partner which you do not want your partner to change in you:

- 1.
- 2.

- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

List the differences you see in your partner which attracted you to this person in the first place.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

What are the ways in which you can alter the way in which you argue, to rejoice in and nurture the legitimate and growth enhancing differences in each other?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

### **C. Steps to have a successful fight**

Do you and your spouse ever plan a fight? Crazy idea, you say. Well, let's plan a fight for you two! The following are suggested steps for your next successful fight.

#### **STEP 1: Pick a Topic**

Choose one of the five hot topics listed above - don't shy away from the "biggies."

#### **STEP 2: Pick a Place**

Preferably in the privacy of your home away from all others, i.e. kids, friends, parents, neighbors, pets, etc.

#### **STEP 3: Pick a Time**

- never in the morning in bed after awakening
- never just after arriving home from work or school
- never at bedtime
- never at meals
- never when out on social occasions
- never in the car when traveling places
- only when you are both awake, ready and able to spend at least sixty minutes

#### **STEP 4: Create a Mood of Loving Concern**

- never begin angrily
- never cry
- never yell



- never call names
- do use an understanding tone and approach
- do be gentle and caring
- do be open and communicative
- do listen for feelings
- look each other in the eye
- sit close to one another
- hold each other's hands (optional)

#### **STEP 5: Create a Problem Solving Atmosphere**

- Explain the problem in total detail for full understanding
- List the issues which are the sum total of the whole problem
- Listen to each other's points of view concerns
- Encourage each other to talk and express feelings and
- Identify alternatives and brainstorm a full exhaustive list of possible solutions
- Rank order problem alternatives and solutions

#### **STEP 6: Create a “Compromise to Grow” Atmosphere**

- Be willing to look at a whole list of solutions
- Don't hold on to your "point of view" only
- Be creative in searching for solutions
- Don't hold on to an "I win, you must lose" position
- Don't hold onto a "You win, I must lose" position
- Don't hold on to a "You will lose and I will lose" position
- Do hold onto a "you will win and I will win" position

#### **STEP 7: Bring a Permanent Closure to the Fight**

- Once you have settled on a compromised solution, write it down into a formal statement
- Have each of you sign the statement which is kept in your ongoing Marriage Work-Out Couples Journal
- Put it in a prominent place in your house or room
- Refer to it in the future if the issue resurfaces
- Be willing to alter or modify the agreement if, over time, it is not completely satisfactory to both parties

### **Suggested Discussion Questions**

1. How well does the need for regulating the intensity of our intimate involvement explain our fighting pattern?
2. How well does fighting assist us to have healthy intimacy?

3. What are some explanations why our five hot topics never get settled?
4. What are our honest opinions about fighting?
5. How open are we to following the prescription for fighting presented in this exercise?
6. What would happen if we scheduled our fights?
7. What information did we get in this exercise which helps to explain why our fights are so painful?
8. How open are we to mutual compromise in our fights?
9. What role models for fighting did our parents provide us?
10. What steps can we take to ensure that our fights are productive and health engendering?

**In your Journal Record Your Personal Notes on this Exercise**

### 4-3 Take a Risk Conflict-Resolution Exercise

Each partner is to fill out the attached sheet independently. In the first column (minuses) list all of the complaints that bother or disappoint you about your partner. In the second column (pluses) list all the pluses or the things you like and admire about your partner.

#### Your Partner's Pluses and Minuses

| Minuses (-'s) Complaints | Pluses (+'s) Like and Admire |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1                        | 1                            |
| 2                        | 2                            |
| 3                        | 3                            |
| 4                        | 4                            |
| 5                        | 5                            |
| 6                        | 6                            |
| 7                        | 7                            |
| 8                        | 8                            |
| 9                        | 9                            |
| 10                       | 10                           |
| 11                       | 11                           |
| 12                       | 12                           |
| 13                       | 13                           |
| 14                       | 14                           |
| 15                       | 15                           |
| 16                       | 16                           |
| 17                       | 17                           |
| 18                       | 18                           |
| 19                       | 19                           |
| 20                       | 20                           |

Once you complete filling out the pluses and minuses:

1. Exchange the lists.
2. Take turns reading out loud the list your partner wrote about you.
3. Try to discuss your problems calmly and• rationally without defensiveness.
4. Maintain good will and show respect for one another.
5. Use an impartial moderator, if you think you will need one. This person should be someone you both like, trust and respect. A senior citizen or older person not related to either of you is often a good choice for this moderator.
6. Discuss each and every complaint and develop a plan of action, or a way of remediating each problem.
7. Keep in mind that many problems may be bundled together or are overlapping. Keep an open heart and ear as you share and openly discuss these concerns.

8. Don't decide that a complaint is too silly or trivial to discuss and work out. So-called little things can build up and really cause a problem later on.
9. If the discussion starts getting heated or is becoming unproductive, put the problems aside and go on to the other side of the list and discuss the things that you like and admire about your partner.
10. Once you two have cooled down and you feel better about each other, go back to the sticky issues.
11. As you go along ask yourself the following questions: What is it about my partner's complaint that upsets me so? Should I really be that upset? Isn't there something I can do in myself about this complaint?
12. Be honest with each other, be open, be fair, and solutions to your problems will come.
13. Remember, you are taking a look at yourself in your partner's eyes; hopefully this will be enough to cause a change in your behavior.
14. If you both truly work at trying to please one another by removing the causes of complaints and emphasize the pluses in your relationship, the relationship can be revitalized and romance rekindled.
15. Be sure to review the plus column when you complete the minus column.

**In your Journal Record Your Personal Notes on this Exercise**

#### **4-4 Rules for Handling Marital Conflict**

1. Always complain with a spirit of good will.
2. Avoid attacking each other.
3. Focus on the here and now. Rehashing old failures, hurts and disappointments (gunny sacking) is unproductive.
4. Admit your feelings and explore them with each other.
5. Try to express your feelings to do verbally, try writing. Writing clarifies feelings that are inside us.
6. Learn to make "I" statements. Instead of saying: "You make me feel put down," say: "I feel put down." In other words, own your own feelings. Do not blame.
7. Listen to your partner's feelings, thoughts, and opinions. Repeat them back to be sure you understand,
8. Select an appropriate time to have your disagreement - make an appointment to disagree if need be.
9. Postpone dealing with the conflict if your partner is fatigued, sick or under special pressure.
10. Be specific: Think about what made you angry and focus on specific actions, feelings and attitudes and be as explicit as possible.
11. Deal with one issue at a time. Try to determine your primary grievances.
12. Ask for a reasonable change. Determine what you really want from your partner and then ask yourself if the request is reasonable and realistic.
13. Listen carefully. Be able to restate your partner's position. Ask questions, give feedback and check out your assumptions.
14. Be accepting and understanding. Be open to your partner's feelings. Accept them even if they are very different from what you would feel in a similar situation.

15. Be willing to accept an incomplete resolution of a conflict. If you both have fully discussed your position, then the unresolved difficulty usually loses most of its destructive potential.

16. Never resort to cold silence. This is an unfair tactic.

17. Learn to give positive feedback when things go well.

18. Avoid trying to "win" if it means that your partner must "lose."

If you are having trouble in resolving your conflict - go back and work on learning to improve your listening and responding skills in Chapter 2 Communications Warmup at: <http://www.coping.us/marriageworkout/communicationswarmup.html>

### **Suggested Discussion Questions**

1. How easy is it for us to follow these rules in our fights?
2. Why do these list sound so contrived to us?
3. What about these 18 points sounds unrealistic?
4. What in these tips is too unclear for us?
5. How content are we when we set aside a fight to another time?
6. What are some obstacles keeping us from following these tips of fighting?
7. How do these rules differ from our current format of fighting?
8. What use is there in fighting if there is not a clear winner?
9. Why is it that fighting is something we both avoid at any price?
10. If fighting can be so productive, why is it that after a fight we feel so badly?

**In your Journal Record Your Personal Notes on this Exercise**

## 4-5 Improving Marital Negotiations

Couples who are in conflict are in a negotiations process. The following activity is intended to help you develop effective negotiating skills.

### STEP 1: On the Moon Game – Individual Partner Exercise

You two are the married members of a space crew originally scheduled to rendezvous with a mothership on the lighted surface of the moon. Due to mechanical difficulties however, your ship was forced to land at a spot some 200 miles from the rendezvous point. During landing, much of the equipment aboard was damaged and, since survival depends upon reaching the mothership, the most critical items available must be chosen for the 200 mile trip. Below are listed the fifteen items left intact and undamaged after landing. Your task is to rank Order them in terms of their importance for you two in allowing you to reach the rendezvous point. Place the number 1 by the most important item, and the number 2 by the second most important and so on, through number 15, the least important. You have ten (10) minutes to complete this phase of the exercise on your own. Do not discuss the results of this exercise with your partner yet

| Ranking |  | Score |
|---------|--|-------|
|         | Box of matches                             |       |
|         | Food concentrate                           |       |
|         | 50 feet of nylon rope                      |       |
|         | Parachute silk                             |       |
|         | Portable heating unit                      |       |
|         | Two .45 caliber pistols                    |       |
|         | One case of dehydrated milk                |       |
|         | Two 100 lb. tanks of oxygen                |       |
|         | Stellar map of the moon's constellations   |       |
|         | Life raft                                  |       |
|         | Magnetic Compass                           |       |
|         | 5 gallons of water                         |       |
|         | Signal flares                              |       |
|         | First Aid Kit containing injection needles |       |
|         | Solar-powered FM receiver-transmitter      |       |
|         | <b>Individual Score</b>                    |       |

Once you have completed this task, read on to identify how you function as a negotiator when you are dealing or bargaining with your partner over a conflict

Are you a soft or hard negotiator? Put a check mark next to those positions you take when negotiating with your spouse.

| Check if True for you | Soft Negotiating                                       | Hard Negotiating                                    | Check if True for you |
|-----------------------|--|---|-----------------------|
|                       | Partners are friends                                   | Partners are adversaries                            |                       |
|                       | The goal is agreement                                  | The goal is victory                                 |                       |
|                       | Make concessions to cultivate the relationship         | Demand concessions as condition of the relationship |                       |
|                       | Be soft on the people and the problem                  | Be hard on the people and the problem               |                       |
|                       | Trust partner  | Distrust partner                                    |                       |
|                       | Change your position easily                            | Dig into your position                              |                       |
|                       | Make offers  | Make threats  |                       |
|                       | Disclose your bottom line                              | Mislead as to your bottom line                      |                       |
|                       | Accept one-side losses to reach agreement              | Demand one-sided gains as the price of agreement    |                       |
|                       | Search for the single answer: the one s/he will accept | Search for the single answer: the one I will accept |                       |
|                       | Insist on agreement                                    | Insist on your position                             |                       |
|                       | Try to avoid a contest of wills                        | Try to win a contest of wills                       |                       |
|                       | Yield to pressure                                      | Apply pressure                                      |                       |

Now that you know what type of negotiator you are, consider a third option to marital negotiations which is "principled negotiations." The following are the thirteen (13) items above but translated into principled negotiations terms. Review principled terms with your partner to see if you can agree to use these principles as you progress with the "On the Moon Game." Put an X next to those principles you both agree to use in your negotiating On the Moon.

#### Principled Negotiations Terms

| Check if You both Agree | Principled Negotiation Term                                 |
|-------------------------|---|
|                         | Partners are problem solvers                                |
|                         | The goal is a wise outcome reached efficiently and amicably |
|                         | Separate the people from the problem                        |
|                         | Be soft on the people, hard on the problem                  |
|                         | Proceed independent of trust                                |
|                         | Focus on interest, not positions                            |
|                         | Explore interests   |
|                         | Avoid having a bottom line                                  |
|                         | Invent options for mutual gain                              |
|                         | Develop multiple options to choose from: decide later       |
|                         | Insist on using objective criteria                          |



|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | Try to reach a result based on standards independent of will    |
|  | Reason and be open to reasons; yield to principle, not pressure |

**STEP 2: On the Moon Game – Couple Exercise**

This is an exercise in couple decision-making. You two are to employ principled negotiations skills in reaching this decision. This means that the ranking of each of the 15 survival items must be agreed upon by you both before it becomes a part of the couple decision. Couple agreement is often hard to reach. Therefore, not every ranking will meet with each other's complete approval. Try, as a couple, to make each ranking one with which you both can at least partially agree.

| Ranking |  | Score |
|---------|--|-------|
|         | Box of matches                             |       |
|         | Food concentrate                           |       |
|         | 50 feet of nylon rope                      |       |
|         | Parachute silk                             |       |
|         | Portable heating unit                      |       |
|         | Two .45 caliber pistols                    |       |
|         | One case of dehydrated milk                |       |
|         | Two 100 lb. tanks of oxygen                |       |
|         | Stellar map of the moon's constellations   |       |
|         | Life raft                                  |       |
|         | Magnetic Compass                           |       |
|         | 5 gallons of water                         |       |
|         | Signal flares                              |       |
|         | First Aid Kit containing injection needles |       |
|         | Solar-powered FM receiver-transmitter      |       |
|         | <b>Total Couple Score</b>                  |       |

Now that you have completed the couple rating go on to Step Three to score your individual and couple ratings.

**STEP 3: On the Moon Game – Scoring and Interpretation**

**FIRST:** Score your individual ratings. Use the following On the Moon Game answer key:

| Rank Value |                             | Reason for Ranking   |
|------------|-----------------------------|--|
| 15         | Box of matches              | No oxygen  |
| 4          | Food concentrate            | Can live quite a while without food, important but not top 3 |
| 6          | 50 feet of nylon rope       | For travel over rough terrain                                |
| 8          | Parachute silk              | For carrying stuff   |
| 13         | Portable heating unit       | Lighted side of moon is hot                                  |
| 11         | Two .45 caliber pistols     | Some use for propulsion                                      |
| 12         | One case of dehydrated milk | Needs water to work  |
| 1          | Two 100 lb. tanks of oxygen | No air on the moon   |

|    |  |   |
|----|--|---|
| 3  | Stellar map of the moon's constellations   | Needed for navigation                             |
| 9  | Life raft                                  | Some value for shelter or carrying                |
| 14 | Magnetic Compass                           | Moon's magnetic field is different from earth's   |
| 2  | 5 gallons of water                         | You can't live long without this                  |
| 10 | Signal flares                              | No oxygen   |
| 7  | First Aid Kit containing injection needles | First Aid Kit might be needed-needles are useless |
| 5  | Solar-powered FM receiver-transmitter      | Communication                                     |

To arrive at a score for each of the 15 items, find the difference between your rating and the answer key rating for each item and the net difference is your score for an item. For example, if your answer was 9 and the correct answer was 12, the net difference is 3 which then becomes the score for that particular item. Total the 15 item scores for your individual score.

**SECOND:** Score your couple ranking in the same way finding the net difference of the couple ranking from the answer key ranking for each item and then totaling the 15 item scores.

**THIRD:** Compare your individual scores and couple score using the following rating scale:

- 0 - 20 Excellent
- 20 - 30 Good
- 30 - 40 Average
- 40 - 50 Fair
- Over 50 Poor

**FOURTH:** Jointly discuss these suggested discussion questions

#### **Suggested Discussion Questions for On the Moon Game**

1. How easy was it for us to be principled negotiators in this game? In day to day living?
2. Was it easier to come to an individual ranking than a couple ranking?
3. How well do we function as a problem solving team?
4. In our negotiations who is the hard negotiator and who is the soft negotiator?
5. When we negotiate do we brainstorm options and alternatives before we proceed to making a decision?

6. How comfortable are we in not focusing on our level of trust in each other when we negotiate?
7. How objective are we in evaluating our options prior to coming to a decision?
8. What blocks us as we negotiate with one another?
9. How easy is it to separate people from problems when we negotiate?
10. How easy is it to leave our personal opinion outside of a negotiating process?
11. What does this game tell us about our couple negotiating process?
12. Which score was higher our couple or individual ones? Why?
13. How easy is it for us to consider a fight as a negotiations session? Why?
14. What have we learned in this Marriage Work-Out exercise to assist us to fight more fairly?

**In your Journal Record Your Personal Notes on this Exercise**

### 4-6 Let's Have a Fight

Just in case you are not able to come up with areas or concerns with which you can practice "fair fighting" here is a list of issues some or all of which can provide that spark. Read over the list of topics then rank order them 1, 2, 3, etc. in the order of "hotness" for a potential fight with your partner. Then you and your partner need to rank order the items jointly based on your separate results. Good luck and Good Healthy Fighting.

| My Rank | My Partner's Rank | Our Joint Rank | Hot Issues   |
|---------|-------------------|----------------|--|
|         |                   |                | Money Management   |
|         |                   |                | Health: her/his/ours   |
|         |                   |                | Time   |
|         |                   |                | Job: her/his   |
|         |                   |                | Rest   |
|         |                   |                | Sex  |
|         |                   |                | Our communication with one another                               |
|         |                   |                | Children   |
|         |                   |                | Household chores   |
|         |                   |                | Atmosphere in the home   |
|         |                   |                | Religion: her/his  |
|         |                   |                | In-laws: her/his   |
|         |                   |                | Relatives: her/his   |
|         |                   |                | Goals for the remainder of our lives                             |
|         |                   |                | Retirement   |
|         |                   |                | Death: her/his/ours  |
|         |                   |                | Outside interest   |
|         |                   |                | Use of social media (Facebook, tweeter, texting, Instagram etc.) |
|         |                   |                | Friends: her/his   |
|         |                   |                | Home decorating, fix up, set up, etc.                            |
|         |                   |                | (Name other Hot Topic)   |
|         |                   |                | (Name other Hot Topic)   |
|         |                   |                | (Name other Hot Topic)   |
|         |                   |                | (Name other Hot Topic)   |
|         |                   |                | (Name other Hot Topic)   |

Don't forget all that you have learned to this point in doing this exercise. Have fun!

**In your Journal Record Your Personal Notes on this Exercise**

## **4-7 Follow-up: Work-Out Plans for Fighting Fairly**

As a result of our exercises, discussions, and efforts in this chapter of our Marriage Work-Out, we have come up with this action plan to continue and follow up the health enhancing we have just completed.

### **1. Fighting Fairly Needs:**

The following are needs which we still have to address to fully achieve full health in the Fighting Fairly aspect of our marital relationship:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

### **2. Strategic Steps toward Growth in Conflict Resolution and Fighting Fairly:**

The following are specific steps we will take to address our needs to improve our ways of fighting fairly:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

### **3. Personal Responsibility Taking**

The following are the things I will specifically do to ensure that we as a couple continue to grow in fighting fairly:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

#### **4. Evaluation of Action Plan for Fighting Fairly**

We will know we have achieved our goal in fighting fairly by the following measurable behavioral changes in our relationship:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

We agree to the above **Marriage Work-Out** plans in Fighting Fairly.

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**My signature**

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**My partner's signature**

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**Date**

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**Date**