



3 Things Couples Fight Over

The 3 things couples fight over are:

- Power and Control
- Closeness and Care
- Respect & Recognition

Which is why all couples have a cycle of harmony, conflict, and repair. **The problem is that often couples don't repair properly.**

Most Fights Have This Order:

- One person attacks
- One person is blamed
- The other person either blames back or defends

People find fault-finding very personal. As a rule, people do not consider that they can withhold their self-esteem and still be flawed and make mistakes. There is often shame involved with fighting.

Men will naturally try to fix a problem that is presented. However, if they can't, it is out of their range of abilities, or they have tried before and know that there is no solution, they will try to defend themselves.

Why do Fights Escalate?

Arguments escalate because both parties get defensive and stop listening. During this time, people stop listening because their nervous system is on high alert for danger. They are listening to answer with a defensive phrase, not to validate or understand.

This is why couples counsellors teach **active listening**. If the person who is complaining is acknowledged and heard, things do not escalate. Solutions can then be found.

How to De-Escalate Arguments

- Use Active/ Reflective Listening: Listen attentively and move into the compassionate process to learn. (See the eBook on Active Listening or try a Ghita Therapy workshop for couples: www.ghitaandersen.com)
- Agree with the person!
- Take time out. Put a pin in the discussion and agree to come back and discuss it when you can control your emotions
- Touch your partner with gentleness and compassion, look them in the eye and say, "Talk to me."
- Use humour and do not make (whatever the event is) personal
- Try to see the underlying need that the person has that causes resentment: I am fearful. I have lost control. I feel undervalued. I don't feel loved and appreciated... etc.
- Speak from your experience and use the "I" phrases not "you" (accusing) phrases
- Speak your truth from your perspective and then lovingly disengage