



Dispute Resolution Skills Worksheet

For People in Romantic Relationships.

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Use this space to reflect on the three (3) key takeaways: Know Yourself, Know Each Other, and Communicate, and consider applying them to your own life and relationships.

KNOW YOURSELF

The Take: Understanding your own boundaries, values, and needs is crucial before entering any relationship. Knowing yourself helps you identify potential incompatibilities and areas where compromise might be necessary.

Reflection Questions:

Considering things like acceptable levels of communication, personal space, independence, physical intimacy, and conflict resolution styles. What are your non-negotiable boundaries in a romantic relationship? What values are essential to you, and what needs do you expect your partner to fulfill?

Example: I will not tolerate any form of abuse (physical, emotional, or verbal). I value honesty and open communication. I need a partner who respects my independence and supports my personal growth.

KNOW EACH OTHER

The Take: Learning from the experiences of other couples, both successful and unsuccessful, can provide valuable insights for your own relationship. Observing relationship patterns in your family can also highlight potential strengths and weaknesses you might bring into your own partnership.

Reflection Question 1: Reflect on the long-term romantic relationships you've observed (parents, grandparents, other family members, friends). What are the key strengths and weaknesses you've noticed in those relationships? How have those observations influenced your expectations and desires for your own romantic relationships?

Example: *My parents have excellent communication skills and always prioritize resolving conflicts before going to bed. However, they sometimes struggle to express affection openly. This has taught me the importance of both clear communication and regular displays of affection in a relationship.*

Reflection Question 2: Based on your individual boundaries and values, and considering the insights gained from observing other relationships, what shared boundaries do you want to establish with your partner? How will these boundaries contribute to a healthy and fulfilling relationship?

Example: We will prioritize weekly date nights to ensure dedicated time for each other. We will have regular check-ins to discuss any concerns or needs. We agree to seek professional help if we struggle to resolve conflicts effectively on our own.

COMMUNICATE

The Take: Open and honest communication is the foundation of any successful relationship. Confronting issues head-on, rather than avoiding them, prevents resentment and allows for resolution. Using "I" statements promotes understanding and avoids blaming or accusing your partner.

Confront Communication Head-On

- Describe the situation or behavior that is bothering you.
- Express your feelings about the situation using "I" statements (e.g., "I feel hurt when..." instead of "You always...").
- Explain your perspective and needs clearly and calmly. Actively listen to your partner's response and perspective.
- Work collaboratively to find a solution that meets both of your needs.

Use "I" Statements:

- Instead of: "You never listen to me!"
 - Try: "I feel unheard when I don't receive a response after sharing my thoughts."
- Instead of: "You always make me feel bad!"
 - Try: "I feel hurt when I'm criticized in front of others."

Reflection Question: Think about a recent conflict with your partner (or a past conflict if you're currently single). How could you have used the "confronting communication" and "I statements" techniques to navigate that conflict more effectively? What would you do differently now?

Building a healthy and lasting relationship requires effort, understanding, and a willingness to grow together. Use these tools and reflections to strengthen your communication skills and create a fulfilling partnership.