

## Use your conflicts creatively



Conflict is normal, because we are all different. Anger is a normal emotion and, as with all emotions, is a gift from God. Anger itself is neither good nor bad. It is part of life. It's what we do with it that's either good or bad.

Conflict is just disagreement heated up, and disagreement arises out of differences that are accentuated when we live close together. Reconciling our differences is the main task in building marriage. When faced with a conflict situation, you can choose between three options:

1. Domination
2. Alienation
3. Resolution/Intimacy

To use conflicts creatively, we first have to process the anger and then resolve the disagreement – in that order! So we tackle the conflict in two stages: we deal first with the emotional and then with the factual dimensions.

When anger is handled badly it can separate us from each other, either by domination or alienation. But when anger is handled well it can lead us to greater intimacy, simultaneously reinforcing the individuality of each person.

It is always up to us to choose what we do with anger. If a couple does not learn to resolve conflict in a satisfactory manner, they may begin to avoid one another, giving first priority to other things instead of to the marriage relationship. It is therefore important to understand anger and its function in our marriage relationship.

To the extent that a couple learns to face their conflicts honestly and creatively, “a warm feeling of trust replaces the feeling of revulsion that the disagreement and anger had caused.... The result is that the couple find, in time, that their disagreements cease to threaten them because they know they can be handled and resolved.... Each potential conflict is treated as a growth point; it is used to strengthen the relationship.” (David Mace)

## In this workshop you will learn

- ways of dealing with conflict

- unhealthy and healthy ways of dealing with anger
- how to process anger
- how to resolve conflicts and disagreements
- how to deal with conflicts constructively

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