



A FREE GUIDE FROM THE SECURE BOND

How to Fight Right

Arguing with respect and compassion. A CBT-based guide to the tone, the timing, and the exact words that keep hard conversations safe.



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Fighting is not the problem

Every couple argues. Connected couples and disconnected couples argue about the same things: money, chores, in-laws, attention, the baby.

The difference is not whether you fight. It is **how** you fight, and whether you repair after.

Here is the truth I share with every couple I coach: relationships do not have problems. Relationships have two humans, each carrying their own past, trying to connect. When an argument explodes, it is almost never about the dishes. It is two nervous systems, each trained by a different childhood, trying to feel safe at the same moment.

This guide gives you the tools I teach in sessions: how to start, what tone does, the sentences that keep a fight safe, and the CBT pause that changes everything. Small tools. Real change.

1 · The two-second rule: tone arrives first

Your partner's nervous system reads your **tone** in the first two seconds, before your words even land. A true sentence said with contempt is received as an attack. An imperfect sentence said softly is received as an invitation.

The practice: before you speak, drop your shoulders, lower your volume one notch, and slow down. Same words, softer channel. Watch what changes.

2 · The soft start

How a conversation starts is almost always how it ends. Hard starts put your partner in defense before you finish the first sentence.

~~"You always leave everything to me."~~

Try instead: "I am drowning a little, and I need your help. Can we figure this out together?"

~~"You never listen to me."~~

Try instead: "Something is sitting heavy on me. It is not an attack, I just need you to hear it."

3 · The CBT pause: catch the thought before it becomes your voice

Behind every sharp sentence is a thought that fired first. In the heat of an argument, catch yours:

- **Notice:** "What did I just tell myself?" ("He does not care." "Nothing I do is enough.")
- **Question:** "Is that a fact, or is it my exhaustion and my history talking?"
- **Reframe:** "He shows care differently than I need. I can ask for what I need."

The thought "he does not care" produces a war. The thought "I need to be seen right now" produces a request. Same evening, different marriage.

4 · Fight the problem, not each other

***The team sentence:** "Same team. The problem is the problem, you are not my enemy."*

Say it out loud, even mid-argument, even if it feels awkward. It reminds both nervous systems what is actually true. Some couples shorten it to two words: *"Same team."*

5 · Listen to understand, then prove it

Most of us listen to answer. In a hard conversation, listen to understand, then reflect it back before you respond:

"So what I hear is that you have felt alone with this. Did I get it right?"

You do not have to agree. You have to make your partner feel accurately heard. This one habit de-escalates more fights than any clever argument ever will.

6 · Know when to pause

When your heart races and your voice rises, your thinking brain is offline. Nothing good is said past that point.

***The respectful time-out:** "I care about this too much to fight badly about it. I need twenty minutes, and then I am coming back."*

Two rules make the pause safe: **name a time you will return**, and **actually return**. A pause without a return feels like abandonment. A pause with a return feels like respect.

7 · Repair early, repair often

Connected couples are not the ones who never hurt each other. They are the ones who repair early:

"That came out wrong. Can I try again?"

"I was sharp with you before, and you did not deserve that tone. I am sorry."

Repair is a skill, not a personality trait. It can be learned at any age, starting tonight.

Your practice page

Think of your last argument. Walk it through the tools, in writing:

The thought that fired in my head was:

Was it a fact, or exhaustion and history talking? A truer, kinder sentence would be:

The soft start I could have used:

The repair I can still offer today:



When you want a guide beside you

These tools work. And they work faster with support. If your arguments keep landing in the same painful place, let's talk about it, warmly and without pressure.

Book your free 15-minute call at thesesecurebond.com

Or go deeper: book your Introduction Session

calendly.com/estiluv2coach-7nim/30min · 75 minutes · on Zoom

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