

TandemMarriage presents:

How to De-escalate an Argument...

and keep your train from going off the tracks!

001.



LISTEN

You must work at understanding your spouse.

Your spouse will feel validated when they feel heard. Don't try to defend yourself at this stage, just listen to your spouse's feelings, concerns, fears, etc. Once your spouse feels listened to (and validated) you will see the level of defensiveness drop a notch.

002.

REPEAT

Put it in your own words.

Repeating back what has been said goes hand in hand with listening and will actually train you to be a better listener. This will feel awkward at first, but will become much more natural in time. And you will be spending less time in conflict.



003.



CONTROL YOURSELF

Keep your emotions, words, and volume in check.

You either have control over your emotions, or they have control over you. Further, it may *feel* like you have no control, but you actually do. Or at least you *will* after you spend some time working on this. This will allow you to tame your tongue as well.

004.

APOLOGIZE

Learn to find your contribution to the conflict.

A sincere apology is priceless. Just recall a time when you felt wronged by someone and they offered you an apology. It made all the difference, right? We all want life to be fair and just. Apologizing for our contributions is our way to do just that.



005.



AVOID HOT BUTTONS

You know how to upset your spouse, don't do it.

It doesn't take long for two people to know each other well enough to understand their vulnerabilities. These are their hot buttons. Just because you have the power to push your spouse's hot buttons does not mean you should. Doing so will erode trust.

006.

TIME-OUT

If you need a minute to gather yourself, take it.

Most couples will experience times when they failed to manage their conflict well. If things are ramping up instead of down, you need a time-out. This is not an excuse to avoid conflict, rather it is about 10 minutes to gather yourself so you can face it.



007.



FOCUS

It's easy to get off track if you don't stay focused.

When trying to resolve a conflict, make sure that the main thing remains the main thing. Do your best not to bring up other (or past) issues and try not to be derailed when your spouse does. Keep on track and resolve the issue.

008.

SHARE FEELINGS

Share your feelings, not your spouse's behavior.

Telling your spouse what they did wrong (their behavior) will make them defensive. Sharing how their behavior made you feel, is far better and will help them to understand you more than they currently do. This requires you to be vulnerable.



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All of these tips come from the book, *Ready to Surrender (Poor Communication in Marriage is a Battle You Can Win)*, by Brad & Tami Miller from TandemMarriage.com. Sign up for our email list to get updates about the book that explains this infographic step by step.