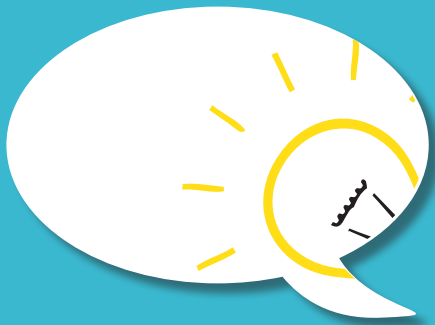


15 SIMPLE TECHNIQUES


To Improve Communication
With Your (Ex)Spouse




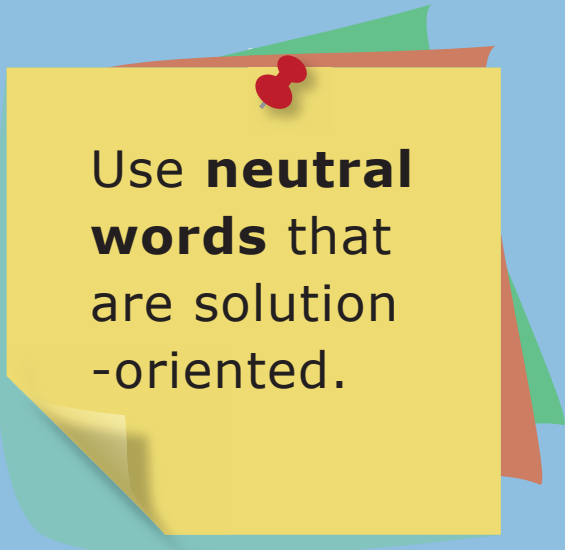
Kristina Darwood
Darwood Law Firm

1

Plan Your Conversation In Advance

 **Think beforehand** about what you want to accomplish and what you want to say to reach your goal.

 Even write down the **key phrases** you want to use in discussing the issue.



Use **neutral words** that are solution-oriented.



Calm Yourself Before Speaking

Use whatever works best for you:

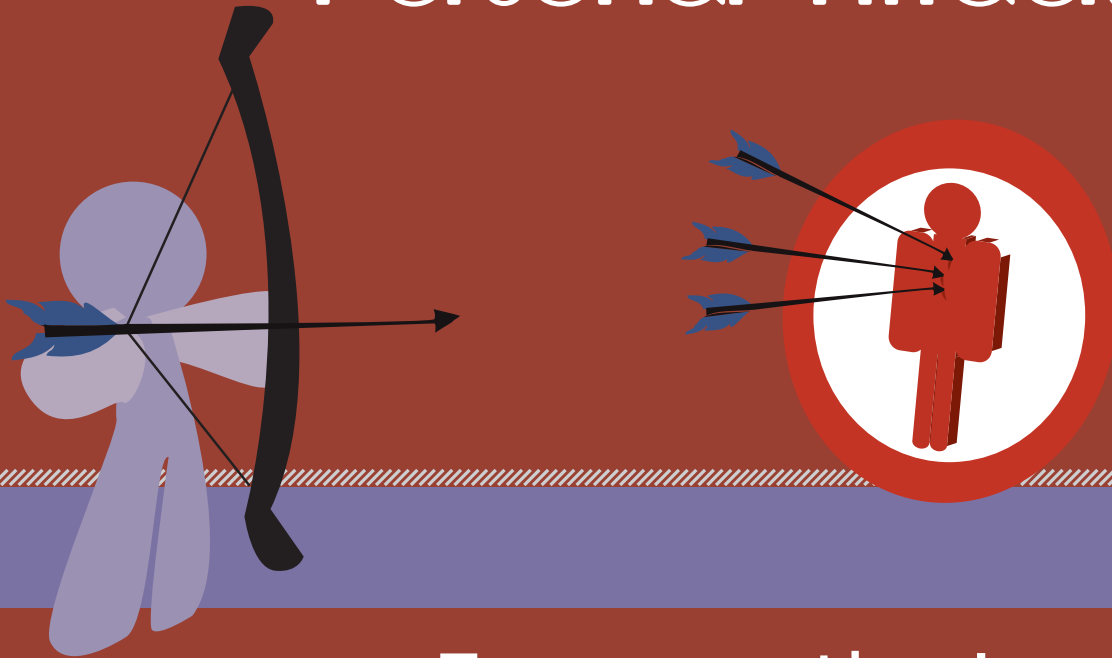
3 deep breaths, count to 5, ask yourself if this is a big enough issue to get angry over, try to see the issue from your spouse's perspective, or question whether two years from now you will care about this.



3

Avoid

Personal Attacks



Focus on the issue
and its solutions, not the person



4

Listen

Before you jump to conclusions ask questions to make sure you are hearing correctly.

HOWWHATWHY

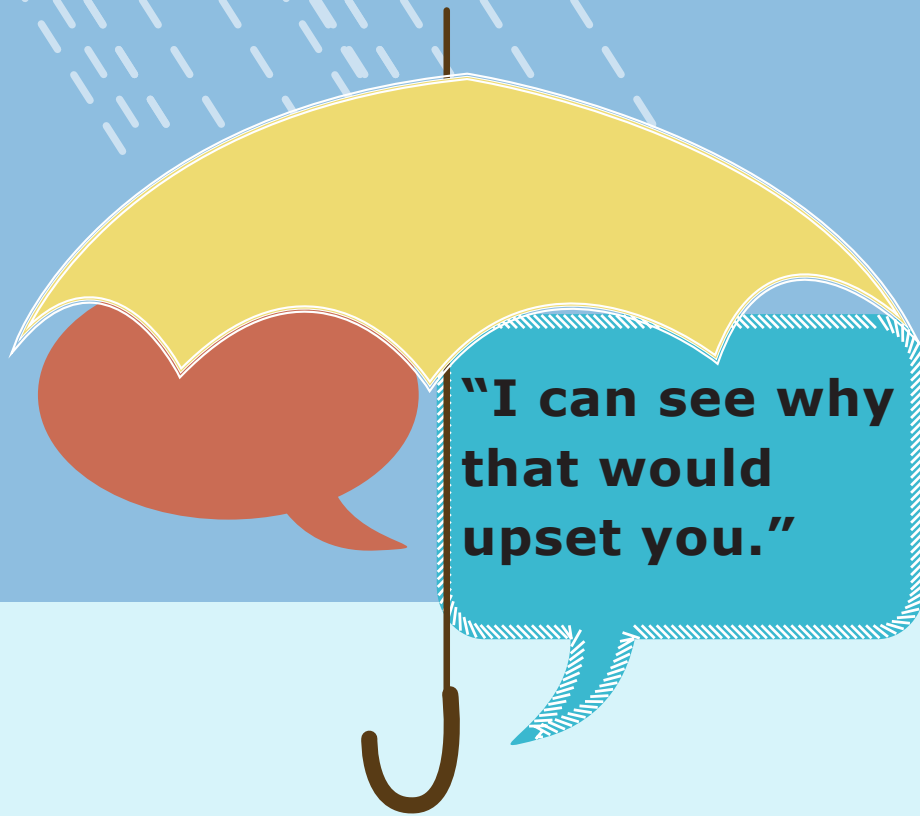
5

**Do Not
Interrupt**

Allow your spouse to completely finish a thought before you begin to speak.

6

Empathize Before Responding



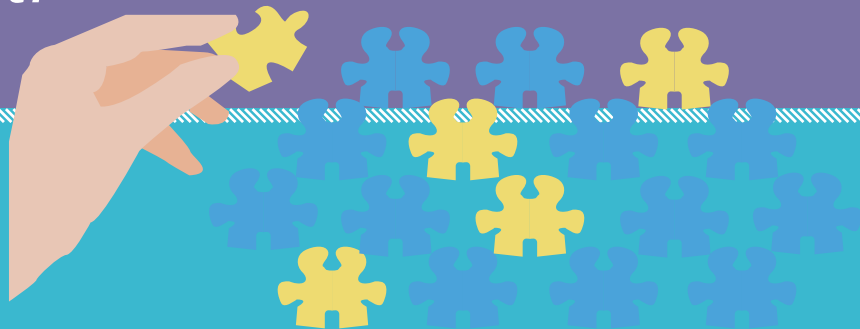
**"I can see why
that would
upset you."**



Admit your share of the problem

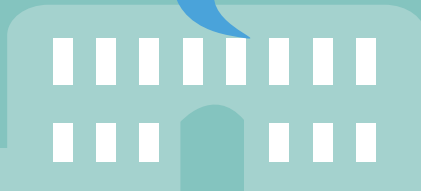
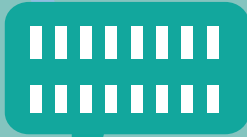
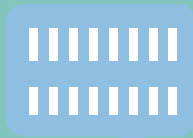
Tell your spouse you'd rather be part of the solution.

"I am certainly guilty of making this matter worse and want to correct that."





8



Restate your spouse's complaint in your own words.

Your spouse will know you listened and heard.

"So what you want is...."

9

Sandwich your request

Between Two Positive Statements

For example,

- Begin by acknowledging some assistance your spouse has provided
- State your request
- Finish with a thank you

"First I want to say that I really appreciate you...."

10



Hedge

Use softening introductory phrases like,

"Perhaps you could..."
"Maybe if we tried..."

11



Reverse

If your spouse starts speaking louder and quicker, instead of matching the volume and speed, you should speak more quietly and slowly.

12

Apologize

This works wonders. Even if you are not at fault, say you are sorry. Much can be accomplished if one spouse is big enough to apologize first.



13

Offer to compromise

Trade one favor
for another.



*"Yes, I can
do that if
you can...."*

14

Suggest multiple solutions

"An alternate possibility might be to

-----"



15

Set the issue aside

“**T**hat’s a big one. Can we take 24 hours to come up with some possible solutions and then select one?”

