

# Are You Fighting More and Enjoying It Less?

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Recipe for a heated argument:

Take 1 group of people (a family).

Mix it with close proximity (a house)

Bake it in a 24/7.oven for unknown duration

Makes a batch full of contention

As we become relieved at the possibilities of what a vaccine can do in the upcoming months; as we look at the grim prospect of new strains of virus and a rise in cases and death; there are still uncertainties about our future. Some families have shared that they have definitely drawn closer during the quarantine. Yet others are not experiencing homey bliss. What makes the difference? Did the successful, happy families never have any arguments?

Often Christian counselors have coined the term “intense fellowship” for arguments within Christian families. Our discussions can be intense and can have long-term effects if we don’t look at what is behind the disagreements.

My sister-in-Christ Josslyn has been married to husband Rick for over 50 years. She said that the two worst fights she had with her husband set the stage for a labelling system of future arguments.

The first fight was when they were still dating. They were on a youth retreat to Europe so were a bit isolated as to a normal daily structure. The disagreement began with a discussion about whether there were more coffee or tea drinkers in the world. Rick stood strongly for coffee drinkers and Josslyn was sure that tea was king. The fight heated up so much that they broke up...for a good 24 hours.

The second argument came after they were married and their daughter was only 3 days old. As they looked at her lovingly in the crib, they began to argue about how to pay for her college education. Silence between them lasted at least two days.

Josslyn and Rick determined that most arguments are based on two principles they learned from these two marker fights. The coffee/tea argument was about something that really didn’t matter much in the overall scheme of things. In fact it was pretty dumb to fuss about it. The college fund fight displayed really poor timing. The discussion should have taken place when at least the child was talking! From then on, the couple filtered future disagreements through these two lenses: bad timing or not very important.

Many of our relational issues are based on the two principles Josslyn and Rick learned: During the extension of quarantine, we need to know how to avoid letting the situation create poor timing in any discussion with our spouse or children. We also must work to eliminate arguments that do not have any primary importance. In other words, we need to gain perspective.

*2 Timothy 2:23-24: Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil...*

We must realize we have choices when we disagree with another person:

1. Should we press the issue beyond its worth or be quiet? Both of these responses could be wrong based on the importance of the topic.
2. Do we really need to resolve this now?
3. Can we learn how to communicate in a way that the other person can hear our heart without either of us becoming defensive?
4. Might we declare time outs to think rather than speak?
5. Can we keep the discussion in the "how I feel" level rather than decreeing your opinion as the truth and nothing but the truth?
6. Is it possible to declare a permanent truce or end to the discussion? Can we agree to disagree?

Look at the pictures of family members you have displayed on your walls or on your dresser. Remember, they are also stuck with you in your home. These beautiful loved ones deserve your best, not your worst.

As you push forward to complete your time of quarantine, help create an experience or two that will make you closer. Learning to communicate during disagreements is a lesson that children need to learn before they find their significant other in the future.

*Romans 14:19: So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.*

P.S. By the way, there are more coffee drinkers than tea drinkers. But Josslyn and Rick still disagree about how they paid for their child's college education, but they compromised and the graduation took place.