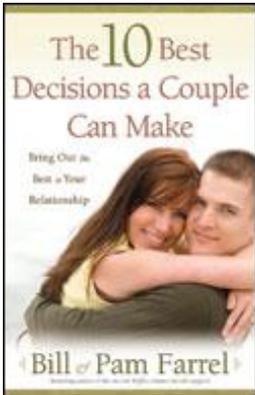




## Conflict Covenant Worksheet

In [10 Best Decisions a Couple Can Make](#), we offer many ways to avoid, and handle disagreements. One we have seen most helpful in our own marriage, and thousands of couples, is the **Conflict Covenant**. This will help you decide the “rules of engagement” or how you will handle issues when you are not seeing “eye to eye”. Creating one is a great date night activity, and it is best done when you are NOT in a conflict! Answer the questions below (make notes under each question as you go along.}. Then, at the end, we give you a few ideas on how to write up the conflict covenant more creatively!



- ♥ *What actions will or won't you do?* (How will you cool off if discussing escalates to yelling? How will you avoid physical violence?)
  
- ♥ What words will or won't you use? (We recommend no swearing, belittling, take divorce out of vocabulary, etc)
  
- ♥ *When will you call in help?* (And who will you call: a counselor? Your Pastor? A mentor couple?)



- ♥ *At what point will each of you “blow the whistle” and seek legal and spiritual help if violations occur?*

Most couples struggle to know when to call for outside help. We suggest that your marriage needs outside help to FIX it if one or all of these things exist:

Fighting more than getting along  
Intimacy has ceased

If one of you wants to eXit

Third party help can range from nearly free (as often offered

in a local church setting); or a sliding scale (some Christian counselors or non profit counseling centers offer this), or you might need the more intensive weekend or week long (or longer) getaways often run in a safe and serene setting by a very experienced expert(s). Focus on the Family has partnered with [National Institute of Marriage](#) to give this keep of vital help to troubled marriages.

Often your local pastor, the author of your favorite marriage book, a ministry like [Focus on the Family](#) or [American Association of Christian Counselors](#) can help you discern the best option for your situation. Check their websites or email experts through their website to see if they have recommendations for you.

Try to protect the privacy of your marriage and give optimum opportunity for change by carefully selecting people to help who keep confidences.

- ♥ *We have penned an article with more information and help on what to if your marriage is feeling like it is [On the Rocks](#).*
- ♥ *Also, our book, [The Marriage Code and study guide](#) is an 8 week guide looking at the common areas of conflict and how to find unity.*

- ♥ *What will you do to **build** your marriage?*

In [Red Hot Monogamy](#), we give this acrostic for how much TIME it takes to keep a marriage Red Hot:

**T**en to twenty minutes of daily talk time  
United Marriage Encounter offers great training on “dialogue” interactions that can maximize those 10 to 20 minutes reconnects each day.  
**The best time of day for us:**

**I**nvest in a weekly date night

All of our books contain “date nights” with dinner and discussion questions; and Pam’s [52 Ways to Wow Your Husband](#) gives ideas for a wow date once a week for an entire year! Try [Focus on the Family’s Date Night Challenge](#).

**The best 4 hour block (day/time of day):**

**M**onthly day away

This is at least a 6 to 8 hours block of time so both needs are met. In the [First Five Years of Marriage](#) we suggest: *“If you give a man your body, then he will give you his heart; If you give a woman your heart, then she will give you her body.”* These longer dates give enough time for emotional and physical connection.

**Our next monthly day away will be:**

**E**scape twice a year:



Get away once for rest and relaxation and once for a marriage building conference to gain new tools – plan to be away at least 24 hours and 48 hours is even better!

**Our yearly R and R getaway will be (suggestions might be anniversary, Valentine's, etc):**

**A marriage conference we each would like to check out:**

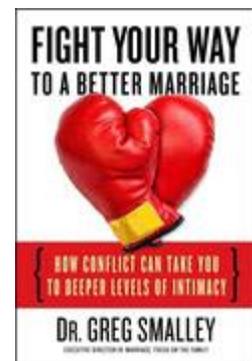
- ♥ *Do you two have a favorite sport or activity?* Sometimes enjoying that activity helps remind you that you do like each other! That activity can also be used to format the agreement. For example, one clever couple uses boxing:

First: **Go to the Mat:** Decide to open conversations with prayer.

Second: **Go to our corner** : Separate for a little while (hour or so to calm down) if we feel we might say something we'd regret

Third: **Call in the referee:** If we can't solve the issue in three "rounds" of discussion, then call in a third party: mentor, pastor, or specialist in the area of conflict.

Forth: **Go into training:** Attend a yearly marriage event to "stay in shape" for love.



- ♥ Is there a clever idea you want to incorporate to add in a little levity or humor? Humor is a great stress de-stressor if used carefully. Some of our friends when they sense tempers are rising say, "Want a candy bar?" then they take the time to chew a fun sized bar. That is about the right amount of time for them to cool down. (A sweet way to count to ten!)
- ♥ Is there a favorite verse you both can memorize that will be a communications guideline?

A frequently cited one is:

*Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil.* (Eph 4:26–27 ESV).

We know that this might feel impossible when you have work the next day or kids to care for so if your disagreement can't be settled in one sitting, we simply reschedule, and close in prayer with a sentence of affirmation like "We will get through this with God's help". Then keep rescheduling, keep praying and keep saying, "I love you" until you are madly in love and want to seal your unity with some "red hot monogamy"!

- ♥ Write it up as a Covenant—For ease begin it something like:

We, Pam and Bill Farrel promise to . . .

#### NEVER

- ♥ Hit
- ♥ Swear
- ♥ Yell
- ♥ Say the word divorce
- ♥ Use words that belittle or scar
- ♥ Use words I would be sorry I'd said if you died .
- ♥ Rationalize bad behavior



#### ALWAYS

- ♥ Say "I love you"
- ♥ Say "I am sorry. Please forgive me."
- ♥ Forgive and give grace and mercy
- ♥ Use words that speak for my own feelings
- ♥ Use words that give hope and life
- ♥ Hold hands (It is just less likely one of us would through something!)
- ♥ Pray and ask for God's help.
- ♥ Always reschedule and keep rescheduling until we can agree.
- ♥ Always be humble enough to ask for help
- ♥ Always attend marriage enriching classes, conferences and getaways

As a safeguard to your love, look to mentors who have survived a few storms, time with them will give you hope. Pam asked her grandparents advice for long lasting love on their 60h wedding anniversary. Her grandma looked at her grandpa with a twinkle in her eye and replied, "Honey, pure grit and determination!"

Instead of fighting each other, fight FOR your marriage- make it a covenant that you WILL Love, "for better or for worse" and if you follow your conflict covenant, you will see things go from worse to better!

Praying for you!



Pam and Bill Farrel

[www.Love-Wise.com](http://www.Love-Wise.com)