

Dirty Fight Tactics Worksheet

By Peggy L. Ferguson, Ph.D.

Make two copies of this worksheet so you and your partner can each fill it out. Without discussion or consultation with your partner, check the boxes under “Partner’s” dirty fight tactics you believe your partner uses. Then, check the boxes under the column “Mine” to identify your dirty fight tactics.

When you have identified your own and your partner’s dirty fight tactics, share them by comparing the items you identified for your partner against the ones they identified for themselves.

Next, compare the items you identified for yourself against the ones your partner identified.

How did they compare? Where were you in agreement? Where did you disagree? Which are the most destructive dirty fight tactics that you both use?

Each partner will identify the most destructive tactics they use and commit to the partner to eliminate those tactics (regardless of whether the partner seems to be changing).

The first step in solving any problem is to “identify the problem.” Couples can change old, destructive communication styles by learning and practicing new, effective communication skills. Communication skills are the cornerstone of effective problem-solving.

Partner's	Mine	
		Name calling
		Criticism
		Digging up the past
		Laundry list
		Ridiculing, shaming
		Hitting below the belt/Achilles heal
		Using humor as distraction
		Ignoring
		Placating or pacifying
		Sarcasm
		Passive aggression
		"The Look"
		Guilt trips
		Blaming
		Using "triangles" to communicate
		Turning the tables
		Legends" (i.e., "You're just like your Dad")
		Nagging
		Hit and Run or Ambush
		Pouting or Silent Treatment
		Playing Therapist
		Pretending to Agree
		Premature Apology
		Intellectualizing
		Minimizing/Discounting

Partner's	Mine	Having the Last Word
		Sabotage
		Getting Even
		Dishonesty, lying, half-truths
		"I told you so!"
		Quibbling Over Details
		Over-generalizing (i.e., "always, never, etc.)
		Sweeping generalizations (i.e., "all men are.....")
		Threatening Divorce
		Mind Reading or Expectations of Mind Reading
		Eye rolling, smirking, and other negative body language
		Patterns of time-out without time back in
		Using sex, money, kids for power
		Violence - verbal, physical, emotional, sexual

These are but a few of the dirty fight tactics possible. There are many more helpful articles and worksheets on communication skills for couples on my website, WWW.PEGGYFERGUSON.COM

Note: This article has been revised and edited from its original version, which was previously published in 2011 on this site. The content has been updated for contemporary language, clarity and accuracy."

Now that we've explored the various strategies and tactics involved in less-than-ideal scenarios, let's focus on a more effective and ethical approach to conflict resolution. Transitioning from your identified Dirty Fight Tactics, we can now focus on developing new skills with the Fair Fight Tactics. You can achieve your relationship goals by equipping your communication efforts with invaluable tools for navigating conflicts with integrity and fairness.



This is a digital product, available immediately.

\$2.95

Hubbard House Publishing and
Transformational Endeavors
WWW.PEGGYFERGUSON.COM
WWW.TransformationalEndeavors.Online
peggyferguson@peggyferguson.com