

Seven Key Ground Rules for Married Couples

Ground rule number 1:

Either partner can bring up an issue at any time and the listener can say “this is not a good time.” If the listener does not want to talk at that time, he or she takes responsibility for setting up a time to talk in the near future (usually within 24 to 48 hours).

Matthew 18:15

Ground rule number 2:

When discussing an important issue, we separate problem discussion from problem solution.

Proverbs 18:13

Ground rule number 3:

In discussing conflict, we practice using “I” statements. We speak from the heart, not from the head.

Genesis 2:17

Ground rule number 4:

We take turns speaking, and reflect back expressions of understanding. We discipline ourselves to wait for our turn to speak. We remind ourselves that understanding is more powerful than agreeing.

Ephesians 5:21

Ground rule number 5:

When conflict begins to escalate, we call a Time Out and try talking again with a “do over” or using the “Take it to the Cross” technique. Alternatively, we agree to talk later at a specified time about the issue using “Take it to the Cross”.

Proverbs 29:11

Ground rule number 6:

We have weekly couple meetings.

Hebrews 10:25

Ground rule number 7:

We make time for the great things of marriage - fun, friendship, sensuality and spiritual connection. We agree to protect these times from conflict and the need to deal with issues.

*Adapted from: **A Lasting Promise: A Christian Guide to Fighting for Your Marriage** by Scott Stanley, Daniel Trathen, Savanna McCain, and Milt Bryan.*