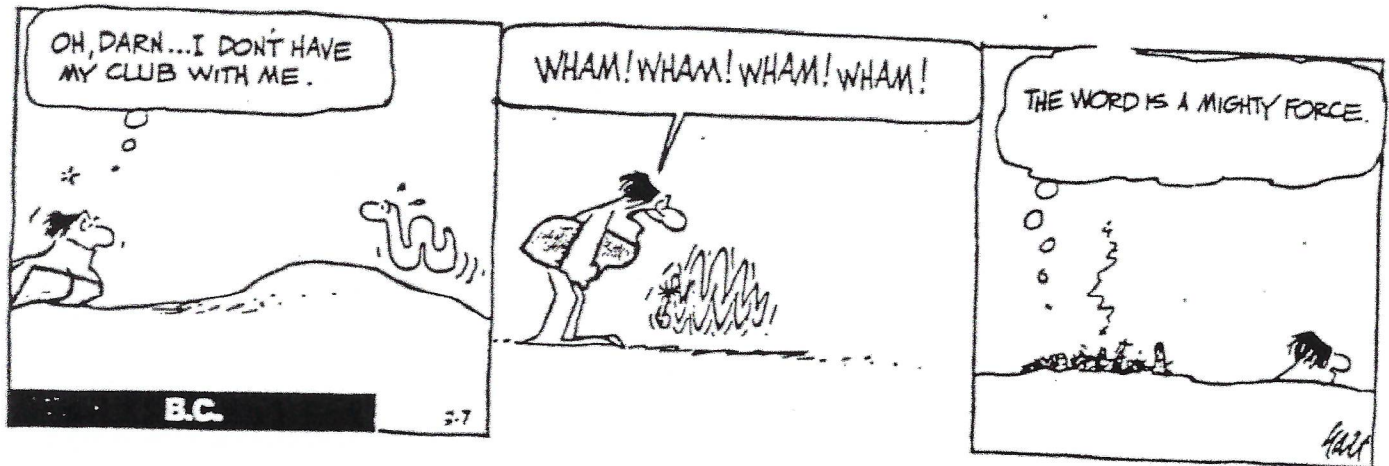


Dirty Fighting



| | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1. I Win, You Win ☺ | 2. I Win, You Lose |
| 3. You Win, I Lose | 4. I Lose, You Lose |

There is only one fair way to "fight." That's when we start out with the idea that "I'm OK, and you're OK." "I win, and you win." When we think like that, we will negotiate and compromise and problem solve, after our emotions are expressed.

The other three positions are arenas for dirty fighting:

2. "I win, you lose" makes us aggressive. This is parent-child behavior.
3. "I lose, you win" makes us passive. This is child-parent behavior.
4. "I lose, you lose" causes us to withdraw and sulk, preparing our bitter juices for another miserable day tomorrow. This is child-child behavior.

When we decide we want to win an argument or battle regardless of the cost to our partner or to our relationship, we will fight dirty. We usually make these "decisions" in the heat of emotion.

We can fight dirty in initiating an argument or in being the responder.

Dirty fighting techniques utilize the six C's:

- Comparing
- Confusing
- Condescending
- Complaining
- Condemning
- Commanding

Dirty fighters are experts in the ancient arts of blaming and sarcasm.

In dirty fighting, whenever a complaint is leveled, the other is ready and waiting with a "cross-complaint". This saves them the trouble of actually responding to their partner's problem.

If all else fails, we can play the martyr. Or we can walk out and slam the door in order to get the "last word."

Dirty fighters are very angry, but usually won't acknowledge their anger. For them, anger is not an OK feeling.

Dirty Fighting “Techniques”

1. **ASK WHY**
“Why didn’t you clean it up?” Or “Why were you late?” will imply that there must be something terribly wrong with the other person, and that an issue is something more than some simple problem behavior that might otherwise be easily resolved.
2. **AVOID RESPONSIBILITY**
Although not very elegant as a tactic, saying “I don’t remember” can bring the discussion to an abrupt halt. Alcohol or fatigue can serve the same purpose, as in “I must have been drunk.”
3. **BE INCONSISTENT**
Keep them off balance by changing your position. Try claiming that they never talk to you and then ignore them when they do.
4. **BLAME**
Make it clear that the fault lies entirely with them and that once again you are simply the innocent victim. Don’t admit that your behavior plays any part in the difficulty. Make sure they realize that they must change first.
5. **BROWN BAGGING**
Try to list as many problems as possible in as much detail as possible. Don’t stick to the original issue, but rather, throw in all the problems you can think of. Don’t limit yourself to the immediate present. If your partner can’t recall the offense, so much the better.
6. **CROSS COMPLAIN**
Respond to any complaint your partner may raise with one of your own. For example, “Me late? Why, if it weren’t for the fact that you never have any clean clothes for me . . .” If done properly, you can balance com-plaint against complaint forever.
7. **CRUCIALIZE**
Exaggerate the importance of the issue with statements such as, “If you really loved me, you would never have done it in the first place.” Or, “This proves that you don’t care.” Never concede that an issue is not absolutely critical and in need of immediate resolution.
8. **DON’T LISTEN - DOMINATE**
Any time you appear to be listening, you run the risk of suggesting that you value your partner’s opinion. Consider talking while they are presenting their case, pretending to read, or falling asleep.
9. **ESCALATION**
Move quickly from the issue to questioning their personality; wondering whether it is worth the effort to stay together (issue-to-personality-to-relationship). Interpret the other’s shortcomings as evidence of bad faith and the impossibility of a happy relationship.

10. **FORTUNE-TELLING**
Predicting the future can save you the effort of really trying to resolve the problem. "You will never change," or "It would be easy for me to change, but you wouldn't live up to it" are statements which can protect you from having to make any effort at all.
11. **GET EVEN**
Don't settle for a compromise or an apology. Hold grudges for as long as possible, as you might need those complaints in future arguments.
12. **GIVE ADVICE**
By telling people how to act, think and feel, you can maintain a position of superiority while insisting that you are only trying to be helpful.
13. **LABEL**
By labeling someone in a negative manner you can create the impression that they are totally at fault. Psychological labels (i.e., "childish," "neurotic," "insecure," or "alcoholic") are particularly effective in obscuring issues where you may be vulnerable.
14. **LEAVE**
No problem is so big or important that it can't be ignored. Walk out of the room, leave home or just refuse to talk. Sometimes just threatening to leave can accomplish the same end without the inconvenience involved in actually leaving.
15. **LIST INJUSTICES**
This is a great morale builder. By reciting every slight injustice or iniquity you have experienced in the relationship, you will experience a renewed sense of moral self-righteousness. You can use this approach to justify almost any activity you have always wanted to engage in. For example, "Since you went ahead and bought that dress, I can buy a new car."
16. **MACHINE GUNNING**
By continually throwing up questions, never allowing them to answer, you can keep them in confusion as to what you really are talking about.
17. **MIND READING**
By deciding that you know the real reason why someone is acting in a certain way, you can avoid having to debate issues. For example, "You only said that to set me up, or "You don't really feel that way," are particularly effective.
18. **OVERGENERALIZE**
Use words like "always" and "never," as in, "You are always late." This is likely to distract your partner into discussing the over-generalization rather than the issue, and insure further misunderstanding.
19. **PERSONALIZE**
Anyone can resolve a conflict if you stick to the issue. By shifting to personalities, you should be able to generate enough defensiveness to keep the conflict going forever.
20. **PLAY THE MARTYR**
If timed properly, this tactic can completely disorient the opposition. "You're right, dear, I am hopeless" can stop them in their tracks. An example of a less subtle form is "How could you say that after all I've done for you?" An extreme is to threaten to kill yourself if they don't shape up.

21. **PULL RANK**
Rather than depend on the merits of your argument, pull rank by reminding your partner that you make more money, have more education, are older or younger, or are wiser or more experienced in such matters. Anything that will enhance your status at their expense.
22. **REJECT COMPROMISE**
Don't back down. Why settle for compromise when with a little luck you can really devastate them and the relationship. Stick with the "one winner" philosophy.
23. **SARCASM**
This is a great way of saying something without having to take responsibility for the communication. If you can say, "You're so smart" just right, you can imply that they are stupid and deny that you said it at the same time.
24. **TIMING**
Pick the right time to begin an argument. Late at night, during a favorite TV show, after several drinks, or just before your spouse has to leave for work are options. As a general rule, look for the time they least expect it or are unable to adequately respond.
25. **USE CHILDREN**
"If you spent more time with them, they wouldn't be failing." "Do you want them to grow up like you?" can always be used unless you are so unfortunate as to have perfect children.
26. **USE MONEY**
"If you made as much money as _____", or, "When you make as much as I do, then you can have an opinion" are old favorites.
27. **USE OTHERS**
"Even _____ says that about you" can back up your argument and make your case sturdier.
28. **USE RELATIVES**
"When you do that, you are just like your mother" can be used to break their concentration and undermine confidence.
29. **USE TERMINAL LANGUAGE**
For example, if you happen to be upset by the fact that the room was not straightened, start with "You slob," to suggest that it is their existence and not their behavior in question.
30. **USE THIS LIST AGAINST YOUR PARTNER**
Do your best to point out your partner's dirty fighting techniques, especially when they are angry and losing control. At the same time, refuse to acknowledge that you use any of these techniques yourself.
31. **OTHERS**
This list should only be considered suggestive of the range of tactics to be drawn from. With practice and creativity, participants should be able to come up with numerous innovations.

Anger Journal

(Use each column for a separate experience with anger)

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------|---|---|---|---|-------------|---|---|---|----|-------------------------|---|---|---|---|-------------|---|---|---|----|
| Date | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Intensity | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Physical Signs | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Behavior Signs | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Situation | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Did you take a Time-Out? | Yes | | | | | No | | | | | Yes | | | | | No | | | | |
| | Comments | | | | | | | | | | Comments | | | | | | | | | |
| Did you Stuff it, Escalate it, Direct it? | Stuff it | | | | | Escalate it | | | | | Stuff it | | | | | Escalate it | | | | |
| | Comments | | | | | Direct it | | | | | Comments | | | | | Direct it | | | | |
| "I" Statements | What else am I feeling? | | | | | | | | | | What else am I feeling? | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Physical Activity | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Alcohol or Drug use? | Yes | | | | | No | | | | | Yes | | | | | No | | | | |
| | Comments | | | | | | | | | | Comments | | | | | | | | | |