



Conflict can be a good thing...

Have you ever been in the middle of a point scoring argument - one of those ones where both parties are trying to show who's more aggrieved, had it the hardest and where the overarching sentiment is, *"It's not fair!"* and *"It's all YOUR fault!"*. Often the end result is both people feeling hurt, less connected and unresolved. It can take a lot to bounce back from this sort of conflict and if it's repeated too often, it can cause relationships to become really strained and break. There's another way to do conflict.

Step One - Stop Fighting for Footage

If two parties are arguing for superiority or entitlement, they're fighting for footage over one another. They'll feel like they're on opposing sides of a fence and trying to gain ground. This alienates and will also escalate anger. Word grenades are likely to be thrown and they'll be damaging when they hit. To see this in action, just watch siblings fighting over whose turn it is to do the dishes! Miss X, *"I did them last night! I've got homework to do."* Miss J, *"I've done them every other night for a whole week and I've got homework to do too! You're just lazy!"* ... Time to duck for cover.

Step Two - Stop Defending and Get Curious

If someone is upset and making demands or accusations, they're not going to be interested in negotiating a solution until they feel heard and understood. Instead of reacting instinctively by becoming defensive, which is natural when facing someone who is angry, step to the side and find your curious part and really focus in on what they're saying. Be sure you've understood because if you're feeling threatened, it's easy to misinterpret or catastrophise what someone else is saying. Check and clarify by repeating back what you've heard and get confirmation that it's accurate. Miss X, *"I did them last night. I've got homework to do!"* Miss J, *"It sounds like you're feeling stressed and you've got a lot to do. What have you got on your plate at the moment?"* ... After a few minutes of listening and clarifying, Miss X is going to be much more open to renegotiating the roster and Miss J is far more likely to find a fair and equitable arrangement instead of both of them getting into trouble for arguing. Good conflict will build strong relationships, so practice and share these tips.

Bare Hands is run by allied health professionals committed to helping women embrace positive change by providing access to practical education. To find out more give us a call, email us or visit www.barehands.com.au.

©Bare Hands 2015

- ✓ Point scoring arguments will end up with everyone losing.
- ✓ Stop fighting for a foot up.
- ✓ Be curious and clarify before negotiating a solution.

"The purpose of an argument should not be victory but progress."

Life Life Happy

Did you find this helpful? Want more strategies like this...

Communication is tricky. Knowing essential principles of good conversations can secure your relationships and stop the breakdowns. Grab **Sticky Strategies** for a quick course in communication 'know how'. There's more free weekly tips [here](#).



Bare Hands
Practical life strategies for women