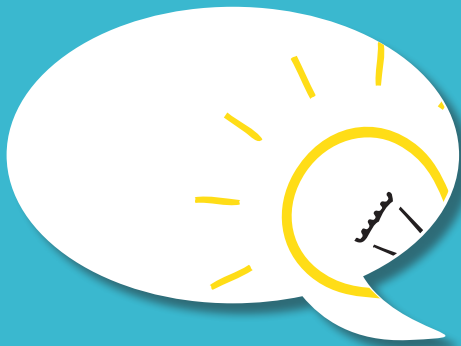


# 15 SIMPLE TECHNIQUES

To Improve Communication  
With Your (Ex)Spouse



**Lawyer John Doe**  
**Doe Law Offices**



# 1


# Plan Your Conversation In Advance



**Think beforehand** about what you want to accomplish and what you want to say to reach your goal.



Even write down the **key phrases** you want to use in discussing the issue.



Use **neutral words** that are solution-oriented.



# Calm Yourself Before Speaking

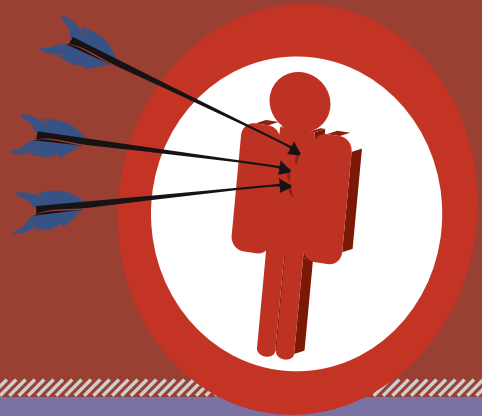
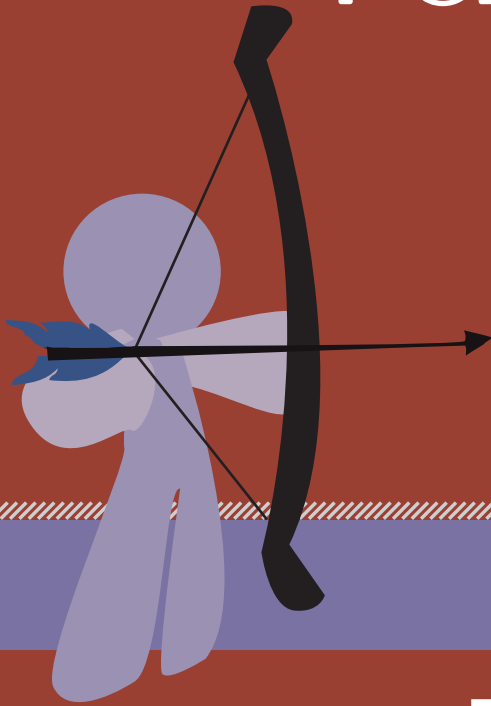
**Use whatever works best for you:**

3 deep breaths, count to 5, ask yourself if this is a big enough issue to get angry over, try to see the issue from your spouse's perspective, or question whether two years from now you will care about this.



# 3

## Avoid Personal Attacks



Focus on the issue  
and its solutions, not the person



# 4

## Listen

Before you jump  
to conclusions  
ask questions  
to make sure  
you are hearing  
correctly.

HOWWHATWHY



# 12

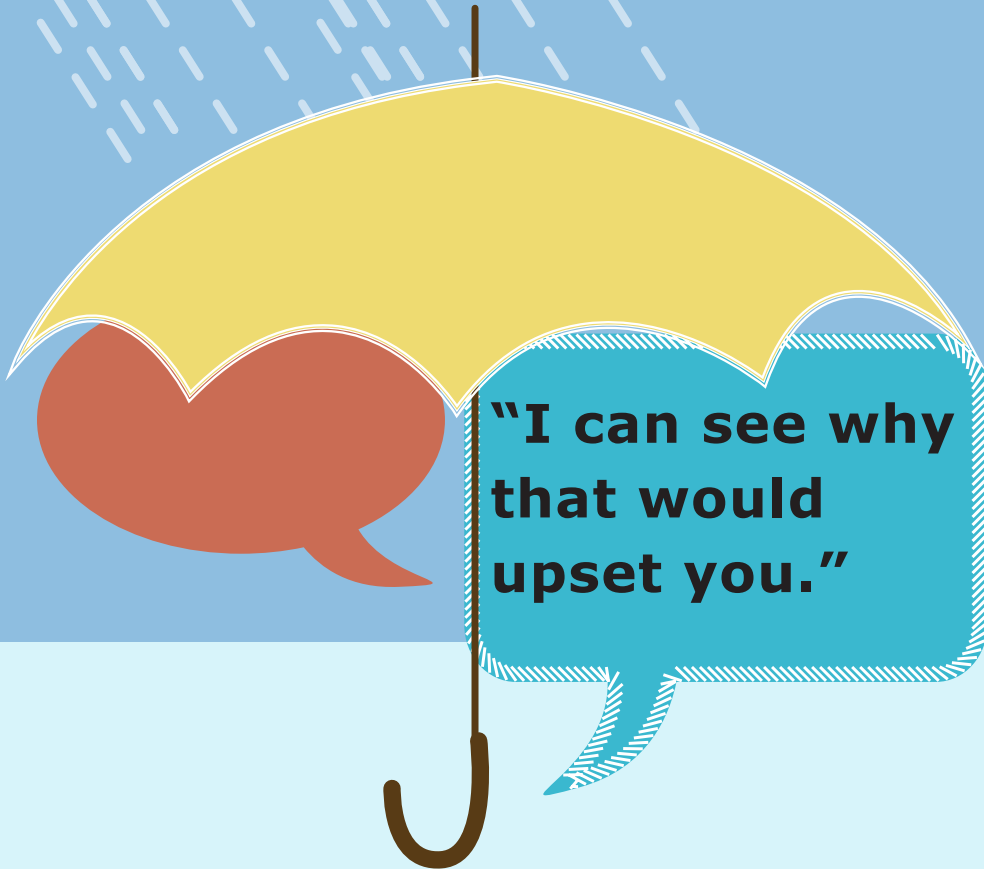
# Do Not Interrupt

Allow your spouse to completely finish a thought before you begin to speak.



6

# Empathize Before Responding

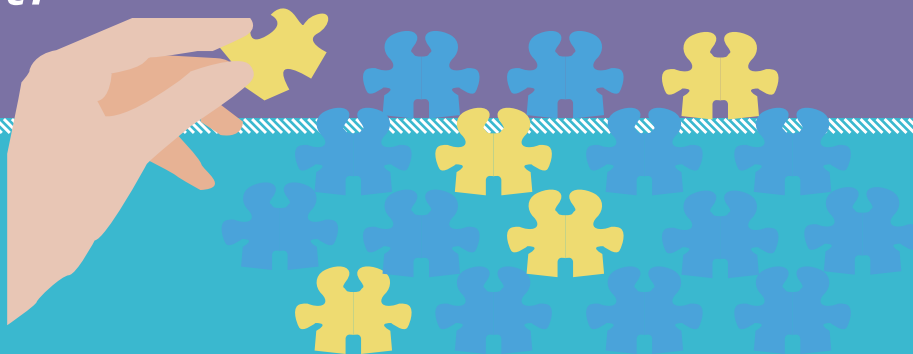




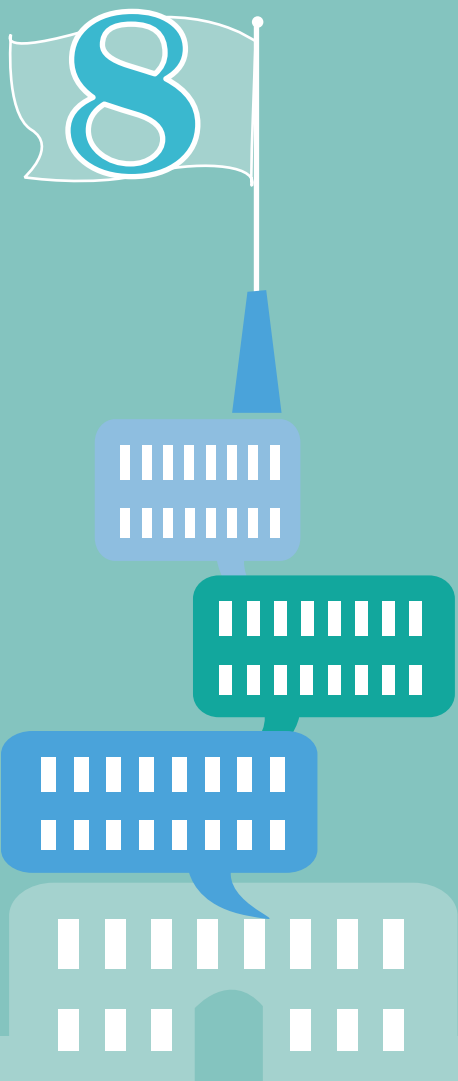
# Admit your share of the problem

Tell your spouse you'd rather be part of the solution.

*"I am certainly guilty of making this matter worse and want to correct that."*







# **Restate your spouse's complaint in your own words.**

Your spouse will  
know you listened  
and heard.

*"So what you want  
is...."*

9

## **Sandwich your request**

Between Two Positive Statements

*For example,*

Begin by acknowledging some assistance  
your spouse has provided

State your request

Finish with a thank you

*"First I want to say that I really appreciate  
you...."*

# 10



## Hedge

Use softening introductory phrases like,

*"Perhaps you could..."*  
*"Maybe if we tried...."*

11



# Reverse

If your spouse starts speaking louder and quicker, instead of matching the volume and speed, you should speak more quietly and slowly.

# 12

## Apologize

This works wonders. Even if you are not at fault, say you are sorry. Much can be accomplished if one spouse is big enough to apologize first.



# 13

## Offer to compromise

Trade one favor  
for another.



*"Yes, I can  
do that if  
you can...."*

# 14

## Suggest multiple solutions

"An alternate possibility might be to  
-----"



# 15

## Set the issue aside

“**T**hat’s a big one. Can we take 24 hours to come up with some possible solutions and then select one?”

