

Dirty Fight Tactics Worksheet

By Peggy L. Ferguson, Ph.D.

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

When you have identified your own and your partner’s dirty fight tactics, share them with each other by comparing the items you identified for your partner against the ones s/he identified for himself/herself. Then compare the items you identified for yourself against the ones your partner identified for you.

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 that they use and will make a commitment 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 up old, destructive communication styles, by learning and practicing new effective communication skills. Communication skill is the cornerstone of effective problem solving.

The Dirty Fight Tactics Worksheet

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Identify your partner's and your own dirty fight tactics. Put a check mark in the Mine and Partner's Columns to identify the Dirty Fight Tactics used by you ("Mine") and your partner ("Partner's"). You might both use some of the same tactics. Choose the tactics that seem to come up fairly frequently in your relationship.

Mine	Partner's	Tactics		
		1. Name calling		
		2. Criticism		
		3. Digging up the past		
		4. Laundry list		
		5. Ridiculing, shaming		
		6. Hitting below the belt/Achilles heal		
		7. Ignoring		
		8. Using humor as distraction		
		9. Placating or pacifying		
		10. Sarcasm		
		11. Passive aggression		
		12. "The Look"		
		13. Guilt trips		
		14. Blaming		
		15. Using "triangles" to communicate		

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Mine	Partner's	Tactics	
		16. Turning the tables	
		17. "Legends" (i.e., "You're just like your Dad")	
		18. Nagging	
		19. "Hit and Run" or Ambush	
		20. Pouting or Silent Treatment	
		21. Playing Therapist	
		22. Pretending to Agree	
		23. Premature Apology	
		24. Intellectualizing	
		25. Minimizing/Discounting	
		26. Having the Last Word	
		27. Getting Even or Sabotage	
		28. Dishonesty, lying, half-truths	
		29. "I told you so!"	
		30. Quibbling Over Details	
		31. Over-generalizing (i.e., "always, never, etc.") and sweeping generalizations (i.e., "all men are.....")	
		32. Threatening Divorce	
		33. Mind Reading or Expectations of Mind Reading	
		34. Eye rolling, smirking, and other negative body language	
		35. Refusal to let the other person take a time out	
		36. Patterns of time-out without time back in	

Mine	Partner's	Tactics		
		37. Using sex, money, kids for power		
		38. Violence - verbal, physical, emotional, sexual		

*Note: 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. Go to [“Communication Articles”](#) .

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WELCOME

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Tags: communication problems, couple communication, hitting below the belt, silent treatment, threatening divorce, communication triangles, passive aggression in marriage, communication in relationships, communication, the silent treatment, communication skills, communication styles, effective communication skills, relationship problems, communicating, marriage problems, emotional abuse