

On Fighting Well **by Whitney Altopp**

I recorded a voice memo for my kids this morning. It took me 8 minutes to tell them why it's important to get good at fighting for the sake of your relationships— especially with your life-long partner.

Anyone who wants a peaceful and joyful life attempts to avoid fighting. Don't be fooled! Avoidance is the wrong road to a peaceful and joyful life.

It should be noted that fights are fights because they take on a life of their own. And the key to successful fighting is that the life generated in the fight **does no harm!**

A fight defined- one person says something and the other one reacts and then the First responds and then the Second states, etc. Something is being created that will take on a life of its own. Do you know how to fight well?

It takes practice. There are skills and tools which work best for the fight. Sometimes you don't know what you need until you find yourself at the moment of needing it. If you're lacking the tool that gives you confidence that you can step forward in ever increasing clarity and care, then stop! The fight is too important to build faultily.

Notice that I don't use the word "argument." Although what I'm speaking of here is verbal (for which physical fight doesn't create harm? There isn't a physical fight which doesn't create harm. All physical fighting creates harm.), I'm not using the word argument. "Argument" implies reason and fights have little reason. Fights have emotion, sometimes understood and sometimes misunderstood by all involved.

Fights are fought because of a desire to be understood by the other. So, when you feel yourself not making sense to another, then call a truce! This fight can be begun again once emotional and practical reinforcements are called in. Because what's the goal?!

To be understood in a way which makes a new way.
A well co-created fight should build a new direction.

Speak up if the volume or the messiness or the intensity or the length of a fight distracts you. You can look for ways to address this. One usually becomes more efficient with practice. Take time to reflect on how well you have or haven't fought so that you might discover what it is you're working toward. The goal is to make a new way. Allow the fights to come when they do. The paradoxical reality is that moving through them well increases your peace and joy in a relationship. Moving through fights well increases your understanding and your sense of being understood.

You and those around you deserve to live a joyful and peaceful life of connection!