Ground rules for arguments

Rules to agree in a calm moment for how you will argue.

Every close relationship has conflict. Agreeing some rules in a calm moment makes it far more likely that rows end in understanding instead of damage. Tick the ones you both agree to.

- [ ] One issue at a time. No bringing up old ones.
- [ ] No name-calling, insults or put-downs.
- [ ] No shouting. If voices rise, we pause.
- [ ] No "always" or "never".
- [ ] We each speak for ourselves: "I feel", not "you are".
- [ ] We take turns, and let each other finish.
- [ ] No threats, including threats to leave.
- [ ] Either of us can call a time out, and we agree when to come back.
- [ ] No arguing in front of the children, by text, or after drinking.
- [ ] We attack the problem, not each other.
- [ ] We look for a solution we can both live with, not a winner.
- [ ] We do not go to bed, or leave, without at least agreeing when we will talk again.

Before raising something

- Is this a good time? Are we both fed, rested and sober?
- What exactly do I want to be different?
- Can I start gently?

Afterwards

- Say what you appreciated about how the other person handled it.
- Repair: a hug, an apology for your part, a cup of tea.

Other rules we agree to

Agreed by, and date

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