

# **Marriage and Family (SOC 212)**

## **Marital Conflict Resolution Guidelines**

- 1) No matter what the issue may be, nothing is really trivial since your regard for your partner's point of view is always on trial.
- 2) Realize that marital conflict is not a zero-sum game; no one can win the battle without both partners losing. Either both achieve deeper intimacy out of every conflict or both lose it.
- 3) Act, don't react. Never allow yourself the indulgence of striking an impulsive blow of words against your partner. Lovers will know how to hurt one another, but they should never use that power.
- 4) Don't mind-rape. Do not presume to know what your partner is thinking and feeling. Always remain open to the possibility that the person may be saying something that you do not anticipate because if you don't you will never hear it.
- 5) Deal with one issue at a time. Despite the temptation, do not ever pile on a list of grievances that you may have been keeping under wraps. This stockpiling of grievances is doomed to be counterproductive since it only creates a feeling of hopelessness in the other.
- 6) When you do express your grievance be careful to make it as specific as possible. Do not indulge in the temptation to theorize (i.e., alleging that your partner is anal retentive or "just like their same sex parent").
- 7) Realize that there is really no such thing as a "conflict-free" happy marriage. Dealing constructively with conflict is what makes a marriage happy.
- 8) Whenever possible, pursue genuine compromise with your partner. Be creative and flexible and thereby demonstrate your love.
- 9) Take pride in your ability to recognize that you are not always correct when you have a dispute with your partner. The ability to apologize is precious and very rare and you need to indulge in it sometimes.
- 10) Realize that real love is active and not passive and requires constant attention that is borne of the commitment that you have to your relationship. Good relationships just don't happen without people making them happen.