

Able Arguers are 10 Times Happier than Silent Spouses

HOW to EFFECTIVELY ARGUE with YOUR SIGNIFICANT OTHER

- **Manage your thoughts.** Soften your judgments by asking yourself why a reasonable, rational, and decent person would do what your significant other is doing.
- **Affirm before you complain.** Don't start by diving into the issue. Establish emotional safety by letting your significant other know you respect and care about him or her.
- **Start with the facts.** When you begin discussing the issue, strip out accusatory, judgmental, and inflammatory language.
- **Be tentative but honest.** Having laid out the facts, tell your significant other why you're concerned. But don't do it as an accusation, share it as an opinion.
- **Invite dialogue.** After sharing your concerns, encourage your significant other to share his or hers—even if he or she disagrees with you. If you are open to hearing your significant other's point of view, he or she will be more open to yours.

ABOUT THE RESEARCH. The study collected responses via an online survey of 976 individuals in February 2012. Margin of error is approximately 3%.

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According to our research on communication in relationships, couples who argue effectively are 10 times more likely to have a happy relationship than those who sweep difficult issues under the rug.

And what are the most difficult topics couples usually avoid or harmfully debate? The study of 976 people found that the three most difficult topics for couples to discuss are sex, finances, and irritating habits.

Many couples operate under the myth that when they avoid discussing sensitive issues they avoid an argument which is ultimately a win for the relationship. However, what we don't talk out, we eventually act out. Specifically, four in five say poor communication played a role in their last failed relationship, and half cite poor communication as a significant cause of the failed relationship.

In reality, it's not how much you argue, but the way in which you debate sensitive issues that ultimately determines the success of your relationship. The good news is that with the right set of skills, crucial conversations can strengthen your relationship.

KEY RESULTS

Able arguers are **10x** happier than silent spouses

4 in 5 say poor communication played a role in their last failed relationship

1/2 cite poor communication as a significant cause of the failed relationship

Fewer than **1 in 5** believe they are usually to blame when a conversation goes poorly

About VitalSmarts—An innovator in corporate training and leadership development, VitalSmarts combines three decades of original research with 50 years of the best social science to help leaders and organizations change human behavior and achieve new levels of performance. VitalSmarts has identified four high-leverage skill sets that, when used in combination, create healthy corporate cultures. These skills are taught in the Company's award-winning training programs and *New York Times* bestselling books of the same titles: *Crucial Conversations*, *Crucial Accountability*, *Influencer*, and *Change Anything*. VitalSmarts has consulted with more than 300 of the Fortune 500 companies and trained more than one million people worldwide. www.vital-smarts.com