



# Fighting Clean

*Love Deeply Tool*



## Fighting Clean

A “Clean Fight” is a negotiation between two people for the sake of the relationship. The person is asking for the “Clean Fight” recognizes that it is their issue. Negotiating in relationships, and particularly in marriage, is extremely important for the goodwill of the relationship. The person bringing up the issue cares enough to take responsibility for something important to them, rather than projecting blame on the other. The person listening to the issue cares enough to consider what is important to someone they care about. They are willing to negotiate.

### **A. Decide on a specific behavior that you have a complaint about.**

(Pick a concrete behavior that is not a strong emotional issue for you both to start with).

- Each person writes out the answers to numbers 1-4 below. Stick to one issue.
- Practice sharing this with a person with whom you do not have a conflict. (Ensures clean fighting)
- Return to your partner. Choose who will be the speaker/listener. Go through all steps.
- Listener incarnates and reflects back what they hear the Speaker say (paraphrase) after each sentence stem.



## Fighting Clean

### **B. Speaker: Ask permission to do a clean fight**

1. **State the problem.** “I notice ...” g. I notice when you arrive home ahead of me your car is not pulled to the end of the driveway which means I cannot pull my car all the way in and it blocks the sidewalk.
2. **State why it is important to you.** “I value ...” g. I value an unobstructed sidewalk. For me, it communicates respect for people’s safety. Kids on bikes, people with baby carriages, and others don’t have to go into the street.”
3. **Fill in the following sentence:** “When ... I feel ...”g. When our car blocks the sidewalk, I feel anxious because maybe I don’t want people to think we are inconsiderate but I also really value being considerate and respecting their safety.
4. **State clearly, respectfully, specifically, and direct your request.**  
g. I would like to ask that you pull your car to the very end of the driveway when you arrive home first. If you forget, I would then like to ask that you take responsibility for moving both cars all the way within the hour.



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### C. Listener:

5. **Consider the request.** Briefly share your perspective on it.  
e.g. I had no idea it bothered you. For me, it is no big deal to block the sidewalk. I never even think about it.

6. **Are you willing to do all of it, part of it, or none of it?** e.g. I am more than willing to move my car all the way in -and both cars if I forget. I have one adjustment though. I would like to ask that you remind me if I forget to do it within the hour.

### D. Speaker:

7. **Agree on request OR Offer an alternative (not more than 3x)**  
e.g. it's a deal!

8. **Together -write agreement** – go over in 2-4 weeks.



## Fighting Clean

**(His) My understanding of the agreement is:**

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**(Hers) My understanding of the agreement is:**

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**Husband's Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Wife's signature:** \_\_\_\_\_



# Fighting Clean

## Dirty Fighting Tactics

Silent Treatment  
Manipulation  
Blame/Attack  
Accuse  
Threaten Intimidate  
Put-downs  
Criticize  
Lie  
Triangle  
Escalate  
Anger/Rage

Sarcasm  
Complain  
Deny  
Passive- Aggressive  
Assume blame  
Avoid  
Hitting/Violent  
Negative Interpretation  
Shout  
Escape into Addictions  
Distract

## Clean Fighting Worksheet

**Speaker:** Ask permission to do a clean fight

- 1.State the problem. I notice ... State why it is important to you. I value ...
- 2.State why it is important to you. I value ...
- 3.Fill in the following sentence: "When ... I feel ... "
- 4.State clearly, respectfully, specifically, and direct your request.



## Fighting Clean

### Listener:

5. Consider the request. Briefly share your perspective on it.
6. Are you willing to do all of it, part of it, or none of it?

### Speaker:

7. Agree on request OR Offer an alternative (not more than 3x)
8. Together -write agreement – go over in 2-4 weeks.

(His) My understanding of the agreement is:

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(Hers) My understanding of the agreement is:

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## Thank You!

We hope you found this tool helpful for you and your partner. If you're looking for more helpful resources like this one, check out our website.

*Kevin*

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