

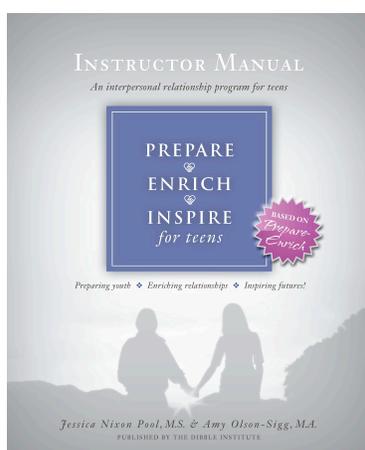
# Sample Lesson

## PREPARE/ENRICH/INSPIRE for Teens

By: Jessica Nixon Pool and Amy Olson-Sigg

**Based on the work of David Olson, Ph.D.**

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Preparing Youth,  
Enriching  
Relationships,  
Inspiring Futures!

Decades of research have established the Prepare-Enrich assessment as a reliable way to uncover strengths and weaknesses of romantic relationships – and to predict long-term outcomes. Key conclusions from these studies form the basis for PREPARE/ENRICH/INSPIRE for Teens (PEI), a major new relationship curriculum developed by The Dibble Institute for teen audiences. The core lessons of PEI introduce the insights and skills that affect success in all types of relationships: self-awareness, expectations, communication, conflict resolution and planning. Reflecting teen preoccupations, romantic attachments take center stage in lessons about dating, love, intimacy, marriage and families.

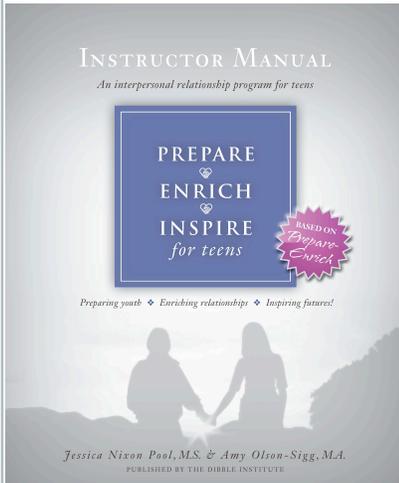
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## Sample Lesson

### PREPARE-ENRICH-INSPIRE for Teens



### PREPARE-ENRICH-INSPIRE for Teens

**Instructor's Manual** \$149

SKU: PEI-I

- 10 Core Lesson Plans
- Resource CD
- Posters
- Activity Cards
- PowerPoint Presentation
- Lesson Assessments
- 1 Student Journal

**10 Student Journals** \$45

SKU: PEI-S10

Quantity discounts are available.

**Optional Activity Book** \$47

SKU: DI-SS1

- Skill Sets #1: Teen Relationships & Romance

#### Section 1: Relationships and You

Lesson One:	Relationships and You
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Lesson Two:	Knowing Yourself
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#### Section 2: Dating, Marriage and Family

Lesson Three:	Friendship, Love, and Intimacy
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Lesson Four:	Navigating The World of Dating
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Lesson Five:	All in the Family
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Lesson Six:	Before You Say "I Do!"
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#### Section 3: Skills To Help Improve Relationships

Lesson Seven:	Communication in Relationships
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Lesson Eight:	Improving Communication in Relationships
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Lesson Nine:	Conflict in Relationships
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Lesson Ten:	Healthy Relationships: From Dreams to Reality
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## LESSON 9

**CONFLICT IN  
RELATIONSHIPS**

Conflict, a disagreement or struggle between two or more people, is an inevitable aspect of all relationships. The closer two people become, the more likely they are to experience conflict. Learning to deal with conflict successfully is part of maintaining healthy relationships. When conflict is mismanaged, it can harm the relationship. But when conflict is handled in a respectful and positive way, it provides an opportunity for growth, ultimately strengthening the bond between two people. By learning the skills you need for successful conflict resolution, you can keep your relationships strong and growing. This lesson helps teens learn to understand the origins of attitudes and behaviors regarding conflict and how to apply skills and attitudes to reduce and resolve conflict.

Conflict often arises from anger and breeds anger. This lesson examines how anger affects individuals and relationships, how to express anger constructively, how to fight fairly, and how to seek and grant forgiveness as well.

**OUTLINE**

*Section 9.1: Conflict in Relationships (20 minutes)*

*Section 9.2: Attitudes and Strategies to Address Conflict (20 minutes)*

*Section 9.3: Anger: It Often Precedes and Follows Conflict (30 minutes)*

*Section 9.4: Fighting Fairly (10-20 minutes)*



# What do you think?

## LESSON NINE ASSESSMENT

Circle True or False for each question below.



- |               |  |
|---------------|--|
| True or False | 1. Avoiding conflict is a good way to preserve a relationship.   |
| True or False | 2. The closer you are to someone (“the better a friend they are”), the less likely it will be that you will have conflict. |
| True or False | 3. Conflicts will disappear over time if they are ignored or just left alone.  |
| True or False | 4. Conflict should always be avoided.  |
| True or False | 5. To avoid hurting someone’s feelings when something is bothering you, it is best to say nothing.                         |
| True or False | 6. Problems often arise simply because people do not feel understood, valued, appreciated, or otherwise treated fairly.    |
| True or False | 7. When you feel angry, expressing it immediately is usually the best thing to do.   |
| True or False | 8. Venting anger releases the feeling of anger.  |
| True or False | 9. Depression and anxiety are often caused by anger that has been repressed.   |
| True or False | 10. Anger is caused by other people.   |
| True or False | 11. When people have conflict, they tend to fight fairly.  |
| True or False | 12. When there is a problem in a relationship, usually both people are at fault.   |

**SECTION 9.1**

# Conflict in Relationships

Begin this lesson by having students take the *What Do You Think?* assessment on the facing page. See the *How to Use the Assessment* pages for more information. Use this assessment to customize your lesson plan. The Score Guide at the end of the lesson will help you determine which PREPARE and ENRICH parts you should emphasize based on how your class scored.

**Section 9.1 Objectives**

- Explore origins and development of attitudes and behaviors regarding conflict.
- Examine how similarities, differences, and relationship closeness among people affects conflict.
- Explore the Hierarchy of Conflict Model.

**Section 9.1 Lesson Plan Overview****INSPIRE: *Conflict in Relationships***

1. In this Section, have students complete page 61 in the *Student Journal*. Watch for prompts throughout the *Instructor's Manual* lesson plans.

**PREPARE: *Conflict Is Inevitable***

2. Lead a discussion using the information found in the PREPARE section, *Conflict is Inevitable*, while completing page 61 in the *Student Journal*.

**PREPARE: *Closeness Breeds Conflict***

3. Lead a discussion using the information found in the PREPARE section, *Closeness Breeds Conflict*, while completing page 61 in the *Student Journal*.

**ENRICH: *Expectations and Conflict***

4. Have students complete the *Expectations and Conflict Worksheet* (Resource 9a).

**PREPARE: *Closeness Breeds Conflict***

5. Lead a discussion using the information found in the PREPARE section, *Why Does Conflict Occur in Relationships?*

**ENRICH: *The Hierarchy of Conflict***

6. Use the *The Hierarchy of Conflict Worksheet* (Resource 9b) to lead an individual or group activity.

**Section 9.1 Materials:****In this Lesson:**

- *What Do You Think?* Lesson 9 Assessment
- *Expectations and Conflict Worksheet* (Resource 9a)
- *The Hierarchy of Conflict Worksheet* (Resource 9b)

**On the Resource CD:**

- Lesson 9 PowerPoint Presentation

**In the Student Journal:**

- *Conflict in Relationships* (page 61)

**In the Activity Book:**

- *The Hierarchy of Conflict Role-Play* (#39)

**Section 9.1 Preparation:**

- **Assessment #1-3:** Review the assessment questions for this section as you present the information in the PREPARE sections and conduct the activities in the ENRICH sections.
- **Journal:** Locate page 61 in the *Student Journal*. Remember, most INSPIRES are also located in the *Student Journal*.
- **Powerpoint:** Locate Lesson 9 PowerPoint on *Resource CD*. Use slides 1-12 for this section.
- **Activity Book** (optional: #39) Additional activities are in the *Skill Sets: Teen Relationships and Romance Activity Book*, available separately from The Dibble Institute.



**#1 TRUE OR FALSE:** Avoiding conflict is a good way to preserve a relationship. (False)

## Prepare

### Conflict Is Inevitable



**INSPIRE:** *Is all conflict bad and should it be avoided? Explain. (Sj pg 61)*

Paraphrase the following:

“Conflict is an inevitable aspect of all relationships: dating relationships, family relationships, work relationships, marriage relationships, the list goes on and on. Conflict is neither good nor bad, it is just validation that two or more people have more than one viewpoint with regard to their needs, interests, and ideas. Trying to avoid conflict for the sake of harmony in a relationship may seem like a good idea, but usually it only postpones an issue/disagreement and can sometimes result in a bigger problem later. For example, if you notice that a friend is often the one who chooses the movie you see or place you eat together, this can be harmlessly brought to his or her attention, allowing your friend to hear your experience and make adjustments. But if you wait until this becomes a pattern in your relationship that annoys you, resentment and frustration have time to build on your part—creating a larger problem the longer it is avoided.”



**INSPIRE:** *Think about a time when something was bothering you in a relationship but you tried to ignore it in order to preserve the relationship. Did the issue go away? How did avoiding the issue affect the relationship? (Sj pg 61)*



**#2 TRUE OR FALSE:** The closer you are to someone (“the better a friend they are”), the less likely it will be that you will have conflict. (False)

## Prepare

### Closeness Breeds Conflict

Paraphrase the following:

“The idea that closeness breeds conflict may seem a bit counter-intuitive or even unfair. The reality is that the closer two people become, the more likely they are to experience conflict. Have you heard the expression, ‘familiarity breeds contempt’? It is meant to be funny, but like all humor, it contains an element of accepted ‘truth.’ When we are closer to someone, what they do will impact us more because we expect them to meet some of our needs.”



**INSPIRE:** *Think of someone with whom you have had the most conflict. What is the relationship you have with this person? What is your level of closeness? (Sj pg 61)*

“Sometimes we get stuck on the idea that closeness means the absence of conflict, but this idea can set us up for disappointment. Believing that a good relationship is one in which there is no conflict is a false and unrealistic expectation. Expectations, when unfulfilled, cause disappointment. Have you ever had the experience of seeing a movie you had few expectations about

but that then went on to exceed those low expectations? Compare that to seeing a movie that received a lot of hype and glowing recommendations. The movie you expect to be good has more to ‘live up to’ in a sense. Disappointment in relationships can be directly related to your expectations about what should happen within these relationships. So remember that conflict will happen in a close relationship. At the basic level is only a reminder that two people have active and different viewpoints. There are variations of a quote which speaks to the importance of each person having his or her own unique ideas and perspective: ‘If two people agree on everything, you can be sure that one of them is doing the thinking,’ and, ‘If two people agree on everything, only one of them is necessary.’



**INSPIRE:** Think about a time when conflict within a relationship happened as a result of expectations. How did that affect the relationship? How would an attitude of “conflict is normal” have helped? (SJ pg 61)

## Enrich

### Expectations and Conflict

Have students complete the *Expectations and Conflict* Worksheet (Resource 9a).



**#3 TRUE OR FALSE:** Conflicts will disappear over time if they are ignored or just left alone. (False)

## Prepare

### Why Does Conflict Occur in Relationships?

Paraphrase the following:

“Have you ever wondered why conflict happens? The hierarchy of conflict model helps us understand how a small issue can potentially turn into a huge issue when it is not resolved. In this model, there are seven levels. The three lower levels represent common reasons why people get together: to chat about daily events, to share ideas, and to express feelings. These discussions generally occur without stress or tension because there is no need for decision-making. In contrast, the top four layers require more discussion and decision-making. Thus, they are more stressful.”

## Enrich

### The Hierarchy of Conflict

**Group Activity:** Pick three students to role-play the scenario located on the *The Hierarchy of Conflict* Worksheet (Resource 9b). Give them a few minutes to read it over and then perform it for the class. Then, pass out *The Hierarchy of Conflict* Worksheet (Resource 9b) to the remaining students. As a group, go back over the scenario and identify each level of conflict. Use the remaining questions to lead a class discussion.

**Individual Activity:** Pass out *The Hierarchy of Conflict* Worksheet (Resource 9b). Have students work in pairs or individually to complete the worksheet.



**ADD TO IT #39:**  
*The Hierarchy of Conflict* Role-Play (in the optional *Activity Book*).

## SECTION 9.2

# Attitudes and Strategies to Address Conflict

## Section 9.2 Materials:

### In this Lesson:

- *Conflict in Marriage* Worksheet (Resource 9c)
- *Resolving Conflict* Role-Play (Resource 9d)

### On the Resource CD:

- Lesson 9 PowerPoint Presentation

### In the Student Journal:

- *Attitudes and Strategies to Address Conflict* (page 62)

### In the Activity Book:

- *Ten Steps for Resolving Conflict* Role-Play (#40)

## Section 9.2 Preparation:

- **Assessment #4-6:** Review the assessment questions for this section as you present the information in the PREPARE sections and conduct the activities in the ENRICH sections.
- **Journal:** Locate page 62 in the *Student Journal*. Remember, most INSPIRES are also located in the *Student Journal*.
- **Powerpoint:** Locate Lesson 9 PowerPoint on *Resource CD*. Use slides 13-22 for this section.
- **Activity Book** (optional: #40) Additional activities are in the *Skill Sets: Teen Relationships and Romance* Activity Book, available separately from The Dibble Institute.

## Section 9.2 Objectives

- Demonstrate nonviolent attitudes and strategies to address conflict.
- Describe a process for resolving major conflict.

## Section 9.2 Lesson Plan Overview

### INSPIRE: *Attitudes and Strategies to Address Conflict*

1. In this Section, have students complete page 62 in the *Student Journal*. Watch for prompts throughout the *Instructor's Manual* lesson plans.

### PREPARE: *Trust that Conflict is Natural...and Purposeful*

2. Lead a discussion using the information found in the PREPARE section, *Trust that Conflict is Natural...and Purposeful*, while completing page 62 in the *Student Journal*.

### PREPARE: *Don't Avoid 'Negative' Issues*

3. Lead a discussion using the information found in the PREPARE section, *Don't Avoid 'Negative' Issues*, while completing page 62 in the *Student Journal*.

### ENRICH: *Conflict in Marriage*

4. As a whole group, complete the *Conflicts in Marriage* Worksheet (Resource 9c). Begin by going over the chart that shows research on conflict between happily married and unhappily married couples.

### PREPARE: *Resolving Conflict*

5. Lead a discussion using the information found in the PREPARE section, *Resolving Conflict*, while completing page 62 in the *Student Journal*.

### ENRICH: *Resolving Major or Reoccurring Conflict*

6. Complete page 62 in the *Student Journal*. Then, break into pairs or small groups and pick a common issue that tends to cause problems in a family or relationship. Use the *10 Steps Model for Resolving Conflict* to help find a solution.
7. Optional: *10 Steps for Resolving Conflict* Role-Play (Activity Book #40)



**#4 TRUE OR FALSE:** Conflict should always be avoided. (False)

## Prepare

### Trust that Conflict is Natural...and Purposeful



**INSPIRE:** What do you think is meant by the following quotation? Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not? “Difficulties are meant to rouse, not discourage. The human spirit is to grow strong by conflict” —WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING. (S) pg 62)

Paraphrase the following:

“What images and feelings come to mind when you think of being in conflict with someone? Are these images negative or positive? If they are negative, they most likely come from the thoughts and behaviors people choose in response to conflict, not the conflict itself. Think about it this way. Have you ever felt conflicted about a decision you alone had to make? Whether this decision was about a gift to give; or whether or not you should hang out with friends when you had other obligations; or an internal struggle to tell someone something you knew you should tell them but was difficult—you have certainly been in conflict with yourself countless times! If we deal with internal conflict, why would we not expect to have conflict in a relationship with another person?”

“Conflict is a natural part of life, and it occurs in relationships, too—especially close relationships. It has been said that ‘conflict is the beginning of consciousness’ because it brings awareness to what is going on around us. It jolts us out of our tendency to ‘go through the motions’ in life, forcing us to observe and take notice. Many times conflict arises out of an unbalanced system such as inequality. In this way it is actually purposeful for the healthy functioning of a relationship because it allows the individuals to analyze and talk about any tensions and unfairness and then make necessary adjustments.”



**INSPIRE:** Describe a recent conflict you have been in. (with yourself or another person) Was there an underlying sense of unfairness that caused the conflict? (S) pg 62)



**#5 TRUE OR FALSE:** To avoid hurting someone’s feelings when something is bothering you, it is best to say nothing. (False)

## Prepare

### Don’t Avoid ‘Negative’ Issues

Paraphrase the following:

“Avoidance is a very common way that people deal with any kind of conflict. For example, you hear through the ‘grapevine’ that one of your best friends had a group of friends together to celebrate a birthday of one of your mutual friends. You don’t know why she did not tell you or invite you, and you have

been feeling resentful toward her. You know you should just talk to her about it, but you have been putting it off. To withhold thoughts and feelings for the sake of ‘keeping the peace’ seems like the easy thing to do, but it ends up creating distance in the relationship and does nothing to resolve the issue. It may not only be relationships that suffer from avoiding negative issues, but physical health as well. One study found that women who kept their feelings inside during conflict were more likely to experience depression, eating disorders, and heart disease.”<sup>1</sup>



**INSPIRE:** What have you noticed tends to happen when you or others avoid disagreements or other negative issues? (S) pg 62)

## Enrich

### Conflict in Marriage

As a whole group, complete the *Conflicts in Marriage* Worksheet (Resource 9c).<sup>2</sup> Begin by going over the chart that shows research on conflict between happily married and unhappily married couples. Then, individually or for class discussion, answer the *Follow It Up* questions.



**#6 TRUE OR FALSE:** Problems often arise simply because people do not feel understood, valued, appreciated, or otherwise treated fairly. (True)

## Prepare

### Resolving Conflict

Paraphrase the following:

“As the research on happy and unhappy couples demonstrates, having disagreements or problems is not really the issue. Rather, it is the level of willingness and the manner in which problems are managed and resolved that determine whether a couple is happy or unhappy. This is true in all relationships, whether between friends, couples, families, or even countries. Oftentimes problems arise simply because people do not feel understood, valued, appreciated, or otherwise treated fairly. They are hurt. And when people are hurt, they make attempts to protect themselves in ways that may make sense to them but may not be helpful in resolving the issue. Think about the three unhealthy communication styles from the last lesson as a framework for the many ways people can react to conflict. For example, an aggressive person may attack, accuse, or give an ultimatum. A passive person may avoid confrontation but silently sulk, and a passive-aggressive person may act as though nothing is wrong, but find covert ways to ‘even the score.’ The following skills can help you stay in the healthy realm of minor conflict:”

#### Five Steps for Resolving Minor Conflict

“For minor problems that arise in relationships, the following five things will help keep the problem from escalating, and get it resolved so you can move forward.”

- 1. Stay in the present moment.** “Deal only with the problem at hand and resist bringing up any past grievances.”
- 2. Be specific.** “Being specific is another way to say to not generalize. Nobody knows how to deal with vast generalizations about their behaviors, and they will tend to defend themselves. For example, ‘When you are looking at your phone when we talk, it feels to me as though you would rather be somewhere else.’ ‘This is hurtful’ is a specific and manageable complaint compared to ‘You never pay attention to me,’ which is a generalization.”
- 3. Be brief and simple.** “Describe what you are feeling as completely but as succinctly as possible. Long-winded explanations only distract from the main point.”
- 4. Wait for a response.** “Having made your brief and specific complaint, give the other person time to absorb what you have said and to respond. Use your listening skills here rather than thinking about what your next retort will be.”
- 5. Balance negative and positive comments.** “One technique that has been shown to help people ‘receive’ criticism is to sandwich it with something positive. For example, instead of just ‘We don’t spend enough time together anymore,’ you can say ‘I have so much fun with you and I wish we could spend more time together.’”

### 10 Steps for Resolving Major (or Reoccurring) Conflict

“Have you ever had a problem in a relationship and then weeks or months go by and the person brings up the same problem again? While this can be very annoying and may cause you to feel defensive, it means the issue was not completely resolved for one or both persons involved. It also may mean that one or both people do not trust that this issue will not happen again and/or they feel the other does not completely understand or care about the past ‘offense.’ For these ‘perennial problems,’ the following 10-step model is a very good one to use because it forces a resolution and deeper understanding of the issue.”

*Teacher’s Note:* Use the *Resolving Conflict Role-Play* (Resource 9d) to demonstrate each step. Pick two or three volunteers who don’t mind reading in front of the class. Assign the roles of the mom and son to two volunteers. Then decide if you will be the narrator or allow a third volunteer to read that part:

1. Set a time and a place for discussion.
2. Define the problem or issue of disagreement.
3. Talk about how each of you contributes to the problem.
4. List past unsuccessful attempts to resolve the issue.
5. Brainstorm new ways to resolve the conflict.
6. Discuss and evaluate possible solutions.
7. Agree on one solution to try.
8. Agree on how each individual will work toward this solution.
9. Set up another meeting to discuss your progress.
10. Reward each other as you each contribute toward a solution.



**ADD TO IT #40:**  
*10 Steps for Resolving  
Conflict Role-Play* (in  
the optional *Activity  
Book*).

## Enrich

### Resolving Major or Reoccurring Conflict

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Complete the second half of page 62 in the *Student Journal*. Each student will pick a conflict he/she has recently been involved in and think about how the Ten Steps could have helped resolve that conflict. Then break into pairs or small groups and pick a common issue that tends to cause problems in a family or relationship. Use the *10 Steps Model for Resolving Conflict* to help find a solution.



*“There are two things a person should never be angry at:  
what they can help and what they cannot.”*

—PLATO—

**SECTION 9.3**

# Anger: It Often Precedes and Follows Conflict

**Section 9.3 Objectives**

- List three basic choices in how to deal with anger.
- Name two negative consequences of reacting with angry outburst.
- Name two negative consequences of repressing anger.
- Demonstrate five constructive responses to anger.

**Section 9.3 Lesson Plan Overview****PREPARE: Anger and Conflict**

3. Lead a discussion using the information found in the PREPARE section, *Anger and Conflict*, while completing page 64 in the *Student Journal*.

**PREPARE: What to Do about Anger**

4. Lead a discussion using the information found in the PREPARE section, *What to Do about Anger*, while completing page 64 in the *Student Journal*.

**ENRICH: Myths and Facts about Anger Quiz**

5. Determine if the individual or group activity is more suited for your group. Both activities allow students to explore the myths and facts about anger.

**PREPARE: Managing Anger**

6. Lead a discussion using the information found in the PREPARE section, *Managing Anger*. Use the optional *Tips for Controlling Anger Worksheet* (Resource 9e) as you present this section.

**PREPARE: Five-Step Plan for Approaching Anger**

7. Lead a discussion using the information found in the PREPARE section, *Five-Step Plan for Approaching Anger*, while completing page 65 in the *Student Journal*.

**ENRICH: Anger Management**

8. In small groups, use the *Anger Management Worksheet* (Resource 9f).

**Section 9.3 Materials:****In this Lesson:**

- *Tips for Controlling Anger Worksheet* (Resource 9e)
- *Anger Management Worksheet* (Resource 9f)
- *Myths and Facts about Anger Quiz Cards* (Activity Cards 9.1)

**On the Resource CD:**

- Lesson 9 PowerPoint Presentation

**In the Student Journal:**

- *Anger: It Often Precedes and Follows Conflict* (pages 63-64)
- *Five-Step Plan for Approaching Anger* (page 65)

**In the Activity Book:**

- *Nails in the Fence* (#41)

**Section 9.3 Preparation:**

- **Assessment #7-10:** Review the assessment questions for this section as you present the information in the PREPARE sections and conduct the activities in the ENRICH sections.
- **Journal:** Locate pages 63-65 in the *Student Journal*. Remember, most INSPIRES are also located in the *Student Journal*.
- **Powerpoint:** Locate Lesson 9 PowerPoint on *Resource CD*. Use slides 23-42 for this section.
- **Activity Book** (optional: #41) Additional activities are in the *Skill Sets: Teen Relationships and Romance Activity Book*, available separately from The Dibble Institute.

**ADD TO IT #41:**

*Nails in the Fence* (in the optional *Activity Book*).



**#7 TRUE OR FALSE:** When you feel angry, expressing it immediately is usually the best thing to do. (False)

## Prepare

### Anger and Conflict



**INSPIRE:** What does the following quote mean to you: “Consider how much more often you suffer from your anger and grief, than from those very things for which you are angry and grieved” —Marcus Antonius. (S) page 63)

Paraphrase the following:

“Anger is a powerful experience that is related to conflict, and it is an emotion that everyone feels from time to time. Anger is felt as an emotional energy that, at its worst, can be hateful and destructive. But in its healthy state, anger can motivate us to look at a relationship issue that needs to be addressed and possibly changed, or to restore a balance of ‘right’ and ‘wrong.’ The key is the manner in which anger is handled, which will be discussed in the next section.”

“Anger is truly a double-edged sword. When a person is angry with others, the anger also negatively affects the angry person. It has been said, ‘It is impossible to hate, despise, or resent somebody without suffering yourself (Bill Borchardt).’



**INSPIRE:** Give an example of a time you were angry. How did you feel? Were you negatively affected too? (S) page 63)

“Because anger is such an intense experience, it is rarely a good idea to “react” to anger immediately unless there is an issue of immediate safety. These reactions are often not well thought out and become more about venting, which is often hostile, and may be regretted later. Research has also shown that those who have emotional outbursts tend to have health problems and are more pessimistic.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, not dealing with anger can also have negative consequences. Repressed anger has been shown to have physical consequences (heart and pulmonary dysfunction) and lead to self-destructive behaviors such as alcohol abuse, depression, and anxiety.<sup>4</sup> In a relational context, unresolved anger can result in passive-aggressive or ‘revenge-seeking’ behaviors. Consider the following example:

“Ashley and Briana have been best friends since elementary school. In high school they both became friends with Josh and they hung out in the same circle of friends. Through the years, there had been social situations in which Ashley and Josh were present without Briana and vice versa. They all talk via email, text, and over Facebook regularly. Ashley started dating Josh, which was fine for a while, but then Briana began to feel as though she was losing two of her best friends when Ashley and

Josh spent more time doing things alone and less time with her. Briana still spent some time with them both, but it just wasn't the same. Briana began to slowly and silently feel resentful. When Ashley would get mad at Josh, she was more available to spend time with Briana and Briana was then privy to hearing some of the secrets of their relationship, including the fact that Ashley had started having feelings for another guy she met through her youth group. One day, after Ashley and Josh had reconciled and Briana was again feeling left out and used, she let Josh know about the other guy. She later deeply regretted telling Josh this as she knew it was more about her anger. It changed the friendship with Ashley because Ashley lost the trust and respect she had toward Briana."



**INSPIRE:** *Have you ever found yourself reacting out of anger and then later regretting something you have done? (S) page 63)*



**#8 TRUE OR FALSE:** Venting anger releases the feeling of anger. (False)

## Prepare

### What to Do about Anger

Paraphrase the following:

"You have three choices when it comes to anger: you can choose to react to it, forget about it, or manage it. Let's look briefly at the first two options before describing attitudes and techniques for managing anger."

**1. Reacting to anger.** "Some people operate with the idea that the best way to deal with anger is to 'let it all hang out.' At one time it was believed that venting anger was cathartic and somehow 'released' the anger. Research now has found that venting anger does not relieve anger and bad feelings but actually fuels them.<sup>4</sup> Also, venting tends to bring out a counterattack, resulting in escalation of conflict. Sometimes a vent or emotional outburst will yield a short-term 'result,' such as getting your way, but in the long run anger pushes people away. And then there are the physical and emotional costs of angry outbursts. For example, studies have found that angry outbursts can cause dangerous abnormal heart rhythms which can actually cause a heart attack in those with fragile hearts.<sup>5</sup> So the question becomes, who benefits from angry reactions? It is neither healthy nor fun to react to anger or to be on the receiving end of someone's anger."



**INSPIRE:** *Think of a time when you either reacted with anger or were on the receiving end of somebody's angry outburst. How were you affected? How was the relationship affected? (S) page 63)*



**#9 TRUE OR FALSE:** Depression and anxiety are often caused by anger that has been repressed. (True)

**2. Forgetting anger (repression).** “Instead of an angry outburst, some people react to anger by ‘repressing’ it. A person may not even be aware that they are angry or that they are repressing or ‘stuffing’ their anger away. A person may stuff their anger because they do not want to cause hurt to anyone, lose control, or damage the relationship. They may be afraid of rejection. They may have internalized the message (from their upbringing or culture) that anger is inappropriate or unacceptable. The problem again is that repression causes physiological change to the nervous system and has been linked to heart and pulmonary dysfunction, as well as smoking and alcohol abuse.<sup>6</sup> Sigmund Freud famously said that depression is anger turned inward.”



**INSPIRE:** Think of a time when you repressed your anger. How were you affected? How were your relationships affected? (SJ page 64)

## Enrich

### Myths and Facts about Anger

**Individual Activity:** Have students complete the *Student Journal* page 64, *Myths and Facts about Anger*.<sup>7</sup>

**Optional Group Activity:** Locate the master copy of the *Myths and Facts about Anger* Activity Cards 9.1 in Appendix L. It is recommended that these cards be copied on to cardstock and laminated when possible. Hang a sign in the front of the room that says, “MYTHS” and another that says “FACTS.” Then, pass out the *Myths and Facts about Anger Quiz* cards. Have each student read the statement on the card and then stand by either the “Myth” or “Fact” signs. Once everyone has made his or her decision, have each person read the statement. Ask if the class agrees that the statement is either a myth or a fact. Allow a short discussion if there is a disagreement.



**#10 TRUE OR FALSE:** Anger is caused by other people. (False)

## Prepare

### Managing Anger



**INSPIRE:** “An argument is always about what has been made more important than the relationship” —Hugh Prathner. Do you agree or disagree? Why? (SJ page 64)

Use the Optional *Tips for Controlling Anger* Worksheet (Resource 9e) as you present the following information.

**3. Managing anger.** “What does it mean to ‘manage anger’? Managing anger begins with recognizing and acknowledging its presence. The goal is not to eliminate anger but to acknowledge the anger, understand its source, reduce the impact (emotional and physiological), and learn to control its effects on yourself, others, and your relationships. The following are attitudes

and tips to effectively manage anger. When you find yourself in difficult situations, these steps can help you control your anger.”

- **Change your perception about the event.** “Many people believe that ‘somebody else makes you angry or gets you upset.’ However, our happiness or unhappiness (or anger) is not externally caused. Anger, like any other human emotion, has an element of choice; we choose how we think about the world, ourselves, and others, and our emotions follow our thoughts. We have the choice then to take responsibility for our thoughts and emotions. Even if someone else does something we do not like, we are free to choose to react with an emotional response or none at all. If your anger is a response to an injustice, figure out if there is something you can do to work toward the resolution of that injustice in whatever capacity you are able. If the situation is out of your control, the only thing you will be able to control is how you think about it and/or the amount of time you spend thinking about it.”



**INSPIRE:** Describe a time when you changed your perception about something that was bothering you. (Resource 9e)

- **Learn what provokes your anger.** “While no one causes us to use anger destructively, it is wise to learn what your anger triggers are and to write them down. For example, you may realize that anger is provoked when someone ignores the good things you do, puts you down, or shows disrespect for your opinions.”



**INSPIRE:** Make a list of things that “push your buttons” or trigger you to be angry. (Resource 9e)

- **Recognize and admit your own anger.** “When you get angry, does your heart pound? Do you sweat? What are you thinking when you get angry? What actions do you tend to do when you get angry? Do you tend to yell and scream or say hurtful, mean, or disrespectful things? Do you throw things, kick or punch walls, or break stuff? Do you hit someone, hurt yourself, or push and shove others around?”



**INSPIRE:** Think about a time you were really angry and make a list of how your body responded or felt. (Resource 9e)

- **Learn to do a self time-out.** “When you are starting to feel angry, take a time-out to relax and redirect. Time-outs should be at least 10 minutes but no more than 24 hours. It is important to come back and talk about your feelings. Here are some activities that can help deflect your anger during a time-out:
  - Exercise
  - Listen to music
  - Write in a journal
  - Meditate or pray.”



**INSPIRE:** What are some other things you can do to calm yourself down during a time-out? (Resource 9e)

- **Strive to understand the other person's point of view.** “There are many reasons someone may do something that provokes our anger besides their intentionally wanting to get us angry. Before responding, try to put yourself in that person's shoes. Most likely the other person's anger has nothing to do with you. Maybe he or she is just having a bad day or is stressed out. You may find that your anger was based on a misunderstanding or misinterpretation of someone's words or actions.”



**INSPIRE:** Have you experienced a time when someone could have responded with anger but chose to attempt to understand your point of view? How did that affect your relationship with them and the outcome of the situation? (Resource 9e)

- **Express your anger constructively.** “It has been said that ‘anger is one letter short of danger’ because there are many damaging ways to handle anger. If you find yourself feeling angry, learn to express angry feelings calmly and with an attitude of respect without attacking or blaming the other person. Disrespect blocks the flow of communication and creates wounds that are often long remembered after the conflict has been forgotten. People tend to forget little disagreements and conflict, but will remember personal insults or attacks. Explain to the other person why you are angry. Use I-Messages and some of the other communication skills we have been learning.”



**INSPIRE:** What are some ways in which you have destructively and constructively dealt with anger? (Resource 9e)

7. **Have a plan of action for when you do get angry.** “Next, we will learn a simple five-step plan for approaching anger.”

## Prepare

### Five-Step Plan for Approaching Anger

Have students complete page 65 of the *Student Journal* while going over the following:

“Here is a simple Five-Step Plan to help you when you find yourself angry. This plan takes into account the other tips we have been looking at.”

1. **Identify the problem:** “Start by noticing what you're angry about and why. Put into words what's making you upset so you can act rather than react. Ask yourself: What am I feeling and why? Think back to your list of triggers. One example could be: ‘I'm really angry at Mom because she won't let me go to the party until I clean my room. It's not fair!’ Your feeling is anger, and you're feeling angry because you might not get to go to the party. Notice that this is not the same as saying, ‘Mom's so unfair to me.’ That statement doesn't identify the specific problem (that you can't go to the party until you clean your room) and it doesn't say how you're feeling (angry).”

- 2. Think of potential solutions before responding.** “This is when you stop for a minute to give yourself time to manage your anger. It’s also when you start thinking of how you might react; but without reacting yet. Ask yourself: What can I do? Think of at least three things. For example, in the above situation you might think:
- (a) I could yell at Mom and throw a fit.
  - (b) I could clean my room and then ask if I could go to the party.
  - (c) I could sneak out to the party anyway.”
- 3. Consider the consequences of each solution.** “This is when you think about what is likely to result from each of the reactions you came up with. Ask yourself: What will happen with each one of these options? For example:
- (a) Yelling at your mom may get you in worse trouble or even grounded.
  - (b) Cleaning your room takes work and you may get to the party late.  
With this option, you get to go to the party and your room’s clean so you don’t have to worry about it for a while.
  - (c) Sneaking out may seem like a real option in the heat of anger. But when you really think it through, it’s pretty unlikely you’d get away with being gone for hours with no one noticing. And when you do get caught there will most likely be consequences from your mom.”
- 4. Make a decision.** “This is when you take action by choosing one of the three things you could do. Look at the list and pick the one that is likely to be most effective. Ask yourself: What’s my best choice? By the time you’ve thought it through, you’ve probably gotten over the desire to yell at your mom, which is a knee-jerk response. You may have also decided that sneaking out is too risky. Neither of these options is likely to get you to the party. So option (b)—cleaning your room—probably seems like the best choice. Once you choose your solution, then it’s time to act.”
- 5. Check your progress.** “After you’ve acted and the situation has passed, think about how it went. Ask yourself: How did I do? Did things work out as I expected? If not, why not? Am I satisfied with the choice I made? Taking some time to reflect on how things worked out is a very important step. It helps you learn about yourself and it allows you to test which problem-solving approaches work best in different situations. Give yourself a pat on the back if the solution you chose worked out well. If it didn’t, go back through the five steps and see if you can figure out why.”<sup>8</sup>

“These five steps are fairly simple when you’re calm but are much tougher to work through when you’re angry or sad, so it helps to practice over and over. Anger is a strong emotion and can feel overwhelming at times. Learning how to deal with strong emotions—without losing control—is part of becoming more mature. It takes a

little effort, a little practice, and a little patience, but you can learn to manage anger.”

## Enrich

### Anger Management

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**Group Activity:** Break the class into small groups of two to four and give each member of the group an *Anger Management* Worksheet (Resource 9f). Have each member share a time when they got angry. They should only talk about why they were angry. Then, have the group members walk through the chart based on what they think could be potential solutions, consequences, and the best choice. The group member who shared the story should record the information on his/her sheet. Then, allow the group member who is sharing to tell if that was really the choice he or she made and how things really worked out. If time allows, repeat with each group member sharing a time they were angry.



*“Speak when you are angry and you’ll make  
the best speech you’ll ever regret.”*

—DR. LAURENCE J. PETERS—

**SECTION 9.4**

# Fighting Fairly

**Section 9.4 Objectives**

- List ways to fight fairly.
- Understand how to seek and how to grant forgiveness.

**Section 9.4 Lesson Plan Overview****INSPIRE: Fighting Fairly**

1. In this Section, have students complete pages 66-67 in the *Student Journal*. Watch for prompts throughout the *Instructor's Manual* lesson plans.

**PREPARE: Fighting Fairly**

2. Lead a discussion using the information found in the PREPARE section, *Fighting Fairly*, while completing page 66 in the *Student Journal*.

**PREPARE: 16 Rules for Fighting Fairly**

3. Brainstorm a list of ground-rules that should be followed during conflicts and arguments. Continue this discussion by covering the *16 Rules for Fighting Fairly* as a group activity.

**PREPARE: Seeking and Granting Forgiveness**

4. Lead a discussion using the information found in the PREPARE section, *Seeking and Granting Forgiveness*, while completing page 67 in the *Student Journal*.

**ENRICH: Practicing Forgiveness**

5. Determine if the individual or group activity is more suited for your group. Both activities allow students to practice seeking and granting forgiveness.

**Section 9.4 Materials:****In the Appendix:**

- *16 Rules for Fighting Fairly* (Activity Card 9.2)

**On the Resource CD:**

- Lesson 9 PowerPoint Presentation

**In the Student Journal:**

- *Fighting Fairly* (pages 66-67)

**Section 9.4 Preparation:**

- **Assessment #11-12:** Review the assessment questions for this section as you present the information in the PREPARE sections and conduct the activities in the ENRICH sections.
- **Journal:** Locate pages 66-67 in the *Student Journal*. Remember, most INSPIRES are also located in the *Student Journal*.
- **Powerpoint:** Locate Lesson 9 PowerPoint on Resource CD. Use slides 43-52 for this section.



*“The best remedy for a short temper is a long walk”*

—JACQUELINE SCHIFF—



**#11 TRUE OR FALSE:** When people have conflict, they tend to fight fairly.  
(False)

## Prepare

### Fighting Fairly

Introduce the following section by saying,

**“It has been said, ‘Conflict is the beginning of consciousness.’ It jolts us out of our tendency to live our lives on autopilot, forcing us to observe and take notice of our lives. If handled well, conflict can actually help a relationship because it allows people to adapt to new situations and to invent new approaches to a problem...essentially to grow.”**

**“We have also learned that conflict is a normal part of relationships. We choose how we respond to anger and that choice can be constructive or destructive. So, what can we do to handle conflict in a peaceful way when it does arise without hurting the ones that we love?”**



**INSPIRE:** Respond to the following quote: “In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity” —ALBERT EINSTEIN. What do you think this quote means? How can conflict be beneficial to a relationship? (SJ page 66)

## Enrich

### 16 Rules for Fighting Fairly

As a class or in small groups, brainstorm a list of ground-rules that should be followed during conflicts and arguments. Continue this discussion by covering the *16 Rules for Fighting Fairly* as a group activity.<sup>9</sup>

**Group Activity:** Pass out the *16 Rules for Fighting Fairly Cards* (Activity Cards 9.2) to students who do not mind reading. Allow one student at a time to read a rule and then briefly discuss it. After each card, ask the group, “How would this rule help during a conflict?”



**#12 TRUE OR FALSE:** When there is a problem in a relationship, usually both people are at fault. (True)

## Prepare

### Seeking and Granting Forgiveness

Paraphrase the following:

**“All relationships will experience times of conflict, hurt, and letting each other down. Building a healthy relationship means learning to forgive and to seek forgiveness when necessary. It doesn’t mean excusing bad behavior or hurtful words or actions, but it does mean not allowing those things to create a wedge in our relationships.”**

“Forgiveness is the decision or choice to give up the right for revenge and negative thoughts toward the other person in order to be free from anger and resentment. It is also important to be clear about what forgiveness is not. Forgiveness is not forgetting or pretending something didn’t happen. It did happen, and we need to retain the lesson learned without holding onto the pain. Forgiveness is not excusing. We excuse a person who is not to blame. We forgive even though a wrong was committed. Forgiveness is not giving permission to continue hurtful behaviors; nor is it condoning the behavior in the past or in the future. Forgiveness is not always reconciliation. We have to make a separate decision about whether to reconcile with the person we are forgiving or whether to maintain our distance.”



**INSPIRE:** Give an example of a time you had to forgive someone. (S) page 67)

“Forgiving and letting go can be very difficult challenges, but it’s even more stressful to hold on to grudges. Studies have found that holding on to grudges can cause negative emotions and physiological stress such as high blood pressure. Forgiving frees you more than it frees the person who you feel is in need of forgiveness.”



**INSPIRE:** Is it easier to ask for forgiveness or to grant forgiveness? Explain. (S) page 67)

Continue by reviewing the following information:<sup>10</sup>

### ***Six Steps for Seeking Forgiveness***

1. Admit what you did was wrong or harmful.
2. Try to understand/empathize with the pain you have caused.
3. Take responsibility for your action and make restitution, if possible.
4. Assure the other person you will not do it again.
5. Forgive yourself.

### ***Six Steps for Granting Forgiveness***

1. Acknowledge your pain and anger. Allow yourself to feel disrespected.
2. Be specific about your future expectations and limits.
3. Give up your desire to get even but insist on being treated better in the future.
4. Let go of blame, resentment, and negativity toward your partner.
5. Communicate your act of forgiveness to your partner.
6. Work toward reconciliation (when safe).

## **Enrich**

### **Practicing Forgiveness**

**Individual Activity:** Complete page 67 of the *Student Journal*.

**Group Activity:** Break into pairs. Look through a newspaper or a news magazine and find a story in which someone needs to forgive or be forgiven. Take turns playing these characters. Each partner should seek and grant forgiveness using the steps you just learned. Switch roles with your partner. Finish by discussing whether it was easier to ask for forgiveness or to grant forgiveness. Explain.

**Lesson Nine Assessment Score Guide:** Use your class score to determine which elements of the lesson to emphasize.

T/F	ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS	RELATED INFORMATION	CLASS SCORE*
F	1. Avoiding conflict is a good way to preserve a relationship.	PREPARE: <i>Conflict Is Inevitable</i> (9.1)	
F	2. The closer you are to someone (“the better a friend they are”), the less likely it will be that you will have conflict.	PREPARE: <i>Closeness Breeds Conflict</i> (9.1) ENRICH: <i>Expectations and Conflict</i> (9.1)	
F	3. Conflicts will disappear over time if they are ignored or just left alone.	PREPARE: <i>Why Does Conflict Often Occur in Relationships?</i> (9.1) ENRICH: <i>The Hierarchy of Conflict</i> (9.1)	
F	4. Conflict should always be avoided.	PREPARE: <i>Trust that Conflict is Natural... and Purposeful</i> (9.2)	
F	5. To avoid hurting someone’s feelings when something is bothering you, it is best to say nothing.	PREPARE: <i>Don’t Avoid ‘Negative’ Issues</i> (9.2) ENRICH: <i>Conflict in Marriage</i> (9.2)	
T	6. Problems often arise simply because people do not feel understood, valued, appreciated, or otherwise treated fairly.	PREPARE: <i>Resolving Conflict</i> (9.2) ENRICH: <i>Resolving Major or Recurring Conflict</i> (9.2)	
F	7. When you feel angry, expressing it immediately is usually the best thing to do.	PREPARE: <i>Anger and Conflict</i> (9.3)	
F	8. Venting anger releases the feeling of anger.	PREPARE: <i>What to Do about Anger</i> (9.3)	
T	9. Depression and anxiety are often caused by anger that has been repressed.	ENRICH: <i>Myths and Facts about Anger Quiz</i> (9.3)	
F	10. Anger is caused by other people.	PREPARE: <i>Managing Anger</i> (9.3) PREPARE: <i>Five-Step Plan for Approaching Anger</i> (9.3) ENRICH: <i>Anger Management</i> (9.3)	
F	11. When people have conflict, they tend to fight fairly.	PREPARE: <i>Fighting Fairly</i> (9.3) ENRICH: <i>16 Rules for Fighting Fairly</i> (9.3)	
T	12. When there is a problem in a relationship, usually both people are at fault.	PREPARE: <i>Seeking and Granting Forgiveness</i> (9.4) ENRICH: <i>Practicing Forgiveness</i> (9.4)	

\* Correct answers + # of students

**RESOURCE 9a**

# Expectations and Conflict

Sometimes we get stuck on the idea that closeness means the absence of conflict. That idea can set us up for disappointment. Believing a good relationship is one in which there is no conflict is a false and unrealistic expectation. And expectations, when unfulfilled, cause disappointment. Disappointment in relationships can be related to your expectations about what should happen within those relationships.

Read the following scenarios. Describe how you would feel or react if they happened to you. What conflict might arise? What expectations exist that might be involved in the conflict?

**Scenario 1:** My best friend forgets my birthday.

I feel...

I would react...

The conflict...

My expectations...

**Scenario 2:** My dentist forgets my birthday.

I feel...

I would react...

The conflict...

My expectations...

**Scenario 1:** A teacher I've known to always give forewarning gives an unscheduled test that is worth 50% of my grade for the term. I haven't studied this material at all.

I feel...

I would react...

The conflict...

My expectations...

**Scenario 2:** A teacher who is unpredictable and known for giving pop-quizzes gives an unscheduled test that is worth 50% of my grade for the term. I haven't studied this material at all, even though I knew this could happen.

I feel...

I would react...

The conflict...

My expectations...

**RESOURCE 9a****Expectations and Conflict** CONTINUED

Read the following scenarios. Describe how you would feel or react if they happened to you. What conflict might arise? What expectations exist that might be involved in the conflict?

**Scenario 1:** I was driving too fast and got a speeding ticket. The fine is \$130. I have the money, but I've been saving it for a special occasion coming up in a week. I thought my parents would help me out, but they said 'No.'

I feel...

I would react...

The conflict...

My expectations...

**Scenario 2:** I was driving too fast and got a speeding ticket. The fine is \$130. I have the money, but I've been saving it for a special occasion coming up in a week. I knew my parents wouldn't help me out, but I asked anyway. They said 'No.'

I feel...

I would react...

The conflict...

My expectations...

**Scenario 1:** I had been casually dating someone for two months when I found out he/she went out with someone else. We had explicitly agreed that we would not be exclusively dating each other.

I feel...

I would react...

The conflict...

My expectations...

**Scenario 2:** I had been casually dating someone for two months when I found out he/she went out with someone else. We had explicitly agreed that we would date each other exclusively.

I feel...

I would react...

The conflict...

My expectations...

## RESOURCE 9b

# The Hierarchy of Conflict



Read the scenario below. For each person's statement, determine which level of conflict is being represented (see *Hierarchy of Conflict* pyramid above). Enter that level in the space provided. Then answer the *Follow It Up* questions at the end.

Father: So, Sarah, how did your day go? Level \_\_\_\_\_

Mother: Yes, I'm interested in your job search. Level \_\_\_\_\_

Sarah: Oh, not so good. I went to four places to ask about summer jobs, and they all wanted me to work 40 hours a week. Worse than that, none of them wanted to give me time off, so I wouldn't be able to go on a trip with my friends later in the summer. I guess it looks like I won't be working this summer. Level \_\_\_\_\_

Father: I can understand you want to spend time with your friends, but you know you've got to save some money for college if you're going to go away to school. Level \_\_\_\_\_

Sarah: Oh, Dad, I know. But that's a long way off and I'm sick of school right now. Level \_\_\_\_\_

Mother: I'm sick of a lot things too like doing laundry, cooking meals, and cleaning up after everyone, but you still need to earn some money for college. Level \_\_\_\_\_

Sarah: Mother, don't get so mad. You seem to think your life is the hardest life of anybody in the family. What about me! I'm so sick of going to school and getting up so early in the morning. I am just sick of everything! Level \_\_\_\_\_

Father: Now look. Both of you calm down. We're going to have to figure this out. There must be some way to balance money and friendship here. Level \_\_\_\_\_

**RESOURCE 9b****The Hierarchy of Conflict** CONTINUED

Sarah: *(leaving the table to retreat to her bedroom)* Money, money, money! That's all you two ever care about. I can't stand this! Level \_\_\_\_\_

*Three days later the family is at dinner. For the past two nights, everyone has gone their separate ways, finding excuses not to be around each other. Now, they are back together.*

Father: Okay, we can't avoid the issue any longer. Let's talk about Sarah's summer job and plans. Level \_\_\_\_\_

Mother: Dad's right, Sarah. You have simply got to get a summer job. Level \_\_\_\_\_

Sarah: But I can't! I won't get any vacation time, and I won't get to see my friends. It will just be work, work, work! I won't do it! Level \_\_\_\_\_

Father: What do you mean you won't? If you don't work, you won't be able to save any money for college. Level \_\_\_\_\_

Mother: And if you don't work, you won't get any allowance from us, so you won't have any money to go on a trip with your friends either. Level \_\_\_\_\_

Sarah: I don't care. I've got some money saved from Grandma! Level \_\_\_\_\_

Father: And I won't let you take the car on the trip! Level \_\_\_\_\_

Sarah: Then, I'll walk. *(And she does, slamming the front door behind her!)* Level \_\_\_\_\_

**Follow It Up:**

- What level is the most damaging to a relationship?
- By looking at this pyramid, can you understand how conflicts get out of hand?
- Go back and look at each level. Pick three different levels and tell what you could do to turn a conflict around at that particular level.

## RESOURCE 9c

# Conflict in Marriage

A study with 50,000 married couples identified the conflict-related items that discriminated most highly between happily married and unhappily married couples.



STATEMENT	AGREEMENT LEVEL	
	Happy couples	Unhappy couples
1. When we discuss problems, my partner understands my opinions and ideas.	78%	20%
2. I can share my feelings and ideas with my partner during disagreements.	78%	25%
3. We are able to resolve our differences.	58%	12%
4. We have similar ideas about how to settle our disagreements.	72%	28%
5. My partner takes our disagreements seriously.	54%	14%

## Follow It Up:

- Read through the above items and think about how attempting to avoid negative issues would impact each statement/idea and produce conflict.
- What other factors can improve the outcomes for unhappily married couples (i.e. learning conflict resolution skills, having healthy communication skills, trust, and safety)?

**RESOURCE 9d**

# Resolving Conflict Role-Play

Conduct the following role-play to demonstrate ways to resolve conflicts.

**Narrator:** **#1 Set a time and a place for discussion.** It is important to focus on the issue without distractions. In this situation, before lunch the next day. Eileen, the mom, finds Marcus, the son, (or Jenn, the daughter) listening to a CD in his room.

---

**Mom:** “Can we sit down this evening and talk about curfew hours?”

**Son/Daughter:** “I’ve got a baseball game tonight.”

**Narrator:** They settle on 8 p.m. Monday evening in the living room. Marcus’s two younger siblings will be at a track meet with their father, so Eileen and Marcus will have some uninterrupted time to work things out.

**Narrator:** **#2 Define the problem or issue of disagreement.**

---

**Mom:** “Marcus, I was upset with you because you were out way past the time you said you would be home.”

**Son/Daughter:** “You weren’t mad because I was out with Jeff and Brian?”

**Mom:** “No.”

**Son/Daughter:** “I thought you didn’t like them.”

**Mom:** “No, I think they’re great kids. I especially like Jeff’s sense of humor, and Brian’s always so polite and thoughtful around me. I was simply upset because you said you would be home at 11 p.m. and you came home at 12:30.”

**Narrator:** **#3 Talk about how each of you contributes to the problem.**

---

**Son/Daughter:** “Okay, I understand. And you’re right. I did say 11. We were just having such a great time talking in Brian’s basement that I didn’t know what time it was.”

**Mom:** “Well, maybe I didn’t make it clear why it was so important for me to know where you were.”

**Narrator:** **#4 List past unsuccessful attempts to resolve the issue.**

---

**Mom:** “This happened two weeks ago, Marcus. You remember?”

**Son/Daughter:** “Yes, Mom.”

**Mom:** “And, wait. It happened just last week. Remember how upset I was then?”

**Son/Daughter:** “And, I thought you were going to flip.” (He smiles.)

**Mom:** “I guess I was a bit nutty then.” (She laughs.) “You know, we didn’t really sit down and talk after it happened. I guess you just ended up going your way, and I was too busy with other things and went my way.”

**Son/Daughter:** “Why do you get so upset, Mom? Don’t you trust me?”

**Mom:** “Oh, yes, I trust you. I am just afraid something has happened to you.”

Narrator: **#5 Brainstorm new ways to resolve the conflict.**

---

Mom: “Well, we’ve got to find a solution to this problem. Let’s do some brainstorming.”

Son/Daughter: “Okay, Mom. You could ground me at home after dark.”

Mom: “Good thinking! What else?” (Laughing.)

Son/Daughter: “Or you could go buy some sleeping pills, and when I’m out past curfew you could knock yourself out with them and have pleasant dreams.”

Mom: “What about if I bought you a new watch with a beeper on it, and set to go off at 10:30 p.m.?”

Son/Daughter: “What if you just set my curfew for 1 a.m.? I’d start to get tired by then and be ready to come home.”

Narrator: Mother and son continued brainstorming in this way for quite a while, clearly enjoying each other’s company. Finally, they got a list of ten options.

Narrator: **#6 Discuss and evaluate possible solutions.**

---

Son/Daughter: “Mom, 11 p.m. is really too early. All my friends get to stay out till midnight or 1.”

Mom: “Well, I suppose I could loosen up on you a bit. But I worry so.”

Son/Daughter: “I could call you to let you know where I am and that I’m okay.”

Mom: “That sure would help.”

Narrator: **#7 Agree on one solution to try.**

---

Narrator: Mother and son settled on a midnight curfew and agreed that Marcus would call to let Eileen know where he was.

Narrator: **#8 Agree on how each individual will work toward this solution.**

---

Mom: “Okay, let’s both write down our responsibilities. I need to make it very clear for you, so I’ll say, ‘I would like you to be home on school nights by 9 p.m. and on weekends by midnight.’”

Son/Daughter: “I can go along with that, but sometimes I would like to stay out longer—like when Brian and Jeff and I are having a great time over at one of their houses. Could I call you before midnight and let you know what I’m up to and get some more time?”

Mom: “Okay. As long as I know where you are and that you’re safe, I can live with that.”

Narrator: **#9 set up another meeting to discuss your progress.**

---

Mom: “Let’s go out to dinner in a month to talk about how we’re doing on this, Marcus. Don’t worry, I’ll buy!”

Narrator: **# 10 Reward each other as you each contribute toward the solution.**

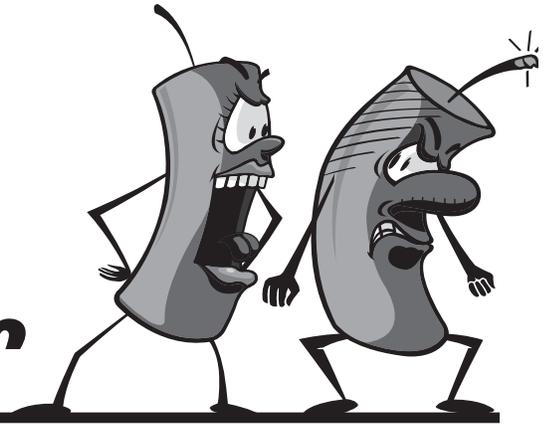
---

Mom: “Marcus, it was nice of you to call last night at 11:30.”

Son/Daughter: “I appreciate you giving me an extra hour and a half, Mom. We were right in the middle of that game, and I was winning.”

RESOURCE 9e

# Tips for controlling anger



**1. Change your perception about the event.** Many people believe that “somebody else makes me angry or gets me upset.” However, our happiness or unhappiness (or anger) are not externally caused. Anger, like any other human emotion, has an element of choice: we choose how we think about the world, ourselves, and others. Our emotions follow our thoughts.

Describe a time when you changed your perception about something that was bothering you.

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**2. Learn what provokes your anger.** While no one causes us to use anger destructively, it is wise to learn what your anger triggers are and to write them down.

Make a list of things that “push your buttons” or trigger you to be angry.

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**3. Recognize and admit your own anger.** When you get angry, does your heart pound? Do you sweat? What are you thinking and what actions do you tend to do when you get angry?

Think about a time when you were really angry, and make a list of how you felt or your body responded.

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**4. Learn to do a self time-out.** When you sense that you are starting to feel angry, take a time-out to relax and redirect.

What are some other things you can do to calm yourself down during a time-out?

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**5. Try to understand the other person's point of view.** There are many reasons why someone may do something that provokes our anger beside intentionally wanting to get us angry. Before you respond, try to put yourself in that person's shoes.

Have you experienced a time when someone could have responded with anger but chose to attempt to understand your point of view? How did that affect your relationship with that person and the outcome of the situation?

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**6. Express your anger constructively.** It has been said that “anger is one letter short of danger,” because there are many damaging ways to handle anger. If you find yourself feeling angry, learn to express angry feelings calmly and with an attitude of respect without attacking or blaming the other person.

What are some ways in which you have destructively and constructively dealt with anger?

**RESOURCE 9f**

# Anger Management Worksheet

Identify the problem: I was angry because....

Three possible solutions:

1.

2.

3.

Consequences:

1.

2.

3.

What would have been my best choice?

Did you make this choice? Why or why not?

How did things work out?