

When You Feel Dissatisfied or Disapproving First ^{***}

- Consider that this situation might not be about right/wrong but rather about legitimately different expectations or priorities.
- Let your partner know you don't like or agree with the way he's thinking or acting, and explain why.
- Convey willingness to listen with an open mind.

He Explains

He is Flexible

He is Defensive or Dismissive

- If your first impression is that his explanations are just excuses or rationalizations that have no merit, think twice. Consider that there might be more than one legitimate way to look at situations or issues like this one.
- Hear him out and refrain from disputing or debating what he is saying before he is able to explain fully.
- Acknowledge *the part* of his explanation that you can understand or agree with, even if you can't agree with everything he's saying.
- If you can't agree fully with his perspective, tell him that you still prefer your point of view, but also convey willingness to give and

- Don't panic and "jump the gun" by becoming argumentative or giving up prematurely.
- Calmly and convincingly restate your intention to be respectful of his point of view while asking him to do the same.

He Explains

He is Flexible

He is Dismissive

Express frustration. Let him know that you're trying but don't feel you're getting anything back. "Call the question."

Walk Away

He is Dismissive

He is Flexible

In your mind, don't make a big deal of his temporary dismissiveness.

Begin a fresh conversation without a chip on your shoulder.

If his dismissiveness persists, refuse to continue business as usual.

***** Note:** If your partner lies, engages in deliberate deception, is sexually unfaithful or physically aggressive, breaks a clear agreement with no good reason, badmouths or undermines you, violates your privacy or personal space or makes an irreversible unilateral decision regarding something about which he knows you have strong feelings, a different chart applies (found in the article, "When Your Partner's Thinking or Actions seem Wrong." For all other times when you feel dissatisfied or disapproving, use the above guidelines.