

NO LOVE LOST BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR ROOMMATE?

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Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances
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By dan the roommate man

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Don't be dismayed if you find yourself in conflict with your roommate(s). Disagreements between people are inevitable, especially in a roommate situation where people live together and interact on a daily basis. Conflicts usually occur when changes are needed and when behaviors, thoughts and feelings need to be re-examined. Don't be afraid to confront your roommates about what is bothering you. If you know how to deal with conflict positively and productively, all involved can benefit from the situation.

Ten Steps In Resolving Conflict

Get everyone together involved in the conflict.

Each roommate should take a turn describing his/her perception of the situation, how he or she feels about it and what he/she wants.

Together, come to an agreement on what the conflict is.

Everyone should agree to be willing to compromise something to come up with a solution.

Together, describe a situation which would be a compromise among yourselves.

Come to an agreement on the described situation. Talk about what changes will be needed to bring about the acceptable situation. Together, make a plan of action which will help achieve the desired new situation and set a time frame for these changes.

Make a commitment to make the necessary changes.

Set a future date to evaluate the situation and to re-negotiate any differences if necessary.

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These steps sound very simple but to make them work you need to know how to fight fair. The key to successful dispute resolution is effective communication. To resolve conflict, communicate with each other on a one-to-one equal basis and avoid behavior that will break down communication.

Ground Rules Of Successful Dispute Resolution

Start right. Set a time to discuss the conflict that is convenient to everyone involved. Avoid bringing up the problem when your roommate is walking out the door on the way to a mid-term exam. A better approach would be, "We need to talk about what is going on. When do you have time to work this out?" Schedule enough time so you will be able to prevent time pressure.

Remember that everyone involved is an equal and should have equal rights to be heard in the discussion. To create a sense of equality, you may wish to meet at a neutral place. It may help to have

everyone sit on the floor or at a table (all at the same level).

Set aside your desire to "Win." Winning an argument is not the same as succeeding in conflict resolution where, together with your roommates, you will all win over the conflict situation.

Each roommate should be able to talk freely about how he/she feels. Make sure that each person's ideas and feelings are clear to everyone involved. Be willing to share your feelings honestly and don't expect others to know how you feel without being told.

Assume each other's perspective. Ask your roommate to reverse positions, i.e., to stand in your shoes while you stand in theirs. This can sometimes be the most effective way of getting your point across and, contrariwise, understanding where your roommate is coming from.

Avoid blaming each other. Assessing blame often has the effect of making the other party defensive and anxious to find fault with you, widening instead of narrowing the conflict.

Talk about actions which can be changed rather than personalities. "You leave your books on the dining room table," can lead to a change of habit; while, "You're a lazy slob," will only lead to defensiveness and hostility. Personal attacks destroy communication of productive ideas.

Don't team up with one roommate against another. This creates defensiveness in the third roommate. You are all working together for a solution.

Don't psycho-analyze your roommate. Avoid a statement such as "Maybe you don't realize this about yourself, but...." Most people don't like the feeling of being analyzed. Instead, take responsibility for your own feelings. A better approach might be, "What you're doing makes me feel...." If your roommates begin fighting unfairly, take responsibility for getting things back on the right track. You don't have to let a confrontation go from bad to worse. Help set and maintain the positive tone of the discussion by your example.

Don't put your roommates on the spot by insisting on an immediate response to your demands. If

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possible, give each other time (at least overnight) to think over a specific demand or suggested cause of action.

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CAN MY CURRENT ROOMMATE JUST THROW ME OUT?

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QUESTION:

I feel that I am being wrongly evicted from our apartment by another roommate who claims to be the only one on the lease. I'm pretty sure I signed it, too, but I can't remember.

ANSWER:

The first thing to do is to get a copy of that lease. Start with the landlord, who probably has a copy (and state law may require him to give you a copy if you request it). If you're on the lease, your roommate cannot get you out — only landlords can evict tenants.

Now, suppose you're not on the lease. All is not lost. If the landlord has treated you as a tenant — by accepting rent directly, for example, or putting your name on the mailbox or doorbell — you may have attained the status of a tenant. Surely, if you and the roommate rented the place together and it was clear that you were on equal footing, you should be given the status of a tenant.

Once you are a tenant, a co-tenant such as your roommate cannot evict you. Only the landlord can do that.

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