

# us part' obsolete?

Therein lies the "attitude" of the foundation. But with skills and faith in marriage, attitude isn't enough.

Communication is not inherent. When communication snarls in a marriage relationship, problems aren't far behind.

**CONSEQUENTLY**, communication skills must be learned, especially in the area of fighting. Improper fighting can destroy relationships. Good fighting can strengthen them.

Dr. George Bach describes aspects of fighting in his book "The Intimate Enemy." He elaborates on when and how to fight, how to turn a domestic quarrel into a constructive discussion.

Hair in the sink, socks on the floor, grocery bills, broken furniture... and more can build into seemingly unresolvable issues. Healthy fighting means focusing on how the issue affects the emotions, rather than the issue itself.

"IT'S REALLY not what you have the argument over, it's how you have the argument," Trenz said.

Round robin, where the same issue repeats itself; gunny sacking, where pet peeves build up; and below the belt fights, which unfairly

capitalize on a spouse's weak spot, are taboo.

Fight guidelines should be set and spouses should strive to fight within those guidelines.)

**WHEN GUIDELINES** are gone and arguments take more time than friendly conversations, it's time for a review.

"When things get bad you have to go back to the roots of what you had in mind when you got married," Trenz advised. "The roots are the needs individuals still have."

Reviewing the beginning may even help a relationship where personality changes have occurred. The constant "you're not the same person I married" is true. But the new person still has many of the old needs.

**FAITH IN marriage** is perhaps the hardest to establish. Trends toward living together and high divorce rates "reflect a growing attitude of skepticism toward marriage," Trenz said.

But a belief that marriage works if it's worked at can be encouragement to struggling couples.

"Marriage is a long-term pairing, two partners agreeing to help meet each other's needs. You really have to believe that marriage does all those things," Trenz said.

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