DESTRUCTIVE FIGHT STYLES

1. Apologizing prematurely.
2. Refusing to take the fight seriously.
3. Withdrawing; evading "toe-to-toe confrontation"; walking out; falling asleep; applying the "silent treatment."
4. Using intimate knowledge of partner to hit "below the belt", playing the Humiliator.
5. Chain-reacting—throwing in the kitchen sink from left field, bringing in unrelated issues to pyramid the attack.
6. Being a "pseudocommodator"—pretending to go along with partner's point of view for momentary peace, but hoarding doubts, secret contempt, resentments, private reservations.
7. Attacking indirectly (against some person, idea, activity, value, or object which the partner loves or stands for) — "Carom fighting."
8. Being a "double binder"—setting up expectations but making no attempt to fulfill them; giving a rebuke instead of a reward.
9. "Character analysis"—explaining what the other person's feelings are.
10. Demanding more—"Gimme"—nothing is ever enough.
11. Withholding—affection, approval, recognition, material things, privileges—anything which would give pleasure or make life easier for the partner.
12. Undermining—deliberately arousing or intensifying emotional insecurities, anxiety, or depression; keeping partner on edge, threatening disaster.
13. Being a "Benedict Arnold"—not only failing to defend the partner, but encouraging attacks from outsiders.

CONSTRUCTIVE FIGHT STYLES

1. Program fights at special times to avoid wear and tear on innocent bystanders. Leave plenty of time to handle feelings.
2. Each partner gives full expression to his own positive feelings.
3. Each partner gives full expression to his own negative feelings.

4. Each one replays partner's arguments in his own words, to be sure he understands it.

5. Entertain the "feedback" of the other person's evaluation of your behavior. This means "chewing over" evaluations of yourself before accepting or rejecting them.

6. Define clearly what the fight is about.

7. Discover where the two positions coincide as well as differ.

8. Each partner defines his "out-of-bounds" areas of vulnerability.

9. Determine how deeply each partner feels about his stake in the fight. This enables each to decide how much he can yield.

10. Offer correctional critiques of conduct - this means for both to develop positive suggestions for improvement in each other.

11. Decide how each can help the other relative to the problem.

12. Recognize the Yablonsky (spontaneous explosion without reason) and wait for it to subside; don't "hook in".

13. Try to score the fight by comparing the learning yield of the fight against the injury. Winners are those who learn more than they get hurt.

14. Fight after thinking. Compare your opinions with each other after the leftovers, evasions, and unsettled issues, if any.

15. Declare a fight holiday, a truce, a period of time in which no fight engagements are to be made. This provides the conditions for exercising the fine art of making up and enjoying its benefits such as warm body contact, good sex, etc.

16. Be prepared for the next fight. Intimate fighting is more or less continuous, and paradoxically if it is accepted and expected, the quality of fighting is less vicious, the fights less long, the injury less, and the learning of new aspects more.

(The destructive and constructive fight styles presented here were developed by Dr. George R. Bach of Beverly Hills, California. They are here adapted from an articles about Dr. Bach's work in Life magazine ("The Marital Fight Game") of May 17, 1963.)