

## 27 GUARANTEED WAYS TO DESTROY A RELATIONSHIP

Robert W. Birch, Ph.D.

Relationships are often hard to maintain, even when two people profess undying love for each other. A major problem in a relationship is that one or both partners continue to make the same errors, but then cannot understand why the relationship is in trouble. It is almost as though they are determined to continue to do things their way, even at the risk of damaging a good thing.

In my clinical practice, I had discovered at least 27 errors in thinking and communicating that people make, which if repeated, have the potential of destroying an otherwise perfectly good relationship.

Which of the following errors are you making?

**1.** Rigidly maintain that you are always right, even when you do not have all the facts!

**2.** Never apologize, even when you are proven wrong beyond a shadow of a doubt!

**3.** Be relentless in rubbing it in when you are proven right!

**4.** Dogmatically maintain that you know your partner's motives better than he or she does!

**5.** Assume that your partner should understand your needs and should respond immediately without being asked!

**6.** Totally ignore your partner's priorities and insist on your own!

**7.** Operate on the assumption that your partner's sexual need cycle is identical to yours!

**8.** Add deep psychological meaning to your partner's sexual disinterest, and take it very personally!

**9.** Do not ever admit hurt, but go immediately to the expression of anger!

**10.** Identify your partner's character flaws and family secrets and use them to make a point when logic fails!

**11.** Use guilt to manipulate, to get your own way or to punish!

**12.** Become proficient at catching your partner being bad, but do not ever comment if you catch him or her being good!

**13.** Cut no slack, yield no ground and push your argument until your partner walks out the door... then follow the coward!

**14.** Do not let go of the past, and be sure to rehash your version of it as often as possible!

**15.** Cling very, very tightly, claiming that you will surly die if you are ignored!

**16.** If you are not a clinger, then stay emotionally/physically distant, and show no signs that you really care for your partner!

**17.** Make promises, but never keep them!

**18.** Be factious so your partner never knows when you are being serious!

**19.** Always make excuses for your bad habits!

**20.** Insist that what you have to say is always more important than what your partner is saying, so interrupt!

**21.** Pretend that you understand what your partner has said, even if you have no idea of the point that was being made!

**22.** Maintain that having sex will smooth over an unresolved argument.

**23.** Be loud and stubborn. Assume that volume and persistence makes you right.

**24.** Assume that you can say really nasty things, and then take them back later.

**26.** Be a mind-reader. Insist that you know your partner's true thoughts, regardless of what he or she says.

**27.** Act as though you do none of the above and it is your partner who must make all the changes!

## 23 RULES FOR EFFECTIVE

Compiled by Robert W. Birch, Ph.D.

1. Together, identify the central issue and stay on it. Deal with just one thing at a time.
2. Do not argue over little details. Never become distracted by minor points.
3. Do not accuse your partner with "you" statements. Make "I" statements about how you perceive the problem and what you are feeling.
4. Do not assign blame. Blame stirs a defensive attitude and is likely to bring a counterattack. Negotiate as adults and as equals.
5. Do not ever attempt to shame. Guilt trips eventually stir anger and backfire.
6. Never ever attack your partner's character or personality.
7. Do not keep score. No one is "always wrong."

8. Do not lecture!

9. Listen carefully to your partner's perspective, and do not interrupt.

10. Do not yell!

11. Do not pass judgement on your partner's perceptions or feelings.

12. Do not clam up when the going gets tough, and don't walk away.

13. Do not take seriously everything said in anger, but listen for what is important.

14. Be very, very careful with your expression of anger, as great damage can be done by harsh words.

15. Direct any anger toward what it is that you are really angry about.

16. Attempt to identify your hurt, and talk of it before allowing your pain to turn into anger.

17. Behind each question there is usually a statement. Do not ask the question, make the statement!

18. If you must ask, do not ask a question you already know the answer too. No one likes to be tested!

19. Maintain respect and unconditional positive regard. In a relationship, respect is of equal importance as love.

20. No name calling!

21. Do not save up issues and then, long after the fact, bring them up.

22. Always work toward a mutual understanding, a fair compromise and genuine forgiveness.

23. Devote more time to reaffirming your caring than to trying to settle your differences.

Collected and organized from a variety of sources by  
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<http://www.sex-help.com>

For More Information  
or help, contact:

Cynthia Ruberg, M.S.Ed., LPCC  
Relationship & Sexuality Counselor  
AASECT Certified Sex Therapist

167 State St. Suite 110  
Westerville, OH 43081  
Phone: 614-865-1612

<http://sexandrelationships.com>

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## Tips on Keeping a Relationship Healthy

Robert W. Birch, Ph.D.  
Sexologist & Sexuality Educator  
[Retired Marital & Sex Therapist]



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