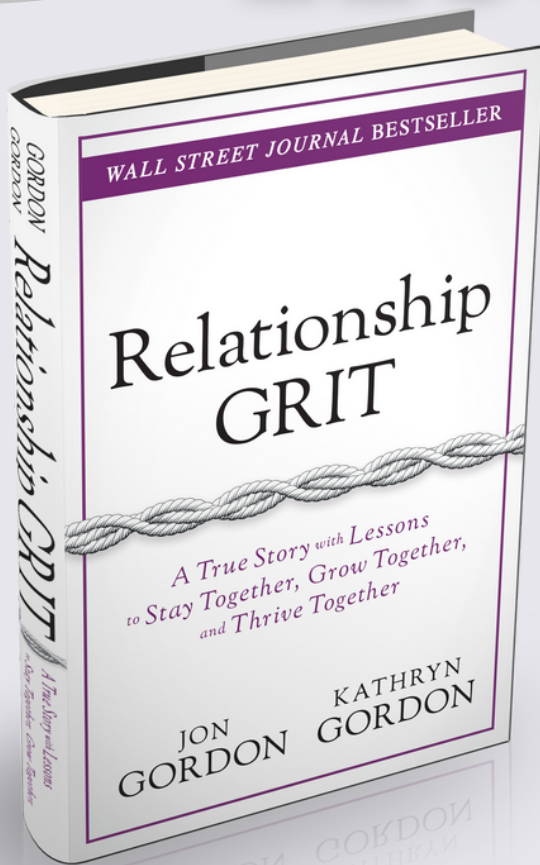


# 5 WAYS TO FIGHT LESS



**KATHRYN**  
*for real*



# 5 Ways to Fight Less

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## Kathryn Gordon

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Learn more at [kathrynforreal.com](http://kathrynforreal.com)

In every relationship, you're going to fight. It's inevitable. And when the fighting begins, sometimes the gloves come off. Maybe you've wondered: how did we even get here? What made us change from fiery romance and "long walks on the beach" to battling it out over small flaws? Relax. Fights happen. If you've read our bestselling book, *Relationship GRIT*, you know that Jon and I have done our fair share of fighting. Of course, it didn't start out that way, but right as we were about to get married, the tension took off. We had to make a choice. Were we going to commit to keeping score, ticking each other off, and fueling the fire? Or, were we going to dig in, get the help we needed, and find some common ground? We decided to work on finding common ground. It didn't come easy, but it was worth it. So instead of having to endure years of counseling, conflict and crazy nights, take a page out of our book from 25 years of marriage. Through years working on our connection and strengthening our commitment to one another, we've found five ways to fight less.

# 5 Ways to Fight Less

## 1. Communicate Clearly

Communication is the foundation of a great relationship. Not everyone is naturally a good communicator. Maybe that's you. But whether it's easy or not, you've got to make communication a priority, or your relationship will fail. It's as simple as that.

It is crucial to communicate what you need, what's not working, how you are doing, and most importantly, your expectations.

You can start by establishing two keys: how and when. Figure out how your partner communicates and when it's best to talk. Are they better sharing in short spurts between their quick shower and breakfast? Or, do they open up more during longer conversations, like during the nightly walk that Jon and I take? This might be easier to determine by a process of elimination. Early in our marriage, I learned when not to ask Jon to talk. Just like anyone returning home after a long day, Jon needed a buffer between entering the front door and a discussion. That 20-minute window, where he could get changed and get something to eat, eased us into the evening and made communication much smoother. Then we'd process anything we needed to on our walk. This may be hard with kids but try talking after you put them to bed. Sit down, get comfortable, and connect.

### **Try This:**

Ask your spouse, "On a scale of 1-10, how well do I communicate? And, what would make it a ten?"

Then, spend some time leveling expectations. Write down your expectations of your partner, consider which are actually important, and share the ones that really matter. Listen to your partner and have them do the same. These two simple exercises will not only prevent petty fights, but they will save you from keeping score in the relationship.

## 2. Create a Meeting of the Minds on Money

I know, I know. The dreaded M word. Money - the lack of it, how it's used, the differences in how it's viewed, spent, given away - every philosophy and practical approach needs to be addressed openly. Otherwise, money can be a relationship killer. Or at least a fight club starter.

How many times have you and your partner fought about money? Or avoided the topic completely? You need to talk about it, budget it, agree to how it's spent, what your expectations are, and come up with a plan. It helps if you and your partner have a shared vision and goal for your life together. Then money becomes a tool for your dreams and goals.

You might still have different spending habits. Maybe one of you saves on clothes shopping and the other on car choices. But if you have a shared vision, and a determined spending, savings and investment plan, your life will be so much simpler. And more on target to reach your goals.

With such clarity, you will have far fewer disagreements.

### **Try This:**

Ask your spouse, "What excites you about our future? What do you want to create together? What dreams do we need to budget, save or invest for if we look five, ten, or twenty years down the road?"

Then, take some time connecting and dreaming together. Write down your vision so you can keep referring back to it. When you have your regular check-ins, spend some time keeping open lines of communication about money. This will turn money from the diesel fueling your fights into the vehicle for your journey.

# 5 Ways to Fight Less

## 3. Kick Out Jealousy

Jealousy has a way of ruining relationships. Most of the time, a jealous partner is actually feeling inadequate. Insecure. Lacking confidence. Jealousy is the by-product of these emotions. So, as ugly as the green-eyed monster is, try not to make it the center of attention.

Instead, turn your gaze towards your spouse. Make them feel loved. Make them feel like royalty. Men, make her feel like a queen. Women, make him feel like a king. Make them feel more important than any other person on the planet. Let them know that you value them, appreciate them, and deeply love them. You know them better than anyone else.

Think of the ways you can do this and begin practically reminding them of how amazing they are every single day. When you honor and appreciate each other, you fight less and improve your relationship.

### **Try This:**

Compliment your partner.

This turns the tables on jealousy. Remind each other of what brought you together. Focus on what you love about your partner. Build them up as the person you know they are or are designed to be!

Then, think of ten things that you love about your partner. Keep a sticky note, 3x5 card, or reminder on your phone of these traits. Read them and remind them often. Speak greatness into them!

As you focus on what they are doing right, you are also making them feel like a king or queen!

Plus, you'll like each other more! It's a win-win! Jealousy will be diminished, and you will both feel stronger, happier, and more connected.

## 4. Remember it's "We", not "Me"

Bad habits are no longer just about you. Every choice you make is a joint decision - or at least a joint consequence - whether you like it or not.

When you choose to engage in your bad habits (and we all have them), you have to remember: it's we, not me. You're affecting your partner. You have to think about how they will feel, what is best for "we."

For the relationship. This can be as simple as cleaning up after yourself or not having that "one more" drink at a party. The good news is these go both ways; your good decisions benefit your partner, too.

Why? You're not on two different teams anymore. You're on the same team. You want to do what's best for yourself and the team. So, if you want that third drink at a social event, but you know it's not good for your relationship, don't do it. (I'm speaking to myself as well here. Full transparency: Jon doesn't like it when I drink... so I've learned my limits - for our best.)

### **Try This:**

Ask yourselves: in what ways can each of us improve our relationship?

This isn't a finger-pointing exercise. Do this separately first, then together. This is about how bad habits and choices affect one another.

Then ask your partner: "Are there any areas that are a priority to you, that you haven't communicated yet?"

Rather than keeping score or staying silent, spend this time talking about how you two can put we before me, creating a solid team. Whether it's about laundry on the floor or dishes in the sink, this will help you argue less.

# 5 Ways to Fight Less

## 5. Keep Intimacy Going Strong

Yes, I'm talking about it: Sex.

Let's face it: we all desire it at some point and at some level. Sure, it's easy for day-to-day stress and struggles to get in the way. But physical and emotional intimacy are essential ingredients for a healthy and strong relationship. It's important to make time to connect intimately.

In fact, in our book, *Relationship Grit*, Jon and I talk about the four C's to becoming one team: communicate, connect, commit, and care. I believe cultivating an intimate connection can embody all four. So, it's definitely worth it!

Besides, even on a purely biological level, sex produces oxytocin, which makes you feel bonded and more loved. This makes you want to fight less!

### **Try This:**

Well, do I have to spell it out for you?

Yes, you need to take time for romance.

Commit to intimacy. Ask your spouse or partner if there is anything you can do to encourage this connection. Some will say they don't feel like it after a hard day at work or with the kids.

Sometimes it's hard to segway from the day's stressors to feeling amorous. You'd be surprised where a foot rub or back rub might take you.

But, no matter what, it's truly a mindset.

When you shift your mindset to love and connection, beautiful things can happen. You can even prep for it like other decisions. You're going to have sex. You're going to bond on that level. It is a matter of connection. Shift your mindset to getting and staying close with your partner, as a matter of priority, and you will find yourself not interested in fighting as much!

It's worth it. And, let's face it - it's fun!

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Fights will happen in any relationship. The question is: what will you fight for when you do? Will you stay in your own bad habits that keep you stuck and frustrated? Or will you fight for your relationship by working at these five steps to fight less? If you apply these five simple tools, you've chosen to fight right. You've put all bets on your relationship, and all the odds are in your favor. I hope these exercises and tips have helped you find new ways to connect openly with your partner. If you haven't read *Relationship GRIT*, check it out. We give a lot of tips and strategies to help you have a stronger, more connected relationship. Join me on my podcast, "Kathryn for Real," to learn more tools for your relationships, a healthier life and a happier you.

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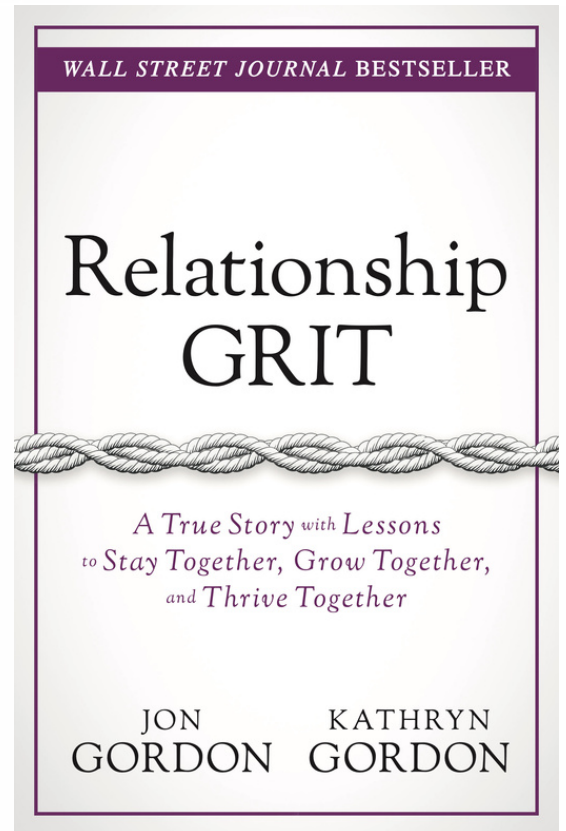
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