1. No Storing Up Past Hurts

What it means: Don't save up all your past hurts and unleash them at once during a conflict.
Why it matters: Using history as a weapon derails current conversations and creates resentment.
Try instead: Stick to what's happening now. If past issues need addressing, set aside intentional time to do so respectfully.

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2. No Arguing on Multiple Fronts

What it means: Stay on *one* issue at a time.
Why it matters: Bringing up multiple problems at once can overwhelm your partner and distract from resolving the core issue.
Try instead: Say, "Let's stay with this for now. We can come back to the other issue later."

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3. No Globalizing Statements of "Always" or "Never"

What it means: Avoid phrases like, "You always..." or "You never..."
Why it matters: These exaggerations are rarely true and tend to escalate defensiveness.
Try instead: Be specific and time-bound: "Last night when you came home late, I felt alone."

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4. No Profanity

What it means: Avoid swearing or harsh language during conflict.
Why it matters: Profanity often shuts down connection and creates fear or emotional shutdown.
Try instead: If you feel overwhelmed, take a break and return when calmer.

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5. No Ultimatums of Divorce

What it means: Don't threaten to leave the relationship unless you truly intend to.
Why it matters: Threats create instability and fear, undermining safety and trust.
Try instead: Use language that expresses how serious something feels, without threatening the relationship.

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6. No Harassment After a Partner Says “Stop”

What it means: Respect when your partner calls a time-out. Don’t follow, yell, or pressure them to continue.
Why it matters: Boundaries allow both people to calm down and return to the conversation from a regulated place.
Try instead: The person who calls the break agrees to re-engage in 1–2 hours or at a set time.

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7. No Interrupting or Talking Over

What it means: Let your partner finish speaking before responding.
Why it matters: Interrupting sends the message that you’re not listening or that your point matters more.
Try instead: Write down your thoughts while listening and share when it’s your turn.

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8. No Minimizing the Other Person’s Words or Points

What it means: Don’t downplay or dismiss your partner’s feelings or experiences.
Why it matters: Minimizing breeds shame and distance.
Try instead: Even if you see things differently, validate their emotion: “I can see this felt really intense for you.”

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9. No Mocking Words or Gestures

What it means: Don’t use sarcasm, eye rolls, or mocking tones or body language.
Why it matters: These behaviors communicate contempt and shut down safe communication.
Try instead: Stay open and curious. Mocking is often a defense—name the real emotion instead.

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10. No Semantics or Word Policing

What it means: Don’t correct your partner’s wording to win an argument.
Why it matters: It derails the emotional core of the conversation and shifts focus to “being right.”
Try instead: Focus on the meaning and impact behind their words, not their exact phrasing.