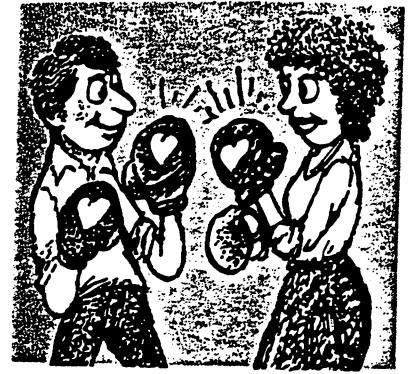


HOW TO HANDLE CONFLICT THE WINNING WAY

When a conflict occurs, usually two different worlds of thought and feeling collide, and are followed by an explosion of hostile words or actions. Hurt feelings and psychological distance are often the result. But there is a style of handling conflict that brings intimacy rather than distance, and where both participants can win. Paul Swets, author of "The Art of Talking so that People Will Listen," offers three rules for this kind of conflict.

1. Avoid yelling, insulting, lying, name-calling, and bringing up past mistakes. These are all "below-the-belt."

2. Each participant must verbalize the other's feelings to his or her satisfaction about a point, before arguing his own point. For example, a man might say, "You feel embarrassed that I made



such a fool of myself at the party last night." His partner accepts or corrects that interpretation and then he goes on to make his point.

3. Realize that the goal of the conflict is intimacy, understanding and closeness — not distance, competition, or winning at the other's expense.

What a difference following these three simple rules could make in our relationships! Each person would be forced to listen deeply to the other. Both would be working to get back on the same wavelength, to restore the relationship. Of course, there still might be hurt feelings, defensiveness, insecurity or anger. But the really damaging punches would be eliminated. You can't lose in this kind of conflict!