



The First Fight: Red Flag or Real Information?

לעליי נשמת
מאריך יצחק בן יוסף אכליהו הכהן ז"ל

Chana asks:

My candidate just had her first real argument with the man she's dating. She's shaken and asking: how normal is it to fight

early on? And how do you know whether a couple is fighting in a healthy way, or if this is already a sign to walk away?

Aleeza answers:

Conflict isn't the problem. Avoiding conflict is.

If two people are dating and never disagree, it usually means they haven't gone deep enough yet, or one person is quietly shrinking to keep the peace. Neither builds a strong marriage.

So yes, having a first fight is normal, even early on. Sometimes it's the moment a relationship shifts from polite and surface-level into something real. The question isn't that they fought. The question is how they fought.

Healthy conflict has a few clear markers. There's respect, even when emotions run high. No humiliation, no threats, no sarcasm meant to wound. There's presence — people stay engaged instead of disappearing, stonewalling, or punishing with silence. And there's curiosity. Even in disagreement, there's an attempt to understand, not just to win.

When should your candidate be concerned? What concerns me is contempt, defensiveness with no accountability, or a

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quick leap to “maybe this isn’t right” instead of “let’s understand what just happened.” That’s not about the argument, that’s about character.

I always tell singles: don’t judge a relationship by the fight. Judge it by the repair. Do they circle back? Does someone say, “I see how that landed,” or “I could’ve handled that better”? Repair is one of the strongest predictors of long-term success according to Dr. John and Julie Gottman of the Gottman Institute.

Dating is not just about finding someone you agree with. Dating is about discovering whether you can grow with someone when things get uncomfortable. Learning how someone handles conflict early on isn’t a setback. It’s information. And good information is a gift.

While conflict is a challenge, I hope they will overcome the hurdles that come their way.

Blessings,
Aleeza ■

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