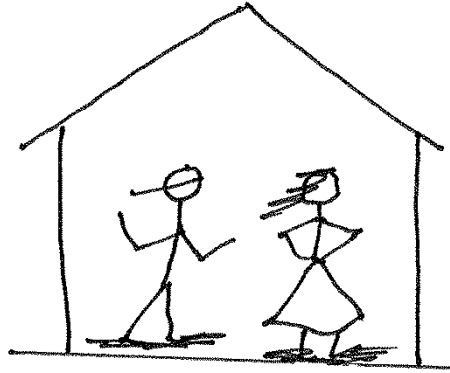


Chapter 1: WHY CAN'T WE AGREE?



No doubt the question, “Why can’t we agree?” has been asked millions of times throughout history. Lack of agreement, or simply having different ways of doing things or different points of view, create conflicts from minor irritations to major upheavals in relationships.

AN EXAMPLE

After a meal at my sister’s house I tried to be helpful by rinsing the dishes and loading her dishwasher. She asked me to rinse the dishes more thoroughly because her dishwasher is old and doesn’t do a very good job and then told me where to put the plates, etc. I’ve loaded a dishwasher hundreds of times. I was a little irritated, but it was a small thing, so I did it her way without protest.

Recently after sharing a meal at my house, a friend helped by rinsing and loading my dishwasher. I caught myself rearranging the dishes in the rack because she hadn’t done it the way I prefer. I had to laugh at myself. Even as small a difference as how we each choose to load a dishwasher can create irritation in a relationship.

Have you ever fought over which way the toilet paper should be installed—so it unrolls from the top or the bottom? I once had a client who was very angry with her husband because he wouldn’t hang the bath towels up with the labels tucked inside where they wouldn’t show! Why not cut off the labels? Why did it matter that much? And another who was ready to divorce her husband because he went barefoot in the house! Really?

We humans cut ourselves off from those we love for differences that are often flimsy. And even if the difference is profound, is it worth losing connection with that loved one? Parents have been known to reject the child they love most in the world because he chooses different values,

Season the Pot by Nancy Landrum

or she trains for a different profession than was planned for her. We often fight over trivialities when we're afraid to address deeper issues. Or there can be issues that haven't yet made it to a conscious level. (How to talk about complex issues is covered in *Communication Elixers*.)

Years ago Apple's ad for a new product touted, "People who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do!" You may not change the entire world, but by learning to drop divisive judgments and embrace differences in your own relationships, you are changing your world and the world of those in relationship with you. That's an awesome accomplishment worthy of your greatest effort!

SEASON THE POT

How often do disagreements cause frustration or conflict in your most important relationships? Name the most serious disagreement that you would really like to work on as you read the rest of this book.

So let's examine the pot...