Why do we keep having the same argument?

Read this together before you start the worksheet.

You can be arguing about the same Saturday and trying to protect two different things. One of you wants time with family. The other needs time to rest. If you start with who's right, you can miss what matters to both of you. The aim isn't to agree right away. It's to be able to say what your partner cares about in words they recognize.

Start with something small.

Pick a recent, low-stakes disagreement you both want to revisit. If either of you is too upset to listen, pause. If you both still want to talk, choose a time to come back.

Take one turn each before you make a plan.

The speaker says what they most want understood. The listener says it back in their own words, then asks, "Did I get that?" If you missed something, let your partner clarify and try again. Then switch roles. Understanding why it matters doesn't mean you have to agree.

WHAT IT CAN SOUND LIKE

Partner 1: "I want to see my dad before he travels."

Partner 2: "You don't want to miss time with him before he goes. Did I get that?"

Partner 1: "Yes. I'm not asking to spend the whole day there."

Partner 2: "I need one morning when I don't have to be anywhere."

Partner 1: "You've had a full week and need a morning to yourself. Did I get that?"

Try one plan you can change.

Ask, "How could we see Dad and still have a slow morning?" Maybe you sleep in and go for lunch this Saturday. Check in Sunday: Did you each get what you needed?

Dr. Katherine Jewett, PsyD, LMFT

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TIME TO THRIVE THERAPY / COUPLES PRACTICE

Why do we keep having the same argument?

Try talking about what matters to each of you before trying to fix it.
Choose a low-stakes disagreement you both want to revisit.

EXAMPLE / A FAMILY VISIT OR A QUIET SATURDAY?

“I want to see my dad before he travels.”
“You don’t want to miss time with him before he goes. Did I get that?”
Then switch: “I need one morning when I don’t have to be anywhere.”

1 Take turns hearing what matters.

Speaker: “The part I most want you to understand is…”
Listener: “What I heard is… Did I get that?” Let them clarify,
then say back what you missed. Switch roles before making a plan.

Partner 1: What I want understood

Partner 2: What I want understood

2 Find a question you can answer together.

“How could we see Dad and still have a slow morning?”

3 Try one small change and check back.

“What if we sleep in and go for lunch? Let’s check in Sunday.”

What we’ll try

When we’ll check how it went

No decision today? If the conversation heats up, it’s okay to pause.

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