

# Relationship-Counselling

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## We fight so much - is there any hope for our relationship?



Couples who argue often ask if there is any hope for their relationship. In most cases couples who argue can learn to change these patterns and have a satisfying, intimate relationship.

The key word here is 'patterns'.

Usually we see arguments as being **about** something:

- 👉 one of you doesn't do their 'share' of the housework
- 👉 you disagree on how the children are disciplined
- 👉 you don't like the way your partner drives

The list is endless! However, although there are issues which need to be discussed and resolved, arguments are more often not about the issue, but part of a pattern that arises automatically between the couple.

### Taking steps to help your relationship

The ideas raised here are explored in greater depth in publications available on this website, as well as courses.

In particular, you might like to read the following Ebook: **Relationship Essentials** by Paul Gale-Baker.

Go to [relationship-counselling.com.au](http://relationship-counselling.com.au) and select the Resources section. You will find information about the books.

You will also find courses in relationship skills, enrichment and intimacy in the Courses section of this website.

You can also sign up to receive Tip Sheet Updates as they are published.

I also offer individual sessions.

*Paul Gale-Baker*

# TIP SHEET 3

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## How to tell if you are in an argument pattern

Look at your last two or three arguments. Put aside what you were arguing about (the content) and focus on how the argument went.

The chances are that you will notice a pattern emerging. For example, one of you might be the one who gets angry, while the other one withdraws. Or one of you may criticize, while the other discounts what is said.

If your arguments are like this, then you have identified a relationship pattern.

Relationship patterns stop us relating straightforwardly as two people. They make us see our partner, not as who they really are, but as though they are wearing a mask.

Relationship patterns *feel* very real, but they are not! We get caught up in a pattern like this and it is as though we are forced to act a part. Often we realise that our behaviour has not been constructive for the relationship, but couples often feel powerless to change their behaviour.

We might feel like we have been loud and angry or withdrawn and not feel good about it, but this usually doesn't translate into change. The next time we are faced with an argument, we will fall into the same pattern.

What can we do about the pattern?

The first step is to recognise that you are in the grip of one of these patterns and face

it together as something for you to solve as a couple. If you can do this, you will have already taken a major step.

The second major step is to ask yourself how you feel when you are in one of these patterns.

The third step is to ask your partner what they are feeling when you are arguing.

The answers will most likely surprise both of you, because you will each have noticed how your partner behaves, not how they feel. It is how we feel that makes these patterns so difficult to change.

If you are the only one in your relationship who recognises there is something wrong, you can still begin to make some significant progress in changing these patterns by following the steps suggested above.

The steps outlined can help you begin to turn around the relationship patterns you find yourself in.

For most of us, working with an experienced counsellor who understands these patterns will be of enormous help in seeing them clearly and finding ways to turn them around. I strongly recommend this to all couples.

The good news is that couples can learn to turn these arguments into constructive discussions, leading to deeper intimacy.

The Relationship Essentials Ebook looks in detail at these patterns and includes approaches and strategies for dealing with them.

*Paul Gale-Baker*

# TIP SHEET 3

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## Paul Gale-Baker

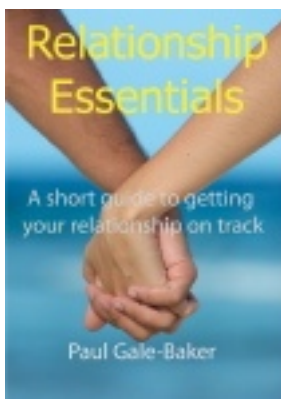
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Paul is a highly qualified and experienced counsellor and therapist in private practice in the suburb of Ivanhoe, Melbourne, Australia.

He is an internationally recognised teacher of the

Voice Dialogue method and Director of Voice Dialogue Australia, which provides training for counselling professionals, as well as courses in relationship and personal growth for members of the public. He speaks publicly and writes on issues of relationship.

Appointments can be made with Paul by going to the web site, by emailing [paul@relationship-counselling.com.au](mailto:paul@relationship-counselling.com.au), or by calling (03) 9444 7427 or 0408 733 683. The practice is located in Ivanhoe, Melbourne, Australia. Sessions are arranged by booking only.



Want to understand what is wrong with your relationship but don't know where to begin?

Perhaps you can see the problems, but don't know what to do about them.

This condensed guide will help you put your relationship on a sound footing. It reveals the major causes of relationship problems which cause pain and dissatisfaction in relationship.

Through clear writing, examples and exercises, it will help you resolve relationship difficulties and put your relationship on track. [Click here to buy this book.](#)

*Please note:*

*The content of this Tip Sheet is intended for informational purposes only. It is not intended to replace counselling and therapy. If you or your relationship are in need of help, I strongly recommend that you see a qualified professional.*