



Rock the Boat: How to Use Conflict to Heal and Deepen Your Relationship

Resmaa Menakem MSW LICSW

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An honest look at what really works to bring more intimacy and deeper trust into your relationship. Couples therapist Resmaa Manakem challenges couples not to avoid conflict—Don't be afraid to rock the boat! The emotional transformation that results can forge a greater, more mature intimacy; a deeper trust; and a stronger bond.

Conflict is a natural part of any intimate relationship. Yet most couples either avoid it or try to smooth over their differences. This results in at least one partner compromising their integrity—and stunting their own growth. Gritty, often irreverent, and always practical, *Rock the Boat* challenges couples not to flee from conflicts, because the emotional stalemate that conflicts produce creates an opportunity for profound transformation. This transformation affirms each partner's individuality while forging a more mature intimacy, a greater trust, and a deeper bond.

Rock the Boat challenges the idea that conflict between partners is unhealthy or something to avoid. Instead, it encourages both people to stand by what they need and who they are—but to do so with compassion rather than competitiveness or vengefulness. This is the purpose of an intimate relationship: to create an atmosphere where both people learn to grow up and mature in their relationship by appreciating each other's individual needs in a caring and mature way.

Author Resmaa Menakem, a licensed clinical social worker specializing in couples therapy, addresses key factors in making this happen, including accepting discomfort and uncertainty; honesty and openness about sex, money, kids, and in-laws; recognizing when conflict might escalate into violence or abuse; and, when appropriate, finding and working with a good therapist.

Rock the Boat is not about ideals, or what we hope or imagine relationships to be. It's an honest, unflinching look at what actually works.

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