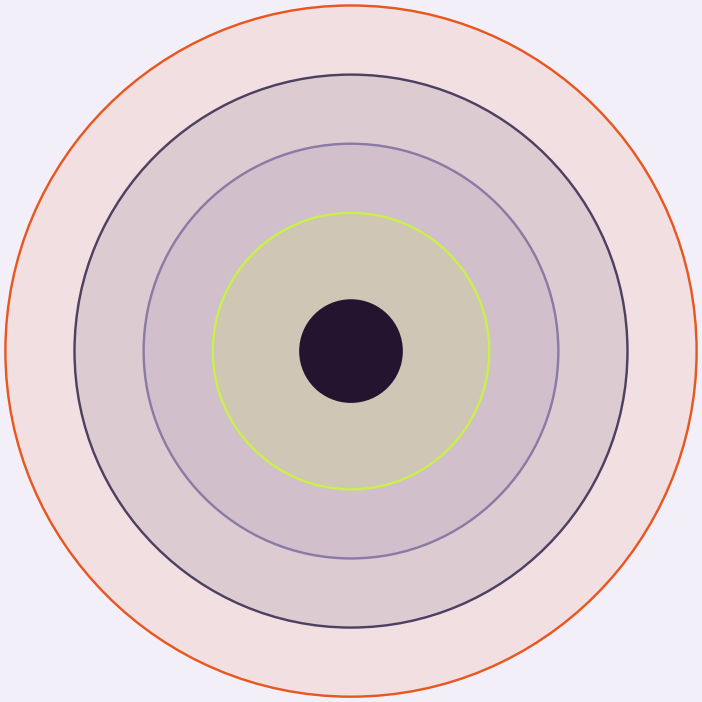
NOVEMBER 2, 2026



The Art of Fighting: The Transformative Power of Conflict

A reading of the book by Priya Parker (2026)

1. ACTION BOOK

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ABOUT THIS EDITION

This is HourLife's reading of The Art of Fighting: The Transformative Power of Conflict, in our own words. It is not a substitute for the book.

BEFORE YOU START 01

The book in a minute

Priya Parker, the facilitator behind The Art of Gathering, argues that strong families, friendships, teams and communities need healthy conflict, not its absence. Drawing on her own work as a conflict facilitator, she follows a fight through three phases: the tear, when something breaks open; grappling, when the group works through it; and cleaving, when it decides whether to mend or to part. Her name for the goal is healthy heat: disagreement a group can hold without smothering it or burning the house down.

Below are the 9 ideas HourLife readers vote up most, each in our words with a note on what it asks of you, and then the steps that put them to work.

WHAT READERS KEEP

The takeaways

1 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Avoiding a fight is not the same as peace.

Many families, friend groups and teams live in what Parker calls unhealthy peace. Nobody says what they mean, until a rare blowup. The hard conversation that never happens does not go away. People just drift, and the connection thins out.

2 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Conflict tells you what a group cares about.

Heat is a sign that something matters to the people involved. Hurt, sadness and anger are information about where the group needs to go next, not just noise to be calmed down.

3 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Not every fight is worth facing.

Before you take one on, ask a few questions. Do you care enough about these people? Does it touch a core value of yours? Can you stay engaged without facing it? Are these the people you want to be in a mess with?

4 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Judge a fight by what it threatens, not by how loud it is.

The book maps fights on two lines: how intense they are, and how much they touch who the group is. We tend to overreact to loud fights that leave the group's identity alone, and underreact to quiet ones that put it at stake.

5 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Look for the longing under the fight.

Underneath many fights is relational longing, a phrase Parker takes from the facilitator Sethu Nair: the wish to stay connected while the current shape of the relationship no longer works. Find that, and the group's unmet need, before you choose what to do.

6 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Most of a hard conversation is decided before anyone sits down.

The right fight, the right people, a private room, a clear format and a set length all matter. So does giving people time to think and feel before they arrive, rather than asking them to do it live.

7 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Practise disagreeing where the stakes are low.

Parker describes a leadership retreat that opened a serious strategy session with a debate about pineapple on pizza. Playful arguments build the habit of saying 'I disagree' out loud, which the group then has when the stakes are real.

8 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Groups that last keep asking the same hard questions.

Lasting groups have not settled every question. They return to the big ones again and again: what they are for, how they decide, who is in charge. Burning Man's founders are one of her examples.

9 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Endings deserve care too.

After the fight comes the choice to mend or to part. If a group, a friendship or a team is ending, it deserves a real goodbye, for the people leaving and the people who stay. An ending can complete a group's purpose rather than fail it.

PUT IT TO WORK

Your action book

Do the setup steps once, then keep the habits going. The setup changes your week; the habits keep it changed after the first good one.

The download puts this whole reading and a printable action book in one PDF: the setup checklist, then a page of real calendar days for each habit, starting on the day you choose.

SET UP ONCE

- [ ] Map one live disagreement
- [ ] Answer the worth-it questions on paper
- [ ] Name the longing and the need
- [ ] Book the fight
- [ ] Send the questions before the meeting

KEEP UP DAILY

- ◯ Disagree about something small each week
- ◯ Raise the quiet thing early
- ◯ Take the most offended person seriously, and keep going

30 days · Nov 2 - Dec 1, 2026

Part two, after the reading, prints each of these as a page to fill in by hand.

THE LAST WORD

Before you go

Pick one step from the action book and do it today. An idea from a book starts to count once it changes what one ordinary day looks like.

PART TWO

The action book

Change the setup once, then keep it up. 5 setup actions to do once, and 3 habits to mark each day for 30 days.

Nov 2 - Dec 1, 2026

Print it, or write on it in any PDF app.

SET UP ONCE

The setup checklist

Each of these is done once. Do one a day, and check it off when it is done.

- [ ] SETUP 1

Map one live disagreement

Pick one fight you are in now.

Rate how loud it is, and how much it touches who you are to each other. Then say where it is: still unspoken, out in the open, being worked through, or over.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 2

Answer the worth-it questions on paper

Before you raise it, write one line each: what these people are to you, whether it touches a core value, and whether you still want to be in this group.

If every answer is no, you may be able to let it go.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 3

Name the longing and the need

Write two sentences.

The first says what you still want with these people. The second says what the group needs that it is not getting. Bring both into the conversation.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 4

Book the fight

Put a time and a length in the calendar, and pick a private place where nobody can see in or overhear.

Tell the other people the format ahead of time so nobody walks in blind.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 5

Send the questions before the meeting

Give everyone two or three questions to think about a few days early.

People who have had time to reflect, alone or with someone they trust, arrive steadier than people asked to think on the spot.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

DAILY HABIT 1 OF 3

Disagree about something small each week

Argue the case for a film, a restaurant or the best route home with the people you will one day have a hard fight with.

Nov 2 - Dec 1, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
						1
2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6 ○	7 ○	8 ○
9 ○	10 ○	11 ○	12 ○	13 ○	14 ○	15 ○
16 ○	17 ○	18 ○	19 ○	20 ○	21 ○	22 ○
23 ○	24 ○	25 ○	26 ○	27 ○	28 ○	29 ○
30 ○						

December 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
	1 ○	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP

DAILY HABIT 2 OF 3

Raise the quiet thing early

When something small keeps bothering you and it is about who you are to each other, say so this week.

Nov 2 - Dec 1, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

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EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP

DAILY HABIT 3 OF 3

Take the most offended person seriously, and keep going

When someone is hurt in a group conversation, acknowledge it out loud and take the point in.

Nov 2 - Dec 1, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

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December 2026

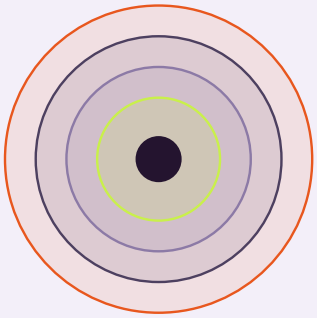
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EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP



The aim is not less heat. It is heat you can hold together, and an honest ending when you can't.

HOURLIFE NOTE AFTER PRIYA PARKER