

## Communication Differences

- A. Establish an appropriate time for discussion of differences.
1. Do it alone not only when others are present
  2. Do it only when both are well fed and rested.
  3. Do it at particular times during each week.
  4. Do it several times during the normal course of the week.
- B. Understand the value of communication
1. The value of communication
    - a. No one can receive too much love.
    - b. We all are looking for love.
    - c. The way to receive love is to give love away.
    - d. The way to give love is to give it without any conditions.
  2. The differences between male and female established by God at the time of creation.

<b><u>Male</u></b>	<b><u>Female</u></b>
<b>“vulnerable to success”</b>	<b>“vulnerable to self”</b>
a. Achiever (Genesis 3:17-19)	a. Helper (Genesis 2:18).
b. Sustains children (I Tim. 5:8)	b. Produces Children (Genesis 3:16)
c. Work oriented (Genesis 3:19) 2:4-5)	c. Home-bound (Prov. 31; Titus
d. Externalize (Genesis 3:12)	d. Internalize (Beguiled Gen. 3:13)
e. Vulnerable to criticism in achievement (Ecc. 3:18-22)	e. Vulnerable to criticism in female “desire shall be to thy husband” (Genesis 3:16)
f. Independent (Gen. 2:19-1-20)	f. Need for frequent reassurance (Prov. 31:28)
g. Argumentation (Cain) (Genesis 4)	g. Conscientious (Proverbs 31:28)
h. Task-oriented (Goals) (Genesis 3:19) 3:16)	h. Social-emotional specialist (Feelings), sorrow, desire (Gen.
i. Work-interested	i. Home-interested

(Genesis 3:19)

(Proverbs 31:10-30)

3. Understanding Marital Communication
  - a. Truthful communication is essential in the husband-wife relationship (Eph. 4:25).
  - b. Truthful communication begins with oneself. One needs to remember to think of judging self before judging one's mate. (Matt. 7:3-5).
  - c. Truthful communication does not ignore trouble (Eph. 4:26).
  - d. Truthful communication is directed to the problem, not to the person (Eph. 4:29).
4. Scriptural Principles of Communication
  - a. Be definite (Matt. 5:37)
  - b. Be honest, open, and truthful (Eph. 4:25)
  - c. Avoid anger, bitterness, or bad language (Eph. 4:26-27, 29-32).
  - d. Build the other person (Rom. 15:1-2; Eph. 4:29; 5:20).
  - e. Deal with the problem first (Matt. 7:3-5).
  - f. Communicate by word and action (I Cor. 7:4-5).
  - g. Communicate in love (Eph. 5:25, 28, 33).
5. Definition of Communication
  - a. **It is not conversation.** This consists of an exchange of words about things, ideas, events, in a objective way.
  - b. **Communication consist of personal and emotional content of two individuals interplaying** in the subject matter involved. It is mutually subjective with both people communing in the field of words.
  - c. **Proximity of two people is necessary for communication.** You can't know anyone unless you communicate with him or her. You can't love anything you do not know about. Therefore, the depth of love existing between a husband and a wife will largely depend on the amount of depth of their communication.
  - d. **Communication does not include yelling, screaming, sarcasm, innuendos, digs, or even silence.** I refer to adult-type communication, not childish sparring, such as "He's going to have to talk first." Or, "She started this and she will have to break the ice" or rationalistic thinking which grants permission to force a point by over-working the vocal chords with a bloodcurdling shout.
  - e. **Communication is not a natural trait.** It is a learning process. The period of training begins in childhood and reaches as far as possible at the point of death. This means that there are guidelines to learn for its successful mastery.
6. Guidelines for Communication
  - a. **The establishment and maintenance of a free atmosphere.** It embodies a sense of freedom on the part of each spouse and includes the license to expose one's self even on an emotional depth. Since it is all-positive, there are no barriers hindering a free, full, licensed permission to say anything that

is on one's mind. It is an understanding that automatically exists, between these two people who have become one flesh. You cannot have a fusion of two personalities and prohibit them from functioning with a technique that is so intimately enjoined.

- b. One of the greatest compliments that a husband or a wife can give to the other is, "I can tell my spouse anything that is on my mind. I can say it without hesitation, apprehension, or fear. I feel comfortable in revealing my innermost thoughts and feelings knowing that they will be received without verbal retribution or ignoring. This includes my failures, my victories, my sadness, my joys, my mistakes, my hopes, dreams, wishes, attitudes, aches, pains, or any other concept where my total self may be involved. This even includes my negative emotions such as anger, hate, depression, including those that I have against him (her) sometimes."
- c. **Grant mutual respect for each other's concepts even in disagreement.** Marriage is fusion of two personalities into a functional operation yet both retaining their own identity. It is the retention of each other's identity that must be preserved in this second rule of communication. You do not lose your identity when you get married. If this were so, marriage would be a destructive force to the individual. You wouldn't want your spouse to "go along with you" on everything. This would indicate to you that your spouse is an overly-submissive wishy-washy-type of individual and that you're married to a "blah" not a person in his own right. If a husband and a wife always agreed on everything, the marriage would stand still; it would not grow. When there is disagreement, it is necessary to respect each other's opinions and ideas toward the subject matter in which they disagree.
- d. **Acceptance.** Acceptance means to be able to assimilate without undue frustration, criticism from your spouse, the differences between men and women, emotional reactions, and the identity of your spouse as they all apply to the communication process.

All criticism that is interchanged between a husband and a wife will obviously be constructive because love demands it. Constructive criticism helps the marriage grow as well as helping the individual grow in a greater measure of maturity. Being able to give and receive criticism in an interrelationship with your spouse is going to be the acid test of your maturity. In any communicative process between a husband and a wife full consideration must be given subject at any given time.

Since there is a no perfection in human beings not even in the mature partners of the marriage, we offer the following aids to avoid negative emotions such as anger from plaguing a good communication. First, the spouse who is beginning to feel angry within himself should be alert to this arousing emotion. When conscious of it, he should say immediately, "Hold it, hold it, I'm getting mad."

It is conducive for mature people to take out their anger on a thing. Never is it permissible for a mature person to take out his anger on another person or a thing of value. I suggest that you and your spouse seek some kind of an outlet for this purpose.

There should also be a permission granted to both spouses when sensing the other's attention and cease the communicative process. In this way each one helps the other to control these emotions so communication is not hindered. There is no loss of ego or status to an individual when he uses the words,

“I’m sorry.” Apologies are really never necessary in a marriage; however, out of respect, courtesy and love, they are verbalized.

- e. **Validity.** If you grant your spouse the free atmosphere, mutual respect, and are willing to offer acceptance, then automatically whatever that spouse says you must consider valid. The communication coming from your spouse must be considered by you as being his real feelings, ideas, attitudes and convictions.

Validity eliminates such statements as “you don’t mean that,” or “You don’t know what you are saying,” or “That is ridiculous,” or “You are lying,” or other such remarks that repress this rule of communication. These kinds of responses could actually display your own defenses which you feel you must build to protect your own ego at that moment.

Validity is again merely granting your spouse identity and accepting that identity as it has expressed itself through words.

Lying has no place in communication. It is foreign to the very essence of communication. Many people will say one thing but consciously have a self-centered, ulterior motive in so doing—this is a form of lying. Many people tell me that they do not believe their spouse really means what he is saying. This is just another way of saying that they are not granting validity to that spouse.

Another obstacle to validity is “bringing up the past.” Once previous communication has solved an issue, let it die. Too many marriages are tense because of the impossible task of living in the past. The mature spouse follows the natural law of forward movement; this law is also designed to fit the communitive process.

- f. **Listen** (Focused Attention). To have something to give out, a person must have a great intake. In fact, there must be a great intake to have a moderate output. Before any spouse, therefore, can wisely contribute to the marriage through communication it is necessary that he, or she, learn the art of listening.

This art, again, requires maturity on the part of both spouses. A child has no sense of respect for others when it begins to verbalize its thoughts. Listening will enhance the process of understanding and deepen the appreciation of the relationship. When one begins to reveal himself it may surprise you as to the content of his feelings. If you listen, you will gain more knowledge of your spouse (and possibly of yourself) and hence give love a chance to deepen. Impatience and a lack of concentration will stimulate interruptions. Interruptions are permissible only when there is a need for clarification and understanding.

What do married people talk about? He answer is simple—everything. Test yourself with the following: What does your spouse think of current events, relatives, the neighborhood, politics, government, prices, crime and punishment, civic activities, your business, money, religion, sports, the arts, the city you live in, sex, love, marriage, juveniles, and you?

What is your spouse’s favorite color, recreation, clothes, car, flower, hobby, or child? What are your spouse’s hopes, ambitions, dreams, fears, goals, value systems, standards, and pet peeves? If you can’t answer the above and all their derivatives you’re hampering love from growing. (Isn’t it odd that

we at times know more about our acquaintances than we do about our spouses?)

One of the most frequent criticisms wives level against their husbands is, "My husband does not talk to me." In the area of withholding revelation of the self through communication the husband is the more frequent offender. When a wife is excluded from communication it constitutes a threat to her security.

There is a time to communicate and a time to be silent. Sickness, children and busyness are some of the legitimate invaders. One I cannot accept is television.

## 7. **Principles of Problem Solving**

- a. **Communicate according to the rules.** Follow the rules of granting each other the free atmosphere; respect, even in disagreement; acceptance; and granting validity to each other.
- b. **Do not give up.** Specifically, there are some exceptions to this point of not giving in which depend on the intensity of the issue. If it becomes apparent in the course of communication that one spouse honestly feels very strongly about an issue which the other honestly regards as relatively insignificant and doesn't make much difference either way, why not give in?

When each as important and intense regards a disagreement, it is generally advised not to give in. When such a concession is made although the individual's opinion remains unchanged, it is likely to be a negative matter with a feeling remaining of being defeated and cheated. Consciously or unconsciously at some time in the future there may be the effort to retaliate. It also keeps the marriage on a competitive basis. Marriage was not intended to be competitive; it was intended to be complementary.

- c. **Seldom compromise.** The word "seldom" is here used because there are many varied definitions of the word "compromise." If by compromise it means that each person "come halfway" this will mean that someone will have to give in.

If an honest compromise can be effected without a negative effect on either spouse, then it can be a valid technique for problem solving.

- d. **Work for an integrated solution.** This is the purpose and the end result of successful communication. An integrated solution is one that is comfortable to both husband and wife with both sharing equal responsibility for all aspects of the solution.

This joint responsibility is a necessary foundation on which to build an integrated solution. In the event that the solution doesn't work out, both must be responsible for the mistake. If the solution is successful, both deserve the credit.

- e. **Working during the interim.** In striving for an integrated solution, communication may take longer than the immediate time allowed. Or perhaps a full, free discussion was accomplished but the solution was not achieved. Either situation calls for an interim before communication is renewed.

1. Each spouse should review and emphasize within his or her thinking the communication rules B, C, and D.

2. The lines of communication should remain open to permit an easy natural reintroduction of the issue at the opportune time or to seek amplification and clarification of things already discussed.
3. Seek more information concerning the issue. It is possible that neither spouse really knew what he (she) was talking about.
4. Each should undertake a self-examination for blind spots by seeking answers from within to these questions: “Why am I hanging on so hard?” “Am I really convinced that my way is the only right way or could I be just trying to have my way and thereby conquer my mate?” “Do I have some kind of selfish motive that I don’t care to look at or to admit?” “Can I admit that there is seldom only one solution?” “Are my reasons really justified?”

There is no independence in marriage but there is interdependence. There is no problem in marriage that cannot be solved by two mature people following the suggested rules for communication.