

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS SUMMARY

Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. James 1:19-20

Someone once said that communication is more than merely talking; it is combining the power of words with the power of the ear to create a soul connection.

James the brother of Jesus gave us some very valuable teaching on how to communicate effectively. He said, "Be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry." Commit to this one principle and I guarantee that your communication will improve significantly.

Great communication is essential to a great relationship because when we are communicating well we feel close and intimate and when we are not communicating well we generally do not feel close and intimate.

The goal of communication is NOT WIN/LOSE!

The goal of good communication is to understand each other better and to create an experience for your partner of being understood and accepted.

Improve your communication by identifying the lies that are at work in your own heart (i.e. I am rejected, I am worthless, I am unlovable, I am perfect, I must perform etc.) and intentionally clothe yourself with God's truth (I am accepted, I am valued, I am loved etc.)

Practice effective communication skills:

1. Mirroring: Mirror back to your partner what you heard them say:

"I heard you say...."
"If I understood you correctly, you said..."
"It sounds like you are saying...."

After you mirror back to them, get some feedback. Ask, "Did I get that right?"

Show an interest in wanting to understand the whole picture, ask, "Is there more you want to tell me?"

Repeat the mirroring process 2 or 3 times and then move on to validating.

2. Validating: Validating is seeing the world through your partner's eyes. That's how we show compassion, something everyone wants to experience from his or her partner. Validating is not agreeing, it is basically saying, "From your perspective, I can see why/how you would see it that way."

Validating sounds like: "I can see what you mean because..."
"That makes sense to me because..."

If you don't understand your partner, ask them for more information saying, "Can you say more to help me understand you better?"

3. Empathizing: Empathizing is a really powerful way of developing intimacy and again really conveying compassion to your partner. Empathizing requires you to verbally capture the emotion behind what your partner is saying and express it to him or her. Empathizing is speaking with your heart.

Empathy sounds something like: "I imagine you might feel"
"I wonder if you feel..."

One major mistake that many couples make is fire hosing each other with too much information. Give bite size pieces of information. Don't rehash the whole history and all the details. Use self-control and practice condensing what you want your partner to hear. Use only 3- 5 medium size sentences at a time. If you have been talking for 1 minute it's time to let your partner respond. Use an egg timer if necessary.