

GOOD COMMUNICATION

GOOD COMMUNICATION - IT'S IMPORTANT!

One survey showed that 98% of women wished for more "verbal closeness" with their male partners, and the most frequently cited cause of anger was "he doesn't listen". Dr. Willard F. Harley Jr in his book "His Needs, Her Needs" states that meaningful communication is the second most important need of the average women (right after affection).

UNDERSTAND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEN & WOMEN

Here is are some generalizations based on a psychological study:

The average man verbalizes 10,000 words per day, and 9,000 of those are used up at during the work day.

The average women verbalize 25,000 words per day, and also uses up 9,000 words during the work day.

Come evening time, guess who want to talk! This difference in verbalizing can lead to conflict. Solution? Perhaps a compromise whereby the man makes more of an effort to talk with his wife in the evening, and have the wife be satisfied with less conversation than she would ideally like to have.

One area that most husbands are weak in is to verbalize their love for their wife on a regular basis. Men -- we need to do that! Here are some quotes from Zig Ziglar:

- Somebody once asked when a man should tell his wife he loved her. The reply was, "before someone else does!"
- Another man confessed in bittersweet irony that he loved his wife so much that it was all he could do to keep from telling her!
- Another case -- I hear of a man who hadn't told his wife he loved her in over 20 years, then shot the man who did!

Men need to say "I love you" with meaning. Most men do not verbalize their love or demonstrate affection unless he wants sex. This can lead to the wife feeling used, not loved. Solution? Verbalize our love and express affection regularly, not only when sex is desired.

AVOID NEGATIVE COMMUNICATION

Part of the way we develop good communication is to avoid negative communication patterns. Here are some negative patterns to avoid:

- Avoidance (don't talk about it)
- Withdrawal of one spouse
- Changing the topic
- Agreeing too easily
- Arguing

5 LEVELS OF COMMUNICATION

- 1) Cliches, causal conversation
- 2) Reporting of facts
- 3) Ideas and judgements
- 4) Feelings and emotions
- 5) Open, honest sharing on a deep, personal level

PRACTICE POSITIVE COMMUNICATION

A very important key to good communication is to consistently practice positive communication. Following are some biblical principles (from Eph 4:15, 29; Col 3:9, 4:6; Jm 1:19, 1:26, 3:9-12, 5:16; Proverbs 10:19, 10:32, 11:9, 11:12-13, 12:18, 12:25, 13:3, 15:1, 15:28, 16:21, 16:24, 17:9, 17:27, 20:5, 21:23, 25:11, 26:20, 26:28, 29:11, 29:20; I Pet 3:10):

- Avoid unwholesome, unedifying, evil, deceitful, perverse, destructive, reckless, negative communication
- Don't share negative experiences of your spouse with others
- Sometimes better to say nothing than fuel an argument or stir up strife
- Pursue positive/edifying communication. Conversation should be "full of grace" and "seasoned with salt". Kind, gentle and pleasant words all benefit the hearer.
- Be "quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to become angry"
- Think before you speak; don't speak in haste.
- Keep secrets and confidences.
- Avoid nagging.
- Speak the truth always, but in love.

- When you are wrong, admit it and ask for forgiveness.

PRACTICAL STEPS TO BETTER COMMUNICATION

Following are 5 practical steps to better communication:

- 1) Take time for one another
- 2) Speak for yourself
- 3) Understand that your partner's perceptions are different from yours
- 4) Really listen (attentive vs passive listening)
- 5) Check out what your partner is saying

WAYS TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION

Here are some ways to improve communication from the Navigators and Gary Smalley:

- 1) Don't assume you know - ask.
- 2) Provide an open, permissive, accepting atmosphere.
- 3) Use compliments freely.
- 4) Use word pictures to help explain feelings and needs.
- 5) Stimulate your spouse's interest.
- 6) Pray for each other, and together.
- 7) Be willing to disagree, but in a gentle way.
- 8) Concentrate on being a good listener.
- 9) Build up your mate's self-esteem.
- 10) Seek more to understand than to be understood.
- 11) When you are wrong or have sinned against your mate, admit it and ask forgiveness. Put it into words: "Will you forgive me?" and "Yes, I forgive you".
- 12) Encourage your spouse to talk and share feelings, then listen carefully and show respect.

LISTENING

God gave us two ears and only one mouth -- I wonder if He was trying to tell us something! The Bible says that we should "be quick to listen, slow to speak" (Jm 1:19); we should listen before we answer (Pv 18:13); listening leads

to wisdom (Pv 19:20).

Here are some steps to improve our listening skills:

- 1) Give the speaker your undivided attention
- 2) Show your attentiveness with body language
- 3) Rephrase or re-state key statements
- 4) Let your mate finish the sentence
- 5) Express your feelings (use "I feel"; avoid negatives like "you never..")
- 6) Be careful about supplying solutions, when an attentive and sympathetic listener is needed