
Basic Healthy Communication

The minimum elements that **HAVE** to be include in all conversations:

1. Assertive Speaking includes:
 - A. The sharing of BOTH their **thoughts** and **feelings** with every topic discussed.
 - B. It has to be communicated **clearly** and **directly**.
 - C. When sharing, you **do not hold back** what you are **thinking** and **feeling**.
2. Active Listening includes:
 - A. **Not interrupting** the speaker, focus on what they are saying.
 - B. Restating what the speaker said to make sure the speaker feels **heard** and **understand**.

Test Your Skills

Can both of you talk about a topic, from small to serious, without getting overly emotional, frustrated, angry, etc..

Additional Healthy Communication Elements

The other important elements that **SHOULD** be used in communication include:

1. Assertive Speaking

A. Reasoning the speaker includes their feelings in healthy communication.

- This helps paint a better picture for the listener.
- By including feelings, it will typically invoke empathy in the listener when responding.

B. Speaker does not use "you" statement, rather use "I Feel" statements.

C. Speaker uses positive language that is respectful in their communication.

- They use polite phrases such as "please", "thank you" and "sorry".

D. Speaker should talk for only 3-5 minutes at a time when topic is:

- Complex, serious, talking about hurt feelings, etc.
- Set a timer to help keep time element if needed.

2. Active Listening

A. Listener carefully listens to what the speaker is saying.

- In addition to restating helps the speaker feel **Heard** and **Understood**, restating also helps to prevent the listener from interrupting before they are finished.

When each person knows what the other person **feels** and **wants** (assertiveness) and when each knows they have been **heard** and **understood** (active listening), **intimacy is increased**. These two communication skills can help you grow closer as a couple.

*** These skills can be learned by anyone. It just takes practice and time.

Daily Dialogue and Complements

- A. Healthy communication and healthy couples have frequent open dialogue and positive interactions.
- Daily Dialogue is talking to your spouse in a meaningful way.
 - This means talking about any aspects of your relationship.
 - Past, present, future, dreams, etc.
 - Rather than giving your spouse a list of things you did that day, or complaints.
- B. Healthy couples have positive interactions.
- Are actions where one spouse appreciates an aspect of their spouse and conveys that sentiment to them.
 - In a healthy relationship each spouse should at least, at a minimum, give each other one genuine complement a day.
 - Giving 5 or more is the final target amount of positive complements a day.

Highlights of Fair Fighting Rules

- A. Before discussing a situation that you are upset about, think about why you feel that way,
 - Think about what is the root of why it is bothering you first.
- B. Discuss one topic at a time.
- C. When you feel hurt, don't try and then hurt your spouse
 - With degrading language,
 - Yelling
 - Or cutting off communication with no intention of returning.
- D. Rather express your feelings with words, see "I feel statements".
- E. If emotions take over the conversation, take a 20 min time out or until your emotions calm down.
- F. Take turns speaking, when expressing your feelings or discussing a topic, limit how much you say at a time. As a general rule, 2 to 3 minutes. If you need to, set a timer.

Purpose of Marriage

Defining the purpose of marriage is done by the couple. Meaning, there is no universal purpose of marriage, rather it is about the two individuals that are married, that determines what they want the purpose of their marriage to be.

A couples purpose for marriage **could** be:

- To have children
- To have successful careers
- To have and carry out religious beliefs
- etc..

Its purpose could be one of the above reasons, all of the above reasons, or none of them. The important aspect for the purpose of marriage is that each couple together discusses what they would like the purpose of their marriage to be, come to an understanding and agree on it.

Relationships Motivation and Love

The main aspects that heavily affect marriages are how each person in the relationship views:

- A. What is a relationship and what do you like about them.
- B. What is your motivation to repair relationships.
- C. What priority are you going to give couples counseling.
- D. What is love & why do we use it.
- E. How do you show love and How does your partner like to receive love.