

A Strong Marriage Based on Strong Communication

by America's Family Coaches -March 20, 2020

Is communication a strength in your marriage? Or a growth area? Do you and your spouse connect well?

Strong communication is the process of sharing yourself verbally and non-verbally in such a way that your spouse both understands and accepts—though not necessarily agrees with—what you are sharing.

Studies show that couples who communicate frequently have a more satisfying relationship. And couples who achieve deep levels of strong communication enjoy the most satisfaction of all.

Try these tips for building strong communication skills:

1. Take one issue at a time. A full day's worth of news, experiences and troubles can be overwhelming. Pouring everything out at once seldom gives your spouse much information about anything. It's one way we tend to skim over our issues and never get to the core of them. You can help your spouse stay on track with a few helpful phrases: *"Tell me more about . . ."* or *"What were you saying about . . . ?"* or *"That sounds like another issue. Let's talk about the other one first and come back to this one later."*

2. Allow one person to speak at a time. When you are communicating with your spouse, keep him or her in the spotlight. When your spouse is expressing, give him or her room for full expression—no interruptions, no feedback. If you both fight to be heard at the same time, communication is bound to break down.

3. Be specific and to the point. One of you may start at the main point and go from there. The other may talk around a topic until eventually arriving at the point. You need to take the time to hear each other.

4. Listen. The biggest single step you can take to improve communication in your marriage is to improve listening. **James 1:19** says, *"Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry."* If you want your spouse to freely share his or her heart with you, you must convey with absolute certainty that he or she has your undivided attention. Listening attentively isn't easy. Maintaining eye contact may be unnerving to you and jumping in with a solution may be hard to resist. However, listening is the key to understanding your spouse's needs.

5. Respond appropriately. At some point after listening, of course, you must respond. The point is not for you to introduce your own agenda, but to clarify and fully understand what your spouse is expressing. You can get into trouble at this point if you fail to look out for your spouse's best interest