

Successful Communications

Good communication is an essential part of a marriage that will last a lifetime. When we can talk about anything with our spouse and know that they heard our heart without reacting negatively, we can resolve any issues that may come up. Knowing that we have been seen, heard, and understood will bring peace and open up new levels of intimacy and closeness in our relationship. Successful communication, however, requires communicating heart-to-heart where what we say is exactly reproduced in the heart of our spouse. Since the language of the heart is images (which include all of the emotions, feelings, and picture or scene on our Image Maker), the image on our heart must be the same image on our spouse's heart.

That sounds great, but there are some things that hinder us being able to have successful communications all the time. One of the biggest challenges is keeping our heart and our spouse's heart open to receive what we want to talk to them about. The Eggerichs in their book *Cracking the Communication Code* refer to women speaking "pink" and men speaking "blue," which means that men need to think like a woman might think when she is speaking and women think like a man might be thinking when he speaks. **A lot of miscommunications occur because we assume that the other person knows what we may know and thinks just like we do.** Another problem that can close someone's heart arises from the non-verbal **relational messages** that we can send to our spouse by our actions, body language, tone of voice, or lack of words or actions. I will get back to this later in the article.

Another area where we can close our spouse's heart deals with men showing love to their wife and women showing respect to their husband. **Eph. 5:25-33 For a woman to keep her heart open, she needs to feel loved and secure in the relationship, and she needs loving, patient communication.** Jimmy Evans says, "Communication is as important to a woman as sex is to a man! A woman has the gift of sex and a man has the need for sex. A woman needs to be more sexual than she may feel, and a man needs to have more honest emotional conversations with his wife than he may feel."

For a man to keep his heart open, he needs to feel respected, honored, and appreciated by his wife. He needs to be affirmed that what he is doing and the sacrifices that he is making are having a positive effect on his wife. He wants to know that he is a good man and hear things like, "I believe in you." "I love you." "You're the best. I respect you and your decisions." *A man is very modest emotionally and sensitive and tender on the inside.* When a man opens his heart up, be careful not to respond with sarcasm, mean-spirited, judgmental, or negative comments. Those will cause him to shut down on you.

We all hear through our deepest needs. Besides communication, a woman needs to feel secure. **She needs to know that her husband is tuned in to her and he sacrificially meets her needs to his own hurt.** A man's **sacrificial love** for his wife will speak volumes to her security and feeling truly loved. She needs to hear things like, "I care and I'm tuned in to your needs." "I'll do whatever it takes to..." "My heart is towards you and our family, and I will say NO to anything else." "I care about how you feel." However, a woman can tell if the man is disconnecting - something is more important than her, or his heart is somewhere else. She needs to know that his heart is there with her. Women can pick up on a man's selfishness, distractions, and frustrations

and know whether he are tuned in and is putting her first. Both men and women can pick up on the sincerity of the conversation through the tone of voice and body language of the other person.

When a woman doesn't sense or feel the **sacrificial love** and the man doesn't receive any honor or respect, their hearts begin to shut down and they begin to hear everything with a filter. We really cannot hear the other person and no heart-to-heart communication will take place.

Jimmy Evans gives five standards to successful communication:

1. A Caring Tone

Jimmy said that he thought he was "washing his wife with the water of the word" **Eph. 5:26** when the Lord showed him what he was really doing was using a fire hose trying to blast the dirt off of her! We are told to "speak the truth in love," **Eph. 4:15** but we are not to use our Bible like a board and hitting them over the head with it! We need to let the other person know that we care about them and love them just the way they are with our words, looks, gentle tone of voice, and actions.

2. Praise

Showing respect, making positive comments about each other, focusing on the strengths and not the weaknesses, all open a person's heart. Critical, judgmental comments close the heart. Praise focuses on what is right and why I fell in love with you. Criticism leaves a void for negative thoughts and action to come into our heart.

3. Truth

"MERCY without TRUTH is a cheerleader without a team.

TRUTH without MERCY is surgery without anesthesia.

TRUTH without MERCY is mean, and

MERCY without TRUTH is meaningless." "We need both." *Jimmy Evans*

Be kind in what you say, but be truthful. We need to talk about the real issues in our marriage, but in a loving way.

4. Faith

When we speak in love, Father is on our side in the conversation. We need to let Father be the "enforcer." If you are the enforcer, you are going to nag, punish, and bully the other person. You will divide the relationship.

5. Surrender

Surrender you mouth and actions to Father. Surrender your right to be right. Be willing to compromise and reach a peaceful solution. Do you want to be right or have a relationship?

Always Remember:

- *You are talking to someone who is different than you are and they will never be like you!*

- We hear through our deepest need. It is a filter that we hear through.

- **Your spouse isn't like you; they don't need what you need and don't hear like you hear!!!**

Now go and have great successful communications and experience a lifelong love affair!