

Preparation for Marriage Manual

Part 9 – The Importance of Communication in Marriage

Communication is to a loving marriage as blood is to a healthy living body.

Without good continued communication the marriage relationship dies.

Have you ever thought about marriage in this way before?

It is impossible to have any kind of relationship unless there is communication.

This is just as true in human marriage as it is in our spiritual relationship with our Creator God.

How would you define communication?

What do you think the word means?

Write down your definition of communication:

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Share this with your future partner, noting down the points that come out in this discussion below:

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There are two primary levels of communicating:

Cognitive Level – this is mainly the communication of factual data.

Talking about such topics as sports, stock market, money, houses, jobs, etc. Always seeking to keep the conversation away from the emotional area.

Consequently such subjects that involve love, fear and anger, etc. are avoided.

People who only converse on this level find it difficult to be warm and supportive to their marriage partners.

Emotional Level – people who communicate on this level soon tire of purely factual data, and deeply desire to share their feelings with their marriage partner.

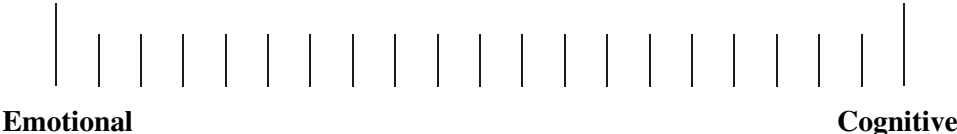
They feel that the atmosphere between a husband and wife must be as free as possible from unpleasant feelings like tension, anger and resentment.

Hence they wish to talk about these emotional things, resolve conflicts and keep things pleasant between them and their partner.

No-one converses on completely cognitive or emotional level but one may be more pronounced than the other in their communicating.

On the diagram below indicate the following with the following numbers:

- 1 Where you think you are
- 2 Where you think your future partner is
- 3 Where you think your future partner would place you



Communication is the process of sharing yourself, both verbally and non-verbally, in such a way that your partner can both accept and understand what you are sharing. Therefore their primary level of communication must be taken into account.

For example, a husband who communicates mainly on a cognitive level will find it difficult to communicate with an emotional wife.

Such a husband is not only unable to respond in such a way his wife needs but he is angered that his precious equilibrium is being disturbed.

To overcome such a lack of good communication each partner must learn to listen to what the other is trying to communicate.

Proverbs 21:11 [Living Bible] *“The wise man learns by listening, the simpleton can only learn by seeing scorners punished.”*

Proverbs 18:13 [Living Bible] *“He who answers a matter before he hears the facts, it is folly and shame to him.”*

Proverbs 18:17 [Living Bible] *“Any story sounds true until sometime tells the other side and sets the record straight.”*

James 1:19 [Amplified] *“Understand this my beloved brethren. Let every man be quick to hear, (a ready listener,) slow to speak, slow to take offence and to get angry.”*

When we are really listening to another person we are **not** thinking about what we are going to say when they stop talking. We are **not** busy formulating our response.

We are concentrating on what is being said.

We are listening with complete acceptance without judgement of what is said or how it is said.

Too often we fail to hear the message because we don't like the message or the tone of voice, thus missing what is being shared.

By acceptance, we do **not** mean you have to agree with everything that is being said.

Acceptance means that we understand what the other person is saying and feeling.

Real listening means that we should be able to repeat what the other person has said and what they were feeling when they were speaking to us.

When a couple marry they each bring to that marriage many areas of their personality and life that will bring joy and fulfilment to the union.

Without good listening that leads to good communication some doors will be locked to their relationship, and the union will lose out on what they could explore and enjoy together.

Attempts to open these areas **without** good communication will lead to failure and frustration.

Let us consider another aspect of communication.

Communication is sending messages to another person.

Every message has three components which must be complementary.

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2. You are trying to watch your favourite TV programme but your partner is continually interrupting and asking you questions. The programme has reached a crucial and dramatic point that you don't want to miss. How do you communicate this desire to your partner?

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3. You are describing to your partner the most exciting event of the day. Right in the middle of it your partner yawns and says, "*I think I'll go to get a cup of coffee.*" How do you communicate your feelings?

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4. Your partner serves you breakfast. You notice that the bacon is overcooked, which you don't like. The toast is served lightly toasted with fresh butter which is exactly what you like. How do you communicate your feelings?

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5. Usually both you and your partner do the washing up after dinner together. One night they ask you to do it by yourself as they are too tired. You are also tired and were looking forward to relaxing. How do you communicate your feelings?

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6. You have just had an argument and then realise that you are totally wrong. It is **not** easy to apologise to your partner for they usually rub it in. How do you communicate your mistake to your partner?

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What does the Christian Bible, say about communication?

In the passages of scripture listed there is a key thought in each scripture and a central thought for each group.

Write down the key thought and then write a summary of the central thought for each group.

Proverbs 11:9

Proverbs 12:18

Proverbs 15:4

Proverbs 18:8

Proverbs 18:21

Proverbs 25:11

Proverbs 26:22

James 3:8-10

1 Peter 3:10

Summary of central thought
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Proverbs 4:20-23

Proverbs 6:12, 14, 18

Proverbs 15:28

Proverbs 16:2

Proverbs 16:23

Summary of central thought
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Proverbs 15:31

Proverbs 18:13

Proverbs 18:15

Proverbs 19:20

Proverbs 21:28

James 1:19

Summary of central thought
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Proverbs 12:18

Proverbs 14:29

Proverbs 15:28

Proverbs 16:32

Proverbs 21:23

Proverbs 26:4

Proverbs 29:20

Summary of central thought

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Proverbs 15:23

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Proverbs 25:11

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Summary of central thought

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Proverbs 10:19

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Proverbs 11:12-13

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Proverbs 13:3

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Proverbs 17:27-28

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Proverbs 18:2

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Proverbs 20:19

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Proverbs 21:23

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Summary of central thought

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Proverbs 17:9

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Proverbs 21:9

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Summary of central thought

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Proverbs 15:1

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Proverbs 15:4

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Proverbs 16:1

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Proverbs 25:15

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Summary of central thought

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Proverbs 12:16

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Proverbs 19:11

Summary of central thought

Proverbs 12:17, 22

Proverbs 16:13

Proverbs 19:5

Proverbs 26:18-19

Proverbs 26:22

Proverbs 28:23

Proverbs 29:5

Ephesians 4:15, 25

Colossians 3:9

Summary of central thought

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John Powell in his book *‘Why Am I Afraid To Tell You Who I Am?’* states that we communicate on five different levels, from shallow clichés to deep personal comments.

Hang-ups such as fear, apathy or a poor self-image keep us at the shallow level.

In the intimate relationship of a marriage we need to free us from restrictions so we can move to the deeper more meaningful levels.

Level Five – Cliché conversation

This type of talk is very safe. We use phrases such as *“How are you?”*; *“How’s your dog?”*; *“Where have you been?”*; *“I like your dress.”* In this type of conversation there is **no** personal sharing. Each person remains safely behind their defences.

Level Four – Reporting the facts about others

In this kind of conversation we are content to tell others what someone else has said, but we offer no personal information on these facts. We report the facts like the six o’clock news. We share gossip and little narrations but we do **not** commit ourselves as to how we feel about what we are reporting.

Level Three – My ideas and judgements

Real communication begins to unfold here. The person will be willing to step out of their solitary confinement and risk telling some of their ideas and decisions. They are still cautious. If they sense that what they are saying is **not** being accepted, they will retreat.

Level Two – My feelings and emotions

At this level the person shares how they feel about the facts, ideas and judgements. Their feelings underneath these areas are revealed. For a person to really share themselves with another individual they must move to the level of sharing their feelings.

Level One – Complete emotional and personal communication

All deep relationships must be based on absolute openness and honesty. This may be difficult to achieve because it involves risk, the risk of being rejected. But it is vital if relationships are to grow. There will be times when this type of communication is **not** as complete as it could be. But this is the goal a married couple should aim for.

Take time right now to write down your answer to the following questions:

1. What are some of the reasons why a person might respond only at level five or level four?

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2. When do you feel most like responding at level two or level one?

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3. At what level do you usually respond?

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4. At what level does your future partner usually respond?

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5. On which level do you usually hold your conversation with the Creator God?

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6. Describe a time when you really felt that you communicated on level one with the Creator God?

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