

A Virtual Date Night talk with Mike and Alicia

Communication in Marriage

Both men and women have been created by God and bring communication gifts into a marriage. God created us differently on purpose! We are meant to be complementary. Conflict arises when we do not recognize the gift found within our spouse's communication style, but instead we think that our way is the only way.

- **REALIZE THERE ARE DIFFERENT TYPES OF COMMUNICAITON.**

Reductive communication searches for solutions while Expansive communication comes alongside the other and takes in all verbal and non-verbal cues as well as context. Both are valuable. Remember, most of us don't exclusively use one style all the time. It depends on the situation.

- **ADMIT THAT ITS BETTER TO BE WRONG TOGETHER THAN RIGHT ALONE.**

Sometimes the solution to your spouse's problem may be so obvious to you that you can't believe they don't see it. If you insist that they accept your solution, you risk moving from being a "problem solver" to being an "adversary". Choose unity over being "right".

- **PUT YOURSELF IN THEIR SHOES.**

Its good to be aware that if you are always thinking of solutions, you may not be listening for the information you need to understand the full context. By getting involved and having the humility to admit maybe you don't know it all, you may be able to walk with your spouse AND provide a solution that better fits their situation. Either way, you make it more likely that your spouse will see you as a trusted source, not an adversary.

- **GIVE FREEDOM.**

All of us have the desire, and really the need, for self-determination. No one can grow as a person if they are simply being controlled by another. As much as we love our spouses, we have to realize that they may not always do what we want and that is OK. We have to give them freedom to make their own choices. When we walk with them as a trusted source and guide we can find peace within a unified relationship.

- **USE YOUR POWER FOR GOOD.**

God has given each of us our own way of communicating for the good of the other. There are pitfalls present in both Reductive and Expansive Communication. We all need to balance our instincts with what our spouse needs at the moment and be sure to do it all in the name of love. (U2 reference intended)

Only when love...is put to the test can its true value be seen. If life was always easy, we would not really find out how real our love is.

St. John Paul, Love and Responsibility

Questions for Discussion

Before discussing this page, fill it out individually in silence first. Then bring your reflections to your spouse to discuss how you can strengthen your marriage.

What type of communication do I use most often? Think of examples.

REDUCTIVE

EXPANSIVE

Rate the following from 1-5 and compare with your spouse. Take time to discuss honestly.

1 - yes absolutely | 2- usually | 3 - most of the time | 4 - not really | 5 - not at all

I feel safe talking to you about anything. **1 2 3 4 5**

I am confident that you can talk to me about anything. **1 2 3 4 5**

When we talk I feel listened to. **1 2 3 4 5**

We make enough time to talk with each other. **1 2 3 4 5**

I feel that you understand my values. **1 2 3 4 5**

I am comfortable talking to you about our physical relationship. **1 2 3 4 5**

I believe that God cares deeply about our marriage. **1 2 3 4 5**

REFLECTIONS ON YOUR RESPONSES ABOVE:

Affirmations

Take some time to think about the concrete ways in which your spouse is a gift to you.

I feel listened to when you...

This is how you have loved me this year...

This is how you have helped me...

I am so proud of you for...

I find it difficult to be vulnerable in the area of...

You are really gifted in this area...

MFP TIP: Use the phrase “I am sorry for _____. It was wrong of me to do that. Do you forgive me?”

Go Deeper

Use this place to talk about changes in your lifestyle that will help you put your marriage first .

DATE YOUR SPOUSE

Write the Date:

Choose a date today to go out alone together.

/ /

What are some things we should do together? _____

COMMUNICATE

How can I show my spouse that they are my top priority? When do we connect daily? Is this working? _____

STAY CENTERED

How can we make the Lord more a part of our marriage? _____

More Resources

- Visit our website and click on "Strengthen Your Marriage" on the home page to access our mini-marriage course.
- Listen to these podcasts:
 - Keeping Love Alive
 - 7 Ways to Spice Up Your Marriage
 - Vulnerability in Marriage
 - Criticizing Your Husband