



WHAT EVERY COUPLE THINKS THEY KNOW

WHAT EVERY COUPLE THINKS THEY KNOW, PART 4: COMMUNICATION

Communication is the lifeblood of healthy relationships, especially marriage. Almost all couples (97 percent) who rate their communication with their partner as excellent are happily married, compared to only 56 percent who rate their communication as poor. When it comes to communication, we should NEVER stop growing and developing.

BIG IDEA: Healthy communication means you talk it before you walk it.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS*

1. What are your personal strengths and challenges when it comes to effective communication? Can you recall a conversation you had that led to confusion and pain? Looking back on it, what went wrong?
2. It's a common misconception to believe that a lack of talking is what leads to a breakdown in communication. Why isn't this so? What is the fundamental cause of dysfunctional communication?
3. Read Genesis 3:1-15. How many communication missteps can you find in that passage? For fun, talk about how you would have handled the first "couple's fight." Why is it important to focus first on who you are as a person before practicing communication techniques?
4. Empathy involves both thinking and feeling. What does this mean? How do you know you are empathizing with another person? How does turning "you" statements into "I" statements make a difference in communication?
5. Studies show that men "report-talk" and women "rapport-talk." Do you find this to be true? What examples from your own experience can you think of?
6. Reflecting on someone's messages lets them know you understand what they are saying. Before practicing this technique, what must a person do to be sure that it is not simply a robotic function?
7. For married couples, do you believe that physical touch plays an important part in effective communication? Why or why not?

Moving Forward

In their book *Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts**, Drs. Les and Leslie Parrot say that "*All the important communication tools can be reduced to 5 skills.*" This week, practice: Making, "I" statements, not "you" statements, reflective listening, understanding and accepting differences, apologizing when necessary, and if you're married - communicating through touch!

Changing Your Mind

Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him...This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one. - Genesis 3:18,24