

Session 3: Frank Talk

Review

To your face I talk with utter frankness; behind your back I talk about you with deepest pride. 2 Corinthians 7:4 (Phillips)

What is Paul's two-prong approach of developing and maintaining a good relationship with the Corinthians?

1. _____

2. _____

What are the two ingredients of healthy frank talk?

1. _____

2. _____

Frank Talk: the SKILL of expressing your needs and what is important to you in a _____ and _____ way.

Assertive Talking

Assertiveness is the ability to express your feelings and what is important to you in the relationship.

Assertiveness is a valuable communication skill. In successful couples, both individuals tend to feel safe and secure to "assert" their desires and feelings. Presumption brings strife, so presuming our mates know what is important or how we feel will often lead to feelings of isolation or anger. It will lead to a greater experience of oneness when we have the wisdom and skill to share how we feel and ask clearly and directly what we are requesting.

Assertive individuals take responsibility for their messages by using "I" statements. They avoid "you" statements. In making constructive requests, they are positive and respectful in their communication. They use polite phrases such as "please" and "thank you." They share how they feel and communicate clearly, directly and gently.

In order to give the communication the best chance of being heard, it is often wise to make sure your communication is at a time and frame of mind to give your partner the best chance to respond with understanding and faith. Before you share something from your heart or a desire/wish, consider asking your partner the following question:

"Is this a good time to share my heart with you?"

If your partner needs some time to unplug from a task or activity, set another time in the very near future to share your thought. It is important to make eye contact whenever possible in this process.

Examples of Assertive Statements.

- "It would help meet my relational need for attention if we could find some time after dinner to take a walk or other quiet activity before we engaged in our evening activities."
- "It would help me feel respected and appreciated if we could spend some time talking over financial decisions before we commit to any expenses that are not currently in our budget."

Active Listening

Active listening is the ability to let your partner know you understand them by restating their message.

Good communication depends on you carefully listening to another person. Active listening involves listening attentively without interruption and then restating what was heard. Acknowledge content AND the feelings of the speaker. The active listening process lets the sender know whether or not the message they sent was clearly understood by having the listener restate what they heard.

Examples of Active Listening:

- “I heard you say that it would help meet your relational need for attention if we could find some time after dinner to take a walk or other quiet activity before we engaged in our evening activities. Is that right?”
- “If I understand what you said, you would feel more respected and appreciated if we talked over financial decisions before we commit to any spending for things not in our budget. Did I hear your heart?”

Sex is the nitrogen of frank talk.

The husband should fulfill his wife's sexual needs, and the wife should fulfill her husband's needs. The wife gives authority over her body to her husband, and the husband gives authority over his body to his wife. Do not deprive each other of sexual relations, unless you both agree to refrain from sexual intimacy for a limited time so you can give yourselves more completely to prayer. Afterward, you should come together again so that Satan won't be able to tempt you because of your lack of self-control. I say this as a concession, not as a command. 1 Corinthians 7:3-6, NLT

Couple's Project

"COMMUNICATION: SHARING FROM THE HEART"

*"May the words of my mouth and the meditation
of my heart be pleasing to you,*

O LORD, my rock and my redeemer." Psalm 19:14, NLT

Step One: Individually, create a Wish List

In this exercise, you will each individually make a Wish List of things you would like to see more of or less of in your relationship. Next, take turns sharing your Wish List with each other. Assertiveness is the ability to express your feelings and desires in a safe and clear way.

Active Listening is the ability to let your mate know that you understand them by restating their message. While sharing your Wish List with your partner, practice your assertiveness (frank talk) skills. In giving feedback to your partner about their Wish List, you will be practicing your active listening skills.

Make a Wish List of three things you would like to modify in your friendship:

- 1) _____

- 2) _____

- 3) _____

Step Two: Come together and take turns sharing your Wish List with each other.

Speaker's Responsibility:

1. Speak for yourself ("I" statements. e.g. "I would feel...", "I wish...")
2. Describe how you would feel if your desire were acted on.

Listener's Responsibility:

1. Repeat/summarize what you have heard.
2. Describe the wish AND how your partner would feel if the change occurred.

Step Three: Discuss the following questions.

1. How successful were each of you at being assertive?
2. In what ways did you each effectively use active listening skills?