

Men – Marriage & Communication

All behavior is communication and most often, very reliable. “Body language” transmits information about our partner and our self. Like all forms of communication it can be true to form (meaning that it accurately reflects our intent, purpose and desires) or it can be misdirected and confounding. When our mental scheme is accurately reflected through our “body language”, we call that “congruent messages”. “True to form” communication is the foundation for a healthy relationship.

Emotional communications are thought waves that emanate in textured form from soft to hard and cool to hot. As an example, compassion comes across as soft and mildly warm. Rage delivers a message of hard, hot and abrasive. Emotional communication is generally very reliable and thus vital to personal health and a healthy relationship. Your partner will be reading your emotional statements to help them gauge the level of acceptance or rejection and or safety versus danger. These are bottom line communications that provide critical information about the health and welfare of the relationship. To deliberately restrict emotional communication is generally an attempt to protect oneself from perceived rejection and or anticipated hurt (danger). When you learn to communicate emotionally, despite past rejections and hurts, you will help heal yourself and your marriage.

Psychic communication (telepathy) is the transmission of thought symbols and images through the medium we call atmosphere or ether. It is our primary form of communication, but unfortunately, we have been taught not to rely on it as a reliable source of information; “what do you think I am, a mind reader”. Well yes, we are mind readers if we would only believe that it is a natural and continuous link from one to another that provides our most direct form of communication. We can not effectively utilize psychic communications if we are busy restricting either emotional communication or “body language”. We must not allow our self to become distracted. We have to practice being “still” and improving our power of concentration in order to be a good receiver and sender.

Verbal communication is over worked and over rated as a means of communicating. But if other forms are neglected, restricted or considered not be valid mechanisms of communication, our verbal messaging over compensates for our deprivation of what is otherwise, our natural and normal sources of messaging. It is in this instance it becomes largely unreliable. Verbal communication is at its best when it validates the true form of psychic, emotional and behavioral communications. It is at its worst when it confounds the aforementioned communication sources and consequently sends a double or mixed message. When verbal expression is an accurate reflection of symbols, waves and motion, the reliability is at 100%. In this instant, the power of one’s expression is formidable and the strength of one’s relationship is impeccable.

The hallmark of a successful relationship is the expression of congruent communication – the lining up of psychic, emotional, behavioral and verbal messaging so that there is no slippage. The power inherent in congruent communication is transformative to a relationship. The following exercises are designed to build, into the relationship, the qualities of reliability, accountability, trust and vitality:

Briefing – the practice of keeping each other clued in as to your comings and goings. When you debrief on a daily basis, you begin to build a viable channel that sustains the information flow. Information flow is critical to good decision-making. The less you have to guess, the greater your opportunity for successful outcomes. Briefing sets the groundwork for accountability, which is highly valued in a healthy relationship, as it increases trustworthiness.

Debriefing – the practice of helping your partner to decompress to reduce stress and tension and sort out conflicts through self disclosure. Tension accumulates daily and carries a charge that will have to be released at some point. We can carry a charge for years regarding events/experiences that may suddenly discharge when triggered, and seem quite confounding to our partner and our self. The “past” is not in the past, it is always in the present. Our “past” is carried with us and for good reason. The reason we have memory is to carry the “past” with us for reference purposes. But when memory remains charged with fear or anger, it will have to be discharged in some fashion at some point. Debriefing is a mechanism for discharging tension, whether that source of tension was recent or a prior (past) experience. The level of tension in a relationship can either advance it to the next level or tear it asunder. Debriefing also allows for newness in the relationship which is what supports a vital relationship. Vitalizing your relationship peaks your interest in your partner and is what keeps you coming back for more. When your interest wanes, so does your relationship.

The two keys for debriefing your partner are the use of curiosity and the practice of inviting your partner to share their life experiences with you. Debriefing is not a discussion, not a critique, it does not permit judgment, analysis, blame, your opinion, fixing or otherwise altering your partner’s statement. It is simply an attempt to follow the train of thought of your partner and, in addition, to draw out new information that adds to your understanding of your partner and your relationship dynamic. It is meant to increase your awareness of your partner, their challenges, fears, desires, hopes and their vision of their personal and married life. Each and every day there is something lost and something gained – find out what that may be for your partner and keep your relationship vital (listen, discover, explore and prompt).

Men – Marriage & Four Ways of Thinking

You are now married and may have children. Thinking only for yourself is inadequate. You will be thinking for yourself, thinking for your partner, thinking for the two of you and thinking for your entire family if you have children. “Me”, “you”, “us” and “we” thinking entails four different perspectives that allows for different outcomes. “Me” thinking is vital to a healthy relationship. It includes everything about “me”; what I want and need, my interests, my goals, my dreams and personal vision (a personal vision might be a career or striving to enhance talents). Essentially, it is everything in life that is important to me. “Me” thinking is necessary for promoting a personal vision, which is a life sustaining endeavor for each and every one of us. Generally, men have been over trained in “me” thinking and therefore cling to it at the expense of others.

“You” thinking means reflecting on what is important to your partner. It doesn’t just mean remembering birthdays and anniversaries or thinking about your partner when you want something from them. It means taking time each day to think about your partner and what is important to them. It means the same as “me” thinking except it is all about your partner. The effort requires learning as much as you can about your partner, which was discussed in reference to the debriefing technique. If you recall, you probably did a lot of this during your courting phase (don’t let the curiosity and excitement of the courting phase slip into silence).

“Us” thinking is what allows for the creation and advancement of the marital vision – what we want to happen as a couple. “Us” thinking is about the couple’s identity. Men tend to have a problem with this because we are fearful of identifying with female characteristics. We have been taught that being female is a weakness and we are determined not to be weak, thus we refuse to think from a women’s perspective – not that we can’t. If we allowed as such, we would undeniably have far fewer rapes, murders and wars and could even save the Earth from a disastrous outcome. Achieving a marital vision nourishes and sustains a marriage, giving each partner incentive to return again and again to the union. Having and reinforcing a marital vision strengthens the couples bond, identity and each partner’s individual vision. It vitalizes the marriage – sex, in and of itself, is not the answer. A marital vision is crucial to a healthy and successful marriage. “Us” thinking includes each partner’s vision for the marriage and the synergy created from the dual effort – the synergistic outcome being the key. “Us” thinking means that each partner imagines scenes of being together, keeping each other close, in a variety of circumstances. When you slip into a sweet reverie of making love to that Hollywood beauty, include your partner in your fantasy in such a way that the obstacle to your marriage fades into the background and your partner is as close as you can permit. Continue to practice until you become one with your partner. And if you can accomplish that you’ll be beyond the rest of us. “Us” thinking removes the obstacles to your marriage.

“We” thinking is about the family unit – everyone in the household. Usually this refers to expectations and customs. It is a collective form of thinking that considers the impact of decisions on all family members. One of the essential features of this type of thinking, when children are involved, is to think; what is in the best interest of the children? When the tension is too high in the family unit, everyone absorbs the tension and tries to cope by finding ways to reduce the stress. Children have less coping skills and therefore are more vulnerable. “We” thinking is necessary for increased awareness of the family dynamic and of searching out system solutions.

Men – Marriage & Anger

Anger is known by many names: boredom, irritation, annoyance, resentment, animosity, hate, rage and fury. Anger is a wave of energy that can either benefit or injure. Chronic anger is a deadly sin. Explosive anger is like living in a region of land mines. Motivational anger is like a booster rocket that can help carry you to the next level of accomplishment. Anger is a natural and necessary source of energy that permits us to remove the obstacles in our path. Excessive anger is a compensation for the dread of weakness that men fear when failure feels imminent. There is a range of anger that supports your marriage and it resides in the medium of assertiveness. Learn to promote assertiveness and you will quiet the swirling waters of chronic anger and the deadly silence of explosive anger. Utilize anger to succeed. One key to utilizing successful anger is to put distance between the anger stimulus (internal or external stimulus) and your selected response. Having a range of responses to select from permits you to choose the one that you perceive to be successful. Once you perceive success you will not allow yourself to reinforce your fear of failure (e.g. loss). Anger does not then have to compensate for your fear, nor become a controlling force in your relationship. A relationship can only withstand so much tension before it has to burst, splinter, break or collapse. Debrief daily and keep the tension at a tolerable level. Create a vision of self and mutual respect and remember that marriage is not ownership, it is a pathway to commitment.