

Scenarios Part II.

1. You've been married for a year now and one spouse decides it's time for children and the other believes both should continue to pursue a career. How do you handle that?
2. Assume you're both completely different people – one is really organized and the other tends to procrastinate and is a happy-go-lucky type. You come across the issue of laundry. One wants it done every Monday. The other decides it would be better to get to it when you need to. How do you handle that?
3. You've had a busy day at work and you get home late. As soon as you walk in the door you can tell that your spouse hasn't had a good day either. Then, your spouse asks you about some things that need to get done around the house that still haven't, and you blow up causing an uncomfortable silence. How do you handle that?
4. The credit card bill arrives, and it seems that you've had a balance that has gone unpaid for some time. You've got late fees and finances charges coming at you left and right, and on top of that, there's another group of items for the month that is clearly beyond your budget. What will you do to correct this problem?
5. You've felt some tension between your spouse for a few months now and nothing can seem to shake it. As you look back over that time you've realized that you really haven't had time to talk about this tension because you've been as busy at work as your spouse. On top of that, you're not exactly sure what the problem is. What do you do?
6. Your spouse has been spending a great deal of time on the internet and it just seems that it's a little more time than most people spend on the computer. You'll even wake up in the middle of the night to find them checking their email or surfing the net. Also, when you come home, you find that he/she is either always facing the door or quickly clicks the mouse or shuts down the laptop. And what's weird is that the history always seems to be erased of where they've been. He/she says they don't want to clutter up the computer but something just doesn't feel right. For whatever reason, too, your spouse has all his/her own passwords and accounts which you are not privy too. Is there need for concern? How do you approach this?
7. Now put all these scenarios together in the same marriage, what are the odds the marriage will survive if all of these continue on without addressing any one of them in a proper way?

Top Two Reasons for Divorce – “Lack of Commitment and Lack of Communication”

A) Lack of Commitment for the Marriage (Evidenced often by “Withdrawal from Companionship,” “Sexual Incompatibility,” Addiction to Internet Pornography/Abuse and Outright Infidelity...)

1. Remember the point Jesus – the Creator of Marriage, the risen Lord, Savior, and Judge of all the world - makes concerning marriage in Matthew 19...

Matthew 19:3-6 “Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?” “Haven’t you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.”

Questions:

- 1) How committed is a spouse to be in a marriage?
- 2) A/D: A marriage should be 50/50. Each person needs to do their part.
- 3) Evaluate: Things really don’t have to change much with my going out with my friends when I’m married.

1 Corinthians 7:1-5: “Now for the matters you wrote about: It is good for a man not to marry (*a person is not commanded to marry*). 2 But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband. 3 The husband should fulfill his marital duty (sexual union) to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. 4 The wife’s body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband’s body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. 5 Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

- 1) Expressions of love which an individual craves will vary from person to person. Couples are encouraged to be open about communicating what expressions of love they are looking for in particular. No one can read another person’s mind. As to that, generally speaking, women and men greatly desire two of the following forms. Which of the following expressions of love do you believe line up more with a particular gender?

Displays of Affection –

Sexual Fulfillment –

Note: One could consider a marriage centering on a concept known as "the love bank." In other words, every husband and wife has a love bank that encounters both deposits and withdrawals from the opposite sex. A crucial distinction is made, however, in that deposits and withdrawals are made differently with men than they are with women. These differences are based upon the ten most felt needs of a relationship with the opposite gender. Husbands, in general, place the highest importance on the following five needs: sexual fulfillment, recreational companionship, an attractive spouse, domestic support, and admiration. Wives, in general, place the highest importance on the following five needs: affection, conversation, honesty and openness, financial support, and family commitment. Both genders express need for all ten items, but typically husbands and wives have contrasting priorities (*From "His Needs Her Needs"*).

2) Evaluate: "Now that we're married," the husband says, "I don't need to get my wife any more flowers, open her car door, hold her hand, or say things like, 'I love you...'
What a relief!"

3) Evaluate: The wife says, "I can't believe he did that. I'll show him. We'll see how he likes the old cold shoulder."

4) A/D Guys, married or not, can be as close with friends of the opposite sex as they can be with friends of their own gender and vice-versa.

B) Lack of Communication for the Marriage

Introduction – Top Five Communication Issues for Couples

- A. Spouse does not understand how I feel – 94% (% of couples having problems)
- B. Wishes spouse would share feelings – 88%
- C. Afraid to share negative feelings – 88%
- D. Spouse is not a good listener – 77%
- E. Spouse gives the silent treatment – 76%

Question: Any surprises here?

II. Communication

- A. What is communication?
 - 1. Verbal/non-verbal
 - 2. Accepting vs. Agreeing
 - 3. Understanding

- B. How powerful is communication?
 - 1. Positively it can do...
 - 2. Negatively it can do...

III. God and communication.

A. Ephesians 4:25 (4:15)

1. How are we to speak?
2. What are we to speak?

B. Proverbs 15:1

1. How are we to speak?
2. Why are we to speak that way?

C. Proverbs 15:28

1. What is easy to do?
2. What is the best thing to do?

D. James 3:1-10

1. To what is the tongue compared?
2. What can the tongue do?
3. How can our tongue be tamed?

IV. Helpful hints for communication

A. Listen

1. God and listening

- a. James 1:19
- b. Proverbs 18:13

2. “We were born with two ears and one mouth. That ought to tell us something.” – Lily Tomlin

3. Listening is described as “a great gift we can give to another person.”

4. How we can improve our listening skills – mentally?

- a. don't formulate a response until the other person is done speaking
- b. accept and understand – which means...
- c. be able to repeat back what was said – why?

5. How we can improve our listening skills – physically?

- a. Stop what you are doing.
- b. Make eye contact.
- c. Come towards the person who is speaking to you.

B. Pick a good time to talk.

1. Understand what is not a good time to talk.
2. How do you make a good time to talk?
3. What do you talk about and for what purpose?
 - Goals
 - Hurts (Confession, Absolution, Fruits of Repentance)

C. Recognize that there are three parts to communication.

1. Content makes up 7%.
2. Tone of voice makes up 38%.
3. Body language makes up 55%.

D. Realize that there are five different levels of communication.

1. They are: clichés, reporting facts, what we believe, share feelings, feelings wrapped up tightly with emotion.
2. Couples do well when all are met...

V. Don't Nag

A. Definitions

1. Yours...
2. "The art of reminding someone when you know they have forgotten."
3. "Inefficiency to promote desired behavior."
4. Persistent, negative, fault-finding.

B. Overcoming

1. Pray
2. To prevent
 - a. make sure we have their attention
 - b. understand terms
 - c. follow through with commitments
 - d. set a time frame

C. Before nagging – discuss

VI. Criticism

- A. Be ready to accept
- B. Know how to give
- C. To improve your constructive criticism skills

Considering & Resolving Conflict

VII. Conflict

	Constructive	Destructive
A. Issues	Focuses on issues at hand	Old issues are brought up
B. Feelings	Share positive and negative	Feelings are left unexpressed
C. Information	Shares all the facts	Information shared is selective
D. Focus	On problem and solution	Focus on people involved
E. Blame	Both people contribute to problem	Points the finger
F. Change	Encourages change to develop ways to deal with the problem.	Resists any change
G. Outcome	Both parties win	One party wins

H. How to resolve conflict.

1. Set a time and place for discussion.
2. Define the problem.
3. Talk about how each of you contribute to the problem – be honest with yourself
4. Review past attempts to resolve the issue that were unsuccessful.
5. Brainstorm new ways to resolve the conflict.
6. Discuss and evaluate each solution.
7. Agree on one solution to try.

8. Agree how each individual will work toward this solution.
9. Meet again to discuss progress.

Practical Concluding Thoughts

A. Communication styles

1. Passive – unwillingness to share thoughts, feelings or desires. Used to hid hurting feelings. Leads spouse to feeling angry, confused and mistrusted.
2. Aggressive – Blaming and accusing (you always, you never). This focuses on negative characteristics rather than the situations they are in.

B. Useful skills

1. Assertiveness – focus on personal thoughts, feelings, and desires. Use statements including “I” and “me”.
2. Self-disclosure – revealing personal information and feelings about yourself. By revealing innermost thoughts and private experiences you are bringing your relationship to a new and deeper level.
3. Active listening – this would include eye-contact, stop what you are doing, ask questions.

C. Remember

1. Emphasize the good in each other.
2. Praise each other often.
3. Take time to listen and summarize what you hear before responding.
4. Be assertive
5. When difficult situations arise, brainstorm solutions and evaluate them.
6. Give your relationship the importance and attention you did when you first met.