CULTIVATING CONNECTIONS

Cherish

MARRIAGE CONFERENCE 2020

CHERISHING IN CONFLICT

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Outline

Skills for Clear Communication
- Listening in Order to Hear
- Making Clear Requests
- Contrasting to Bring Clarity

Putting it into Practice

Listening in Order to Hear

Listen as You Seek to Understand

- **Goal of Interactions**:
  - Understand the speaker.
- **Realize**:
  - Listening is a gift to give.
- **Tips**:
  - Listen for personal emotions, interpretations and desires.
  - Check your understanding with simple open-ended questions.
  - Be patient and continue to build safety.

Listener Skill Statements

Recapping Statements

- *"What you are saying is.."*
- *"Stop for a minute and let me summarize…"*
- *"From your point of view, you think…and feel…"*
- *"So you are feeling…because…"*

Validation Statements

- *"I understand how you could feel that way."*
- *"I would probably feel the same way if I were in your situation. "*
- *"I see your tears, and I see how much this upsets you."*
- *"It makes sense to me that you would feel…"*

Couples Activity

- Interactive exercise: Ask couples to turn toward each other and begin a conversation. One spouse initiates with a Connection Question (next slide). The other spouse listens, not asking questions, but simply reflecting, and making eye contact. Use some of the Listener Skill Statements. After you have had an interchange, switch roles and do it again.
- Remember: To listen is to lean in, speak softly, have a willingness to be CHANGED by what we hear.
- After the activity: Share one word to the group that describes your experience of listening to each other.

Connection Questions: Areas to Know

Spiritual	• Tell me about your relationship with God? • How has the Spirit spoken to you recently?
Events	• What are some recent important events? • What are some upcoming events?
Worries / Stress	• What are your current stresses? • What are your big worries?
Relationships	• Who are your closest friends? • What relationships are currently a struggle?
Hopes	• What are your hopes? • What are your hopes for (us, family, others)?
Favorites	• What is your favorite way to spend and evening? • What was your favorite vacation / getaway? Why?

Making Clear Requests

Skills in this section have been adapted from:
Crucial Conversations: Tools For Talking When Stakes Are High (Patterson, Grenny, McMillan, & Switzler, 2012)

STATE Your Path

Share your facts **T**ell your story **A**sk for others' paths	"What" **SKILLS**
Talk tentatively **E**ncourage testing	"How" **SKILLS**

STATE Your Path – What?

- **S**hare the **facts first**
  - Non-controversial
  - Persuasive & least insulting
  - *"I noticed…"*
- **T**ell your story
  - *"Based on the facts, I am beginning to conclude…"*
  - Don't pile on or go on and on.
  - Watch for safety problems.
- **A**sk for the other's paths
  - What are their facts/story?
  - *"What's your perspective?"*

STATE Your Path – How?

Talk Tentatively

- *"I was wondering…"*
- *"Perhaps you were unaware…"*
- *"In my opinion…"*
- Don't be overly passive or do the message a disservice.

Encourage Testing

- Encourage others to challenge you.
  - *"Do you see it differently?"*
  - *"What am I missing here?"*
- Play devil's advocate
  - *"What if I'm wrong here?"*

Proverbs 18:13*"He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him."*

Contrasting to Bring Clarity

Apologizing and Contrasting

Apologizing:
- Must be sincere.

Contrasting:
- A don't/do statement:
  - *"I don't mean to question your intentions. I do want to clarify our decision-making process."*
  - Addresses others' concerns that you don't respect them or that you have a malicious purpose.
  - Confirms your respect or clarifies your real purpose.
- Is not apologizing.
- Provides context and proportion.
- Useful for prevention or as first aid.

Couples Activity

- Interactive Exercise: The husband comes home 45 minutes late for dinner without notifying his wife. This is not the first time this has happened. Think about how you would start this discussion using the STATE method.
  - Do the exercise again, but switch roles. Or, if you are brave, think about a recent minor disagreement that you and your spouse have been walking through and enter in to the discussion using the STATE method. As needed, use contrasting skills to clarify what you are talking about.
- Reflect together: What was effective about this method? What can you learn together about this?

Colossians 4:6

"Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person."