



COMMUNICATION

Apostolic Christian Counseling & Family Services
 877-370-9988 www.accounseling.org info@accounseling.org

**Ephesians
4:29**

“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.”

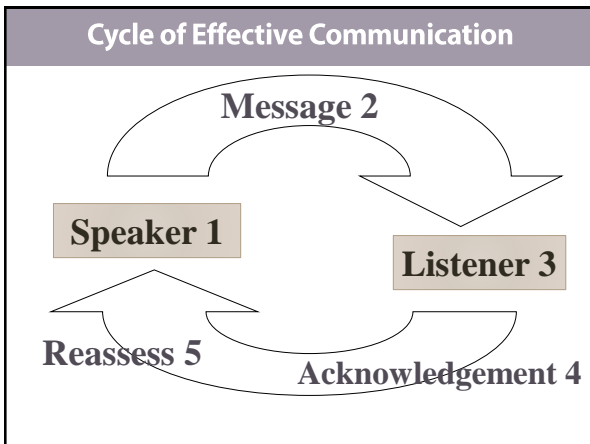
Beliefs That Hinder Understanding

- “All my marital problems are my spouse’s fault.”
- “If our marriage takes hard work, we must not be right for each other.”
- “My spouse can and should meet all of my emotional needs.”
- “My spouse owes me (for all I do).”
- “I shouldn’t have to change who I am to make our marriage better.”
- “My spouse should be like me.”

Thurman, C. (1999). *The Lies We Believe*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

The Communication Cycle

*“But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” **Ephesians 4:15***



Helpful Ground Rules

Start with facts:

- Focus on what is verifiably true vs. what is emotion.

Stay on one topic:

- Trying to resolve multiple issues in one conversation can lead to misunderstandings and add confusion.

Avoid “You” statements:

- Starting a sentence with accusations (even if they are true) will put the other person on the defensive (“You never listen”).

Helpful Ground Rules

Use "I" statements:

- Speak from your perspective. "I feel frustrated when the trash isn't taken out after I have asked you to take care of it."

Be aware of your non-verbal communication:

- Facial expression, eye contact, posture, etc. are just as important as the words we speak sometimes.
- Watch the tone of your voice - *Proverbs 15:1* "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger."

Seek first to understand:

- Negative emotions hold important information about how to love the other person better.
- Talk tentatively and encourage input.

ACCES

Listen Well

• 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 as needed.

Be Aware of Filters

Filter - anything that comes between the *Speaker* and *Listener* which can alter the meaning and/or reception of the message.

1. **Environmental Filters:** radio, children, telephone, being in different rooms, etc.
 - Conversation through text is discouraged.
2. **Internal Filters:** being tired, frustration, having a headache, being sick, etc.

ACCES

Too Much Talk... Or Not Enough?

How Personality and Communication Styles Affect Your Relationship

ACCES

Expanders and Condensers

- Spouses often differ in the quality and quantity of communication they give and receive.
- Personality can affect communication styles.
- The amount one talks: Expanders and Condensers

ACCES

Expanders vs. Condensers

Expanders

- Tend to talk more than others.
- Give detailed, elaborate descriptions, and have a dislike of silence.
- Frustrated by Condensers who do not provide as much information when talking.

Condensers

- Do not talk as much and do not always include a lot of detail.
- Prefer an efficient use of words and stick to the main points.
- May become overwhelmed by the Expander's excessive use of words.

Wright, H. (2000). *Communication: key to your marriage*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books.

ACCES

Direct and Indirect Communication

Direct

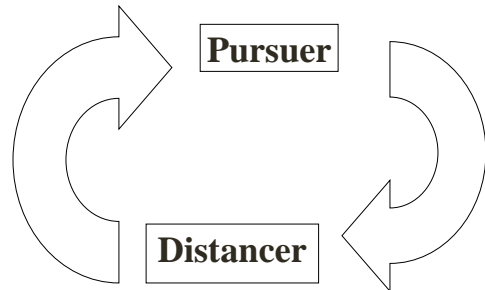
Immediately "say it like it is."
Less room for misunderstanding.
Effective when used with soft tone.
Ex. - "Hun, I would like you to wash the dishes."

Indirect

Don't immediately say exactly what is needed.
More risk of misunderstanding.
Ex. - "Why am I the only one that washes the dishes?"

ACCES

Who Causes the Pursuer-Distancer Cycle?



ACCES

If You Tend To Be A Pursuer...

- Be careful not to be too pushy.
 - Just because you feel like talking through an issue doesn't mean it is the right time to discuss.
- Let your spouse know you have something you want to talk about.
- Find a good time for you both to talk about it.

ACCES

If You Tend To Be A Distancer...

- Do not immediately withdraw when your spouse wants to talk.
- If your spouse wants to talk about something and you aren't ready:
 1. Let your spouse know you are aware he/she wants to talk.
 2. Tell him/her it isn't a good time.
 3. Negotiate a time in the near future that you can talk (be specific!).

ACCES

Emotional Connection

"The Lord Hath Appeared Of Old Unto Me, Saying, Yea, I Have Loved Thee With An Everlasting Love: Therefore With Lovingkindness Have I Drawn Thee."

Jeremiah 31:3

ACCES

What Fuels Connection?

- Couples are always making "bids" for each other's affection, support, and attention.
- Daily humdrum interactions fuel romance.
- In a study of newlyweds:
 - Couples responding to "bids" on average of 86% of time were still married after 6 years.
 - Couples responding to "bids" on average of 33% of time were divorced after 6 years.

Bids can be as meaningless as "it's raining so hard today," to as meaningful as "I need you."

The Seven Principles Of Making Marriage Work (Gottman And Silver, 2015)

ACCES

Type of Bids

VERBAL

- “While you’re up, could you grab the ketchup, please?”
- “Wow! You sure look amazing in that outfit!”
- “I blew the presentation I had today.”

NONVERBAL

- Affectionate touch
- Facial expressions
- Kind gestures

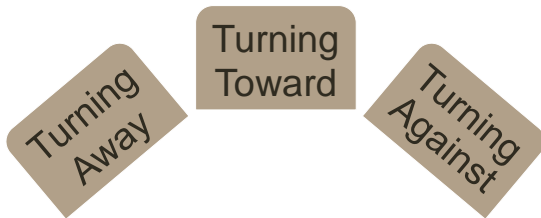
ACCES

Responding to Bids

“How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O god! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.” Psalm 36:7

ACCES

Response Types



ACCES

Example #1

“Did you notice the sunset? It is beautiful!”

Turning Toward

“I didn’t notice it. Tell me what makes it so beautiful to you?”

Turning Against

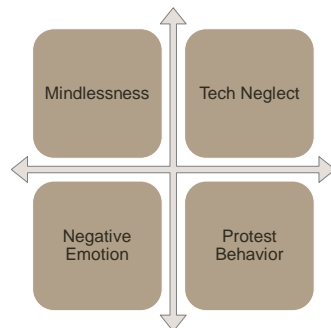
“Did you notice that I am reading?”

Turning Away

Pretending to read newspaper.

ACCES

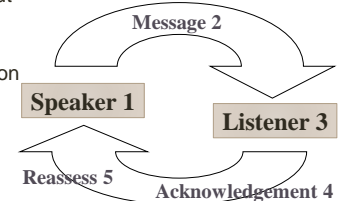
Barriers to Responding



ACCES

Summary & Conclusion

- Communication is about understanding, not agreement.
- Separate communication from problem solving.
- Learn to “Turn Toward” your spouse.



www.accounseling.org/communicationmarriage

ACCES

PERSONAL / COUPLE REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Circle what role you play in your marriage:

- Pursuer/Distancer
- Expander/Condenser

How does this bring both strengths and growth areas to your marriage?

Circle the option/s that most resonate with communication issues for your marriage:

- Formulating a reply
- Distractions by body language
- Environmental filters
- Internal filters

What is one simple step going forward you can attempt to improve your communication?

ACCES

PERSONAL / COUPLE REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Circle which specific barriers you feel are currently present in your marriage:

- Mindfulness
- Tech Neglect
- Negative Emotion
- Protest Behavior

How do these get in the way of making and receiving bids which improve your emotional connection and communication as a couple?

ACCES

Appendix A

Communication During Menopause

ACCES

Communication: Menopause

Men

Listen, don't criticize or try to "fix."

Accept there will be mood swings.

- Seek to go with the flow.
- Seek to not personalize.

Believe she is doing the best she can.

Talk about menopause symptoms and what you can do to help her feel better.

Women

Communicate with your spouse and let him know what you need.

Affirm your husband when you feel understood by him.

Track your symptoms and identify specific times when the two of you can communicate effectively.

Do your best to stay positive.

ACCES

Appendix B

Ways To Stay Connected When Apart

ACCES

Preparation for a Trip

- Minimize surprises - communicate about upcoming logistics and obligations (i.e., bills, repairs, or chores).
- Back-up plan – consider developing a list of options should issues develop (i.e., auto mechanic, a trusted repairman).

Travel plans – provide spouse with a complete itinerary. (include dates, location, phone numbers, and key contacts)

ACCES

Stay Connected While Apart...

Accessibility

Dependability

Respect

Trust

Role Acceptance

ACCES

Stay Connected While Apart...

- Accessibility – in addition to cell phone, provide key contacts in case of emergency. Consider “code” for emergency while traveling.
- Dependability – schedule consistent times to call as well as talk about times of mutual availability. Text when you arrive to destination. FaceTime for family devotions.
- Respect – be intentional about engaging in two-way conversations. Don’t wait until the end of the trip to talk about events at home.
- Trust – be where you say you will be, doing what you are supposed to be doing.
- Role Acceptance – find ways to acknowledge that parts of the job are not ideal.

ACCES