

Constructive Communication

1. I want _____.
2. I feel _____.
3. I like _____, and I do not like _____.
4. I feel _____

(when you do/do not _____)

because _____

and I would like you to (stop) _____.

5. Reflections:

- "It sounds like you _____."
- "What I heard you say is _____,
is that what you meant?"

6. Speaker-Listener Technique

offers an alternative mode of communication when issues are hot or sensitive, or when they are likely to get that way. It is important to ban problem solution attempts and have good discussions first. **Agreed-upon rules for handling conflict can greatly facilitate your ability as a couple to handle conflict in a manner that protects intimacy and promotes growth in your relationship.** Any conversation in which you want to enhance clarity and safety can benefit from this technique.

Advantages of Using the Speaker-Listener Technique:

1. It counteracts the destructive styles of communication -- The WINE signs:
Withdrawal, Invalidation, Negative interpretation and Escalation.
It allows a couple to use structure to make it safe to communicate openly and clearly.
2. When couples regularly use rules and techniques for dealing with the issues in their relationships, they develop an increased sense of confidence.
3. Communication is protected against destructive patterns, making possible clear and safe communication that can bring you closer together.

Rules for the Speaker:

1. *Speak for yourself.* Use "I" statements and talk about your feelings.
2. *Don't go on and on.* To help the Listener keep you statements brief and to the point.
3. *Stop and let the Listener paraphrase.* Allow the Listener to say in their own words what they think they've heard. If the paraphrase was not quite accurate, politely restate what was not heard the way it was intended to be heard. Your goal is to help the Listener hear and understand your point of view.

Rules for the Listener:

1. *Paraphrase what you hear.* Briefly repeat back what you heard the Speaker say using your own words if you like and make sure that you understand what was said.
2. *Focus on the Speaker's message. Don't rebut.* In the Listener's role, you may not offer your opinion or thoughts. Wait until you are the Speaker to make your response. As the Listener, your job is to speak only in the service of understanding your partner.
3. Use the LDD Method – **L**isten, **D**on't **D**efend

Rules for Both:

1. The Speaker has the floor.
2. Speaker keeps the floor while Listener paraphrases.
3. Share the floor
4. Use the LDD Method – **L**isten, **D**on't **D**efend
5. It is often helpful to have a designated object to hold, indicating who is the speaker, thus reminding the other person that it is his/her opportunity to listen.

Remember:

***We all want and need to be understood
and appreciated by the people we love.***

*except from <http://www.positive-way.com/family.htm>

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