



Family Christian Center

340 45th Avenue, Munster, Indiana ~ 219.922.6500

Family Life Development & Application {FLDA} Department

FCC Equip Overseer: Pastor John Ponder ~ jponder@fcc4me.com

FLDA Directors: Elders Robert & Natalie Watts ~ watts@fcc4me.com

FLDA Marketing & Advertising Directors: Conell & Rhonda Hollins



CLASS NAME: Prep for Marriage – 20/20 Vision | Lesson 4: Are We Seeing Eye to Eye?
CLASS SESSION: Sundays, Feb - April 2020 @ 10:45 a.m. LOCATION: The Photon Room
INSTRUCTOR(S): Elders Conell and Rhonda Hollins ~ me2weministries@gmail.com

Are We Seeing Eye to Eye?

The Power of Communicating Well

2 Chronicles 16:9 New King James Version (NKJV)

*“For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him. In this you have done foolishly; **therefore, from now on you shall have wars.**”*

Open Your Eyes!

The #1 problem reported by couples as affecting their marriage is a “breakdown in communication.”

- How do you rate your communication with your fiancé or mate, on a scale of 1 to 10?
- Are you able to share your innermost feelings in a way that you feel heard?

Time and again, marriage therapists see faulty communication pull down a marriage with a strong start. Both partners struggle to convey what they want or need in a relationship, not realizing they are speaking a language the other does not comprehend. Over the disappointment, the partners erect defenses against each other, becoming guarded. They stop confiding in each other, wall off parts of themselves, and withdraw emotionally from the relationship. They can't talk without blaming, so they stop listening. This may lead to living together in an emotional divorce.

- 97% of couples who rate their communication with their partner as excellent are happily married.
- 56% of those who rate their communication as poor rate themselves as unhappily married.

The best time to build communication skills is when things are going well. Establish good habits early on in marriage.

“Verbal communication – words – makes up only a small part of how we communicate. It has been estimated that 60-90% of our communication is non-verbal. And that 60-90% is made up of things like body language, gestures, facial expression and tone of voice. It’s the how of what we say, and it is powerful.”

~Play your way to better communication, Dr. Corey Allan

Turning a Blind Eye

Thank God! You did it! Now what’s next? If you are one of the very few couples that have admitted to poor communication within your relationship, you may believe that half the battle is admitting that you have a problem. However, simply pointing out the problem is far different from engaging the issue head on. Co-existing with poor communication is worse than poor communication itself; it is as if you are turning a blind eye to a desperate cry for help. Your cry for help! At the misfortune of you and your significant other, poor communication often wins and you and your mate often lose to miscommunication. Understanding the key triggers that are embedded in the heart of offenses is vital to recovering, repairing and healing your communication patterns. Typically, those with poor communication habits lack in emotional intelligence, experiencing poor communication in childhood and never developing the skill set to vocalize disagreements in a healthy manner.

Emotional Intelligence – What is your EQ?

Emotional intelligence is the dimension of intelligence responsible for your ability to manage yourself and your relationships. Each day, in your personal and business lives, you are presented with opportunities and challenges that require maneuvering internal as well as external obstacles. Your EQ enables you to maneuver those obstacles successfully and to persevere over the toughest challenges.

“It is a lifelong journey to improve your emotional intelligence. But, unlike IQ capacity, which remains fixed or static, the capacity to improve one’s EQ (Emotional Quotient) actually increases over time. As people mature, life experiences broaden their capacity for emotional understanding. Increased capacity alone will not improve EQ. It only suggests that people have further capacity for understanding and mastery if they choose to develop it. This can be compared to someone who has the IQ to learn calculus. Unless the individual actually chooses to learn how to do calculus, the capacity to do so will always be present but never developed. The same holds true for EQ-an individual must choose to learn and develop in these areas.” Mastering Emotional Intelligence” ~ Lynn Leadership Group

The Impact of Low EQ in relationships

Because people with **low emotional intelligence** do not understand the emotions of others, they experience little empathy for other people, co-workers, family, friendships, and romantic relationships. Marriages are often the first casualty of war since those with low EQ’s are ill-equipped to handle their own emotional baggage and often reject, what they consider to be an overload of emotions from their partner. Using terms such as “your too emotional” to blame others for their lack or inability to carry the emotions for others. Inevitably, they wall off empathy, compassion and ignore the needs of others due to their shortcomings. Eventually, frustration erupts, conflict ensues all due to low emotional vocabulary between significant others, depriving spouses of solutions **only** provided within healthy communication.

Unresolved Conflict

“Conflict exists in all relationships, and when communication is difficult or impossible, conflict often goes unresolved. Negative communication patterns, such as inconsistencies with tone or body language and different communication styles, can even lead to conflict escalation in some cases. By adopting an effective communication pattern with your partner, you will be more equipped to settle disagreements and resolve conflict without negative consequences to your relationship. This includes using “I” statements, focusing on the problem instead of the person, listening and providing feedback, and avoiding interrupting or blaming.”

The Effects of Lack of Communication in a Relationship ~ By: Ayra Moore

Ephesians 4:29 *Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.*

Causes of Conflict

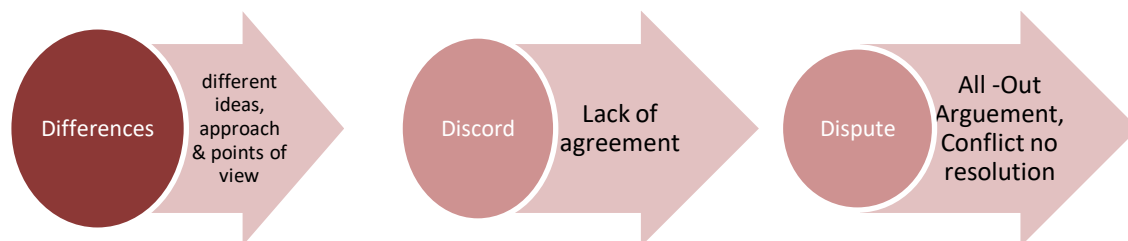
Unequally Yoked- The Greek meaning of unequally yoked or *Heterozygēō*. (from *héteros*, "another of a different kind" *zygós*, "a yoke, joining two to a single plow") – properly, *different kinds* of people joined together *but unevenly matched*; hence "unequally yoked" (not aptly joined) or "**mismatched**" attaching or binding yourself to someone in marriage that is running contrary to faith.

Unmet needs- In psychology the term **unmet needs** refer to the **needs** that a person didn't manage to satisfy yet. Just like there are physical **needs** such as the **need** to eat or the **need** to sleep there are psychological **needs** within relationships that people must satisfy in order to feel good (communication, affection, quality time, etc.).

Conflicting goals/priorities- One person might value quality while another values quantity, or one values speed while another values accuracy. Couples at one time or another will have differences. The reality is on some level, having a partner who has a different opinion, preference, and perspective is probably what makes you love them. But there is a big difference in learning how to manage a difference in opinion or preference than learning how to manage different values. **Imbalanced Core Values** is something different entirely and can throw the trajectory of your relationship completely off course. Priorities, life goals and core value differences can easily end your relationship if God is not at the center of your union to keep it aligned.

Mistrust- when individuals have not previously cultivated a trusting, loving relationship where effective communication flows, even minor occurrences can cause misunderstandings and miscommunications that can lead to conflict. The pace and pressures of life, and the increase use of electronic communications (cellphone, texts, social media, emails, etc.) rather than face-to-face communication, makes it more and more difficult for people to personally interact with one another and develop trust.

Stages of Conflict Model



Irreconcilable Differences

Definition of *irreconcilable differences*

formal

: inability to agree on most things or on important things.

//They are filing for divorce, citing *irreconcilable differences*.

In our opinion, irreconcilable differences are a fancy way of saying “lack of communication”.

According to lifestyle website *YourTango.com* polled 100 mental health professionals and found that communication problems was cited as the most common factor that leads to divorce (65 percent), followed by couples' inability to resolve conflict (43 percent).

The survey also found that men and women have different communication complaints. Seventy percent of the experts surveyed said that men cite *nagging and complaining* as the top communication problem in their marriage. Women's top complaint was that their spouse doesn't *validate* their opinions or feelings enough, according to 83 percent of experts.

The “Silent” Killer

Part of great communication begins with discovery. The more you know the more you grow as a couple. Finding perspective of your loved one's true nature through pleasant and often difficult discussions is the first breakthrough in communication. Often, couples rely on the initial first attraction or preconceived notions of what they believe marriage to be. Most fail to communicate their needs to one another due to assumptions that the other mate already knows what he or she really wants and needs. This begins a vicious cycle before the marriage even starts; halting discovery, growth and development without ever saying a word.

Hosea 4:6 New King James Version (NKJV)

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

Because you have rejected knowledge,

I also will reject you from being priest for Me;

Because you have forgotten the law of your God,

I also will forget your children.

Learning How Not to Communicate

- If your needs are not being met, or if you get hurt, do not cast blame and attack.
- Stop the toxic cycle of hurt and venom. Who will be like Jesus?

Rom 2:1 - Therefore you have no excuse, O man, whoever you are, when you judge another; for in passing judgment upon him you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, are doing the very same things.

Eph 4:32 - Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Col 3:8 - But now put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and foul talk from your mouth.

1 Cor 13:7 - Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Learn to speak about your needs in a reasoned, clear, direct and objective way, as if you were a professional speaking about yourself.

- If you experience a hurt or disappointment, resolve never to clam up.
- Non-talking is a form of communication. What does it mean to you as a couple not to talk?

Laurens Van der Post's novel *The Face Behind the Fire*:

“Slowly she is poisoning Albert . . . The poison . . . is found in no chemist's book . . . It is a poison brewed from all the words, the delicate, tender, burning trivialities and petty endearments she never used – but would have spoken if she truly loved him.”

2 Cor 4:2-3

We have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways; we refuse to practice

cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

The fear of pain is the source of poor communication. The fear of loss of self-esteem, of loss of personal power, the fear of being hurt again or perhaps causing hurt.

1 John 4:18 New King James Version (NKJV)

¹⁸There is **no fear in love**; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.

Sticks & Stones

“Sticks and stones may break our bones, but words will break our hearts” —

Robert Fulghum *~All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*

Proverbs 15:1 New King James Version (NKJV) A soft answer turns away wrath, but a **harsh** word stirs up anger.

John 8:3-7 New International Version (NIV)

³The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group ⁴and said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. ⁵In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?” ⁶They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.

But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. ⁷When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “**Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.**”

Exodus 4:2-5 New International Version (NIV)

²Then the LORD said to him, “What is that in your hand?”

“**A staff,**” he replied. ³The LORD said, “Throw it on the ground.”

Moses threw it on the ground and it became a snake, and he ran from it. ⁴Then the LORD said to him, “Reach out your hand and take it by the tail.” So Moses reached out and took hold of the snake and it turned back into a staff in his hand. ⁵“This,” said the LORD, “is so that they may believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has appeared to you.”

The Four Styles of Miscommunication

1. **Placating** – The placater is a “yes” man or woman, eager to please. “Whatever you want.” Peace at any price. The price paid is feelings of worthlessness.
2. **Blaming** – The blamer is a faultfinder who criticizes relentlessly and speaks in generalizations: “You always blah-blah-blah.” Inside, blamers anticipate they will never receive what they want. Often believing the worst of others and judging based upon their past disappointments. Blamers believe the best defense is a good offense. Not big enough to make themselves vulnerable.
3. **Computing** – Altogether analytical and super-reasonable. Never admits mistakes, void of empathy nor displays emotion.
4. **Distracting** – The distractor erects smoke screens, focusing on irrelevancies, avoiding eye contact and direct answers. Changing the subject, etc.

The Bedrock of Successful Communication

Though communication skills are important, good communication is built first on who you are, and later what you do. Work on who you are as a person. To enjoy rich communication, four qualities must be present: **humility, warmth, genuineness, and empathy.**

Humility is recognizing that “We all make many mistakes.” (James 3:2). Because you identify a mistake does not mean that you are better than your spouse.

Your partner comes to you with a cluster of unacceptable qualities, some known, many yet to be discovered. **Warmth** is loving despite. The key to warmth is acceptance, not conversion.

Rom 5:8

But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

Genuineness is being real, being authentic, not having anything hidden. Being genuine, we are not so much focused on “What should I be? What should my partner be? What should I be feeling?” But rather “What am I feeling?” Convey Openness.

1 Cor 11:19 – “In order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized”.

Heb 4:13 - Before him no creature is hidden, but all are open and laid bare to the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Empathy is seeing the world from your partner’s perspective. Empathy is a great gift, a wonderful way of communicating love. It derives from an intense desire to really feel, to really understand the other’s perspective. Involves active listening from the heart and derives from agape love. Empathy says, “If I were you, I would act as you do; I understand why you feel the way you feel.”

Are you able to put yourself into your partner’s mind and heart? Regarding a circumstance how is his or her perception different from mine?

Rules for Successful Communication

1. Make “I” statements, not “You” statements
Volleying “you” accusations are not at all productive.
Don’t say: “You are so careless. How could you forget we were going out tonight?”
Say: “I feel hurt and a little scared when you forget things we plan together.”

Practice reflective listening. Typical interaction:

Wife: “Look at this! I got this dress cleaned, and I just discovered they didn’t get the stain out. I can’t believe it. What I going to do now? I was going to wear this dress tonight!”

Husband: “Oh honey, nobody will even notice. But you could wear your yellow dress instead. It looks great.”

Is the wife really looking for a solution?

Instead: “Wow, that’s really frustrating. I’d be furious too.” Or, “I can’t imagine how disappointed you are.”

If your partner starts hurling “you” statements at you, **affirm their frustration**. This may feel awkward or patronizing at first, but if you really want to understand their feelings from love, it’s genuine.

You may have to ask, “Please tell me more about it. Help me understand.”

“It is impossible to overemphasize the immense needs we have to be really listened to, to be taken seriously, to be understood. No one can develop a full life without feeling understood by at least one person.”

-- Paul Tournier

2. Understand and accept the differences between men and women.

More next week, but generally women use conversation to form and solidify connections with other people; men are most concerned with analyzing, dealing with facts. Women share feelings; men solve problems.

Wife: You won’t believe the amount of work my boss is giving me!

Listen to this . . .

Husband: (Interrupting) I keep telling you to make an appointment and talk with him about it!

3. Apologize when necessary

Not “if I did something to hurt you . . .”

Instead: “Please forgive me that I . . .”

Acknowledge your responsibility. Own your failure.

4. Communicate through touch

“Greet one another with a holy kiss.”

Romans 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; 1 Thess 5:26; 1 Peter 5:14

Positive Triggers Partner #1	Negative Triggers Partner #1	Positive Triggers Partner #2	Negative Triggers Partner #2

What obstacles due you face in Communication?: _____

Explain under what circumstances do you and your significant other/ fiancé exhibit higher than usual conflict? (i.e. finances, defined gender roles, leadership, lack of drive, emotional instability, low emotional intelligence). _____

