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Rock, Paper, Scissors

The Rock of Offense, Paper Coverings, and Cutting Your Losses

Do you remember the childhood game, “**Rock, Paper, Scissors?**” Rock beats scissors, scissors beat paper by cutting it, and paper beats rock by covering it. It was an awesome game that helped you to quickly size up your competitor while attempting to guess the next move of your opponent to win the game in the quickest amount of time possible. Would it surprise you to know that most disagreements, arguments, fights, and all-out brawls...all start the same way as this childhood game.

Often many couples assume their mates are saying one thing when they actually mean another. This causes miscommunication in which we make the wrong call, bringing out the **rock of offense** when we feel we’re going to lose, **cutting** when we should **cover**, and leaving our communication broken like a pair of scissors after the rock’s drops down its abrupt and rash rush to judgement before the marriage can even begin.

A Stones Throw a Way

Often when we attempt to cut corners in our communication, we are only a stone’s throw away from hitting our targets. Yet, we give up for quicker options that do not provide the detail, discovery, and practice that is needed for healthy marital

communication. Stones such as these cause us to stumble, and fall creating a domino effect in marital communication that leaves one or both significant others feeling as though they have hit rock bottom. Everyone wants to be understood, and when we miscommunicate, we create more than stumbling blocks we create mountains between us emotionally and physically that drive out intimacy and create loveless marriages.

1 Peter 2:8 New International Version

⁸ and, "A stone that causes people to stumble
and a rock that makes them fall."^[a]

They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for.

Communication is the lifeblood of any relationship. Through speaking we are seeking to understand or convey a message of understanding. When understanding is created, knowledge is transferred between two or more individuals successfully. Creating clarity and healthy communication. Furthermore, when communication is healthy it adds longevity to our relationships, especially in marriage. Alternatively, miscommunication is the sudden halt of understanding and is thus the death of a marriage, which is also called **divorce**.

Miscommunication...A Rock-Headed Response

We believe, **miscommunication is disobeying the message.** Without healthy communication, you are destined to fail. When we **don't listen** to the message that is submitted to us, we become **rock-headed** to our significant others and those around us. The idiom **rock-headed** means *dim-witted, someone who seems to have rocks in the head, a hardheaded or stubborn person.*

Acts 7:51

Contemporary English Version

⁵¹ You stubborn and **hardheaded people!** You are always fighting against the Holy Spirit, just as your ancestors did.

First, being hard-headed can be generational. Secondly, how frustrating it must be to communicate with a hard-headed and stubborn spouse; a know-it-all, that doesn't know-it-at-all! Over the years, the most difficult students to teach are **rock-headed** individuals. Why, because submitting to anyone else's opinion is easier said than done. We know you have heard the adage, "**a hard head makes a soft behind**" well those that purposely do not listen are headed to chastisement in the spirit and destroyed in the natural (**Prov 29:1**). If you are engaged or dating this type of individual, we recommend that you **do not get married**, give it time and let God lead you. You will thank us later!

Furthermore, being **rock-headed** doesn't mean that the individual doesn't understand the message it means the person is too stubborn or unwilling to listen, accept or convey the message. We bet you are saying, "**what message?**" In this instance, the message is from the Father above, which is:

Mark 12:30-31

New International Version

³⁰ **Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'**^(a) ³¹ The second is this: '**Love your neighbor as yourself.'**^(b) **There is no commandment greater than these."**

Today, we will address the sudden halts of understanding that cause all of us to disobey this message. Poor **communication** *causes us not to love our neighbors which are the everyday people in our lives.*

We Will Rock You!

Let's discuss the **5 Rock-Head styles** of Miscommunication that prevent us from loving our neighbors. Start asking yourself which style is your most common miscommunication pattern.

The Five Rock Head 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 & 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 on 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, is 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.*
5. **Tone is Everything*** – *It's not what you say, it's how you say it! (Proverbs 15:1 “A soft **and gentle and thoughtful answer** turns away wrath, But **harsh and painful and careless words stir up anger.**”*

A bad misunderstanding can stir up anger and cause us to hate (our neighbors); supervisors, co-workers, friends, family, and spouses and it causes us to blame God and stray away from communicating *with the Lord in prayer*. **Prayer is the ultimate form of communication with God.** It is **His** love language.

When we lose practice in communication with our Father in Heaven, we tend to lose that same ability on earth.

Matthew 6:10 New International Version

10 your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

It's Rock, Paper, Scissors Time!*

Much of this generation have lost their ability to speak. Using text messages, while sitting right next to the recipient; rather than using Godly communication leaves them inept and ill-prepared to speak openly and honestly about their feelings, creating a **Rock, Paper, Scissors** response in communication!

Ask yourselves this question:

- **How often do you and your significant other pray together?** (*Daily, weekly, monthly, when there is a problem or never?*)
- **Have you ever given your mate the silent treatment?**
 - The worst part of poor communication is it's what we don't say that kills the bedrock of marital communication. According to Forbes magazine, "***the 7-38-55 rule indicates that only 7% of all communication is done through verbal communication, whereas the nonverbal component of our daily communication, such as the tonality of our voice and body language, make up 38% and 55% respectively.***"

Wow! **If you add 38% plus 55%, studies show that 93% of all communication is non-verbal.** Even the world understands the impact of non-verbal

communication which includes tone and non-verbal cues. However, take it a step further, when we do speak, we often speak without understanding our audience, both in Heaven and on earth which convolutes our communication with the ones we love and respect the most. **The fear of assumption** takes root and this is where the rock of **offense** takes hold.

The Rock of Offense

When someone matters to you, the next step should be; seeking to understand what makes them tick. However, without questions and answers...we lose the ability to discover the communication styles of our mates. Eventually, *we can "trip up"* our significant others, and eventually veer them off path, **away** from God. That is why the marital role is so important; those that are closest to us can either lift us up or tear us down the most. Furthermore, whether it is realized or not, at any given time you are communicating *something*. Maybe you don't mean to but trust us and our many years of experience, sometimes when you're not saying something—you're saying something!

- **If you are yawning in the middle of a meeting—you're saying something.**
- **If you look at your cell phone when someone is talking —you're saying something.**
- **If you roll your eyes in disagreement—you're saying something.**
- **And if you send a text in LARGE FONT after an argument—Oh Boy! You're saying something!**

At no other time is this most prevalent than in marriage. Miscommunication is the stumbling block of marriage.

Stumbling Block

A stumbling block is a snare that entangles us. What is a snare? A physical snare biblically is a scandal or "*skandalon*" it is a trap with a springing device in it, which means something that either prevents one from walking, or that makes one stumble as one walks: a trap, a snare, even a stone. That stone or **stumbling block that can prevent a straight path to righteousness** in any believer is "**sin**" and the snare is also "**offense**" and we can be entangled by both which is **miscommunication** which in turn causes the offense, and drives us toward sin...if we let it. Let's start with the meaning of sin. The word "**sin**", as it appears in the Bible, comes from the Greek word **Hamartia** or the Hebrew word **Hata**, which both mean "**to miss the mark**" or "**flawed**". The word was used in archery and spear-throwing. When a person missed the center of the target, they erred, or "**hamartia-ed**" or missed the mark.

So, as this applies to sin, we should ask,

- "**Where are we missing the mark?**"
- **How can missing the mark prevent us from attending Jesus's wedding? The marriage of Jesus to the church in Heaven.**

Matthew 18:6-7 New International Version

Causing to Stumble

⁶ "If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. ⁷ Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to stumble! Such things must come, but woe to the person through whom they come!

Stone Cold Killer

Many couples never truly understand the impact of **their own words** until attempting to communicate with their significant other. They also don't understand that the devil is a stone-cold killer and will use your own words to do it. Never let your guard down his only operative is to destroy.

John 10:10 New International Version

¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

Please understand, the adversary is a thief who seeks to steal your peace. He is jealous of you in every way imaginable. The definition of the word Satan is "**the accuser of the brethren**". All day and all night the devil accuses you behind the scenes. Like a coward...a dirty weak coward. **He plans sneak attacks on you and your marriage, looking for cracks, crevices, and chinks in your armor***. What the enemy does is pick up every harsh statement and every careless word you speak. Like the way, Satan asked for permission to attack Simon (Peter).

Scripture teaches us:

Luke 22:31 New King James Version

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial

³¹ [a]And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift *you* as wheat.

The Bible says offenses will come but woe, whom they come through!

Sometimes, in marriage, those offenses will come through your spouse. Yes, offenses will come but it doesn't always have to come through you. Furthermore, don't let the enemy use you as an accomplice to your own demise. **In essence, with your assistance, he is killing two birds with one stone. You and your mate.**

Do you really want to help the devil hurt your marriage because you don't either recognize that this is not a flesh and blood fight? Don't you not know we wrestle again spirits and dark forces? (**Ephesians 6:12**) Or is it that you don't recognize that God is your ultimate covering to protect you from the fiery darts of the enemy? **The choice is yours...**

Paper Thin Coverings

Many couples fail to cover their mates by getting the help that they need to become functioning communicators in marriage giving way to Satan. Often throwing verbal javelins at each other not taking responsibility for how their careless words will impact the ones *they say* they love.

Matthew 12:36 English Standard Version

³⁶I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for **every careless word they speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.**

When you miscommunicate with careless intentions, you are on Satan's turf. Like a starving wild animal, ***the adversary looks for you to say out loud your negative thoughts, and malicious intentions, he thrives on unruly anger, your below-the-belt comments and he prowls around eavesdropping for every crumb of bitterness and every morsel of divisive talk*** within the four walls of your home.

He seeks to annihilate you and devour you until there is nothing left. Why? Well, he's learning you. He's studying your weaknesses and unlike 67.5% of miscommunicating couples, the devil is a great listener. In fact, he is an excellent listener...most liars are. **Scripture teaches us in John 8:44:**

John 8:44 New International Version

⁴⁴You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

Throwing Stones, and Hiding Your Hands

If it is often, you that is throwing stones, or lying to your spouse or fiancé/fiancée that you aren't really the problem in your relationship, then you need to understand that you may have flawed and broken communication that starts with trauma and learned poor communication from family and previous relationships.

These traumas can cause you to lash out against the one you say you love. According to recent research, trauma and ongoing communication difficulties are the number one reason couples divorce in the United States.

Did you know?

- Every 13 seconds, there is one divorce in America.
- That equates to 277 divorces per hour, 6,646 divorces per day, 46,523 divorces per week, and 2,419,196 divorces per year.

That means:

- There are 9 divorces in the time it takes for a couple to recite their wedding vows (2 minutes).

Communication is the foundation of a successful relationship. Do you want to add to this statistic all because you cannot communicate well?

As we stated earlier: ***most couples would rather pay for an expensive engagement ring, and an elaborate wedding than take a free course on premarital training.*** It's sad but true. Pat yourselves on the back for being one of the few invited wedding guests to RSVP for knowledge.

Hosea 4:6

New International Version

6 my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge.

"Because you have rejected knowledge,

I also reject you as my priests;

because you have ignored the law of your God,

I also will ignore your children.

As premarital coaches and counselors, we have seen the evidence, or *should we say the lack of evidence*, in the desire for premarital and post-marriage communication training. Some are even afraid to hear the word **“work”**, especially when associated with healthy communication in marriage. It instantly, to some, makes marriage undesirable. As though, telling the truth somehow made marriage bad. Yes, marriage is work but it is good work! It is so rewarding when marriage is done...God’s way!

Rock of Ages: Fighting Inner Demons

“It is often easier to fight an external enemy than to confront one’s inner demons.” – Ram Dass

The truth is the first examples of communication are often first experienced in childhood. Good, bad, or indifferent you unknowingly may have picked up a few good or bad habits from your parent’s or caregivers’ communication style. Before starting a relationship, most of us have not learned healthy ways to communicate or how to resolve conflict. One of the worst communication traits we project into adulthood is **learned family behavior**. Whether it is the long-held family secrets that everyone knows about and stays hush about or shameful hidden acts of avoidance that have been recycled for generations, many new relationships have learned poor communication from those who are supposed to communicate with us the most. **Absentee biological parents, functioning dysfunctional grandparents, and extended family either do not talk about their problems or become explosive when you do!**

- **Ask yourselves**, *“looking back on your childhood experiences of communication does your family’s past groundwork create an environment for healthy communication for you and your current relationship?”*

Characteristics of an “Inner Demon” Mindset

Proverbs 18:2 Amplified Bible

A [closed-minded] fool does not delight in understanding,

But only in revealing his personal opinions [**unwittingly displaying his self-indulgence and his stupidity**].

- **Pride**– causes the most lack of communication in a relationship.
- **Lies**– destroy the ability to build trust in communication.
- **Trauma/PTSD**- Trauma such as death, rape, abuse, and abandonment can cause you to fear that the other shoe is going to drop.
- **Selfishness**– gets one to focus primarily on one’s own point of view.
- **Silence**– leads to false assumptions and unresolved problems.
- **Neglect**– tells your spouse that you don’t care.
- **Disrespect**– tells your spouse I don’t value you.
- **Ignorance**– not knowing how to solve communication problems is a problem.
- **Lack of romance/sex (in marriage)** – intimate expressions of love in marriage are important.
- **Complacency**- you got lazy.
- **Lack of submission to God**– something higher than ourselves needs to perfect us.

*No matter what your family background is, we all choose to choose what characteristics we carry into our adult relationships. **It is up to everyone to decide if they want to allow the skeletons from their family’s past into their future marriages.***

*However, some individuals within relationships refuse to change or enhance their communication style, often saying to their mates, **“That’s how I was raised”, “It is what it is” or “This is who I am”** in a take it or leave it stance, rather than turning those poor communication experiences into growth opportunities. One or both significant others then begin to choose to stunt their **Emotional Intelligence** as well as their communicative abilities, while inflicting the very same blows to their mates they have been scarred by.*

If this applies to your significant other, ask them this:

- **“Why did we get into a relationship if you have no intention of growing past where you currently are?”**

- An **“it is what it is”** mindset is rooted in selfishness, an unwillingness to **actively** change, and plain old stubbornness.
- If you are unwilling to change then you have a **“poverty of mind”** or a dual thought process (double-minded) and should not pursue a relationship with anyone, let alone get married until God deems you fit to partake in the joys of a relationship.

Love Covers a Multitude of Sins

Like paper, in the **Rock, Paper, Scissors** game, in marriage, we must cover our spouses in love. It’s difficult to address sensitive topics from our childhood or hearing we may have to change. However, through the **Personality Assessments and the Innermost Feelings Questionnaire** you will discover God-given ways to address these concerns. The main point is to never, condemn them. Edify them and lift them up because love covers a multitude of sins.

1 Peter 4:8 New International Version

⁸ Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

When addressing items from our past it is easy to fall into the trap of judgment as we begin to identify our own sinful behavior. Suddenly we start to feel terrible about ourselves. **The spirit of condemnation is a real thing.** Don’t toy with it, nor entertain it. Most importantly, do not feel condemned but feel convicted. Conviction is a good thing and means you have a conscience and have identified an error in your ways. The good thing is you are now looking to seek God for change. **Additionally, keep in mind, our role as Gemstone Graders is to provide you with all the information you need for you to make informed decisions in your life.** We are **not** your judge and nor do we want to be. God is your only judge. It is never our role or anyone else’s to judge your service.

Romans 14:4

New Living Translation

⁴ Who are you to condemn someone else's servants? Their own master will judge whether they stand or fall. And with the Lord's help, they will stand and receive his approval.

Active Listening

Listening is an Action!

Matthew 11:15 Amplified Bible

¹⁵ He who has **ears** to **hear**, let him **hear** and heed **My words**.

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 partner's 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.**

WHAT IS ACTIVE LISTENING? (IT'S NOT ABOUT THE NAIL) *

Active listening requires the listener to fully concentrate, understand respond and then remember what is being said. You make a conscious effort to hear and understand the complete message being spoken, rather than just ***passively hearing*** the message of the speaker.

Why is listening important?

"Listening is the most fundamental component of communication skills. Listening is not something that just happens, listening is an active process in which a

conscious decision is made to listen to and understand the messages of the speaker.

Active listening is also about patience, listeners should not interrupt with questions or comments. Active listening involves giving the other person time to explore their thoughts and feelings, they should be given adequate time for that.

We spend a lot of time listening.

Various studies stress the importance of listening as a communication skill. The studies on average say we spend 70-80% of our waking hours in some form of communication. Of that time, we spend about 9 percent writing, 16 percent reading, 30 percent speaking, and 45 percent listening.

What if God Stopped Listening to You?

We have often heard both couples and individuals say to us, God doesn't hear me or my prayers. Well, what if that's true? Just like we don't listen for a word from God, consistently, what if there is an instance **when God won't hear from you?**

Isaiah 59:1-2

New International Version

Sin, Confession and Redemption

59 Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save,
nor his ear too dull to hear.

2 But your iniquities have separated
you from your God;

your sins have hidden his face from you,
so that he will not hear.

How scary is that to know that God does not hear you due to sin? On top of that, studies also confirm that we are the ones that aren't listening the most. Data proves that the majority of us are poor and inefficient listeners. Most of us are not very good at listening, research suggests that we remember less than 50% of what we hear in a conversation."

Did God Really Say That?

Genesis 3:1-13

New International Version

The Fall

3 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, **“Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”**

² The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, ³ but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”

⁴ “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. ⁵ “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

⁶ When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

⁸ Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?”

¹⁰ He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”

¹¹ And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

¹² The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?"

The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

Listening vs. hearing

Hearing is an accidental and automatic brain response to sound that requires no effort. We are surrounded by sounds most of the time. For example, we are accustomed to the sounds of cars, construction workers, and so on. We hear those sounds and, unless we have a reason to do otherwise, we learn to ignore them.

Hearing is:

- Accidental
- Involuntary
- Effortless
- **Verbal Signs of active listening**
 - **Positive Reinforcement** - *this can be a strong signal of attentiveness, however, too much use can be annoying for the speaker. Occasional words and phrases, such as: 'very good, 'yes', or 'indeed' will indicate that you are paying attention.*
 - **Remembering** - *try to remember a few key points, such as the name or the subject the speaker is identifying. It can help to reinforce that what is being said has been understood. Remembering details, ideas, and concepts from previous conversations proves that attention was kept and is likely to encourage the speaker to continue.*
 - **Questioning** - *the listener can demonstrate that they have been paying attention by asking relevant questions and/or making statements that build*

or help to clarify what the speaker has said. By asking relevant questions the listener also helps to reinforce that they have an interest in what the speaker has been saying.

- **Clarification** - this involves asking questions of the speaker to ensure that the correct message has been received. Clarification usually involves the use of open questions which enables the speaker to expand on certain points, as necessary.

Cut Your Losses

The final stage in the **Rock, Paper, Scissors** game is focused on the scissors. It is so vital to know when to cut your losses. Sometimes the scissors have a tendency **under duress to cut everything even marital covering**, out of fear of getting hurt. God doesn't want us to completely cut off everyone and everything when there is pain, disappointment, rejection or abandonment, especially in marriage. No he wants us to lean on Him for strength, discern what is right and push through. Scripture teaches us:

Matthew 5:44-46 New International Version

⁴⁴ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. ⁴⁶ **If you love those who love you, what reward will you get?** Are not even the tax collectors doing that?

Cutting your losses in marriage is learning to stop keeping score but to start losing count. You must ask yourself, "Am I trying to win the battle or win the war for my marriage?" To be clear, this applies to all relationships. Cutting your losses and forgiving is knowing when to quit which in turn helps you to win.

Philippians 3:7-8 New International Version

⁷ But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of

knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ

If you are the Rock in the **Rock, Paper, Scissors** game at times you may have to know when to hold 'm', and as the paper, you have to know when to fold em'. However, when you are the scissors you need to know when to cut your losses. For instance, do you drink spoiled milk? And why or why not?

Let He Without Sin Cast the First Stone

John 8:7 King James Version

7 So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, **He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.**

It is so easy to point fingers at our spouse, and others are around us, focusing on their wrong doings. But it didn't start with our spouses and nor does it end there. In most cases, past hurts cause a wall of bitterness to erect around our hearts causing hearts to turn stone cold. However, God came to give us life and to the full. We can't be tempted to point out the sins of others without recognize the sin we were all forgiven for through Christs substitutionary death. He didn't die for us to have hearts made of stone...No he gave us a new hearts of flesh to extend forgiveness to loved ones and our enemies.

Ezekiel 36:26 New International Version

²⁶ I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

Cast Lots...Rock, Paper, Scissors

Casting lots, is defined as a lottery, a form of gambling that involves the drawing of numbers for a prize a modern form of rock, paper scissors. To think as Jesus laid dying, after being abused and mocked he forgave. Can you do that? Can you forgive under those circumstances? If you are anything like us; we are thankful that Jesus didn't because we couldn't have done the same thing if the roles were reversed. Don't you agree?

How to Forgive Like Christ: 70 x 70

Matthew 18:21-22 New King James Version

The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

²¹ Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" ²² Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

The Bedrock of Successful Communication

Though communication skills are important, good communication is built first on who you are, and later on 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 yoursouse.***

Warmth - 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, and 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 – "So that those who are genuine among you may be recognized"***).

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 feel, to 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."**