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GrowInGrace Marriage Newsletter

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Life Lessons I'm Learning by Laurie

What Did You Say?

Let me know if you hear these phrases in your house, because we definitely say them a lot in ours ...

"What? WHAT?" ... "I can't hear you, I'm in the bathroom!" ... "Did you say something?" "Are you talking to me?" 🗣️

A few years ago, I found out that I had hearing loss, enough so that I needed hearing aids, which help me hear better, but they also keep me from hearing Aaron talking when I use them as a bluetooth device connected to my phone and am watching a video or a short reel someone posted.

I must confess that my phone can become an idol, and if I am not careful, it robs me of time from Jesus and it most definitely distracts me when Aaron is talking to me.

All it has to do is vibrate and I look to see who's texting me or sending me a Snapchat. After listening to the featured podcast, I have been making a conscious effort to not let my phone rule my life.

I can't have my phone come between me and the Lord or my relationship with Aaron!

Laurie 💜



Featured Podcast - FamilyLife® Today

Dave & Ann Wilson

How Phones Affect Marriage: The Tiny Screen Between You

[<listen to podcast>](#) .. (September 25, 2026)

*Marriage Attention leads to
marriage affection*

*Whatever you're giving your
attention to, you develop a
relationship with*

Your spouse is talking. Your phone lights up. And somehow, the tiny glowing rectangle wins again. How do phones affect marriage when "just checking one thing" becomes a hundred small exits from each other? On FamilyLife Today, Dave and Ann Wilson get painfully practical about phones, distraction, and the quiet marital drift that can happen while you're both sitting three feet apart. [Episode webpage](#)

THINK ABOUT IT – DISCUSS IT – APPLY IT

- 1.) Discuss with your spouse how you feel about their cell phone use when you are together. Does it create barriers or prevent open communication? Why is this?
- 2.) Mobile devices have only been mainstream for ~20 years. Do you think we are more closely connected with each other because of the convenience, or do you feel that we are further isolated from one another as a result?
- 3.) Dave & Ann joke that 'angels want us to have cell phones'. How could we use this technology in a productive and healthy way?
- 4.) What did you think of Dave's song "A-D-D-I-C-T-I-O-N .. Put the Phone Down"? Discuss together what safeguards you can put in place today to keep a hedge of protection around your marriage and family.

How Good Are You at Listening to Your Spouse? (Part I)

'I Do Everyday' FamilyLife® - by Janel Breitenstein (9/29/26)

Anyone else feel like listening is a dying art form?

We carry our lives tucked deep within us. We long for somebody (anybody!) to simply have the occasion to ask for and absorb what's on our minds, what makes up our lives.

But communication in our world happens at the speed of light. We feel more "connected" after a 140-character tweet. Few of us possess the time or the training to receive the stories of those around us.

Unfortunately, this means people are withering around us—even in our own homes. Even in our own marriages.

This art form takes practice. Time. The ability to love someone like we love ourselves.

So we've created a brief inventory to help you uncover strengths and weaknesses of your personal listening style.

Answering honestly, ask yourself if each statement below is a strength, weakness, or neither. Then, select 1-2 weaknesses from this inventory (and 1-2 from tomorrow's) you'd like to improve. (We'll specialize these for listening to your spouse, but they apply to all relationships.)

People come away from talking to you possessing a better understanding of themselves.

You wait a few seconds after your spouse has stopped talking to see if they have more to say.

You practice "reflective listening," using words like, "So I hear you saying that you're ..."

You're comfortable with abstaining from advice at times, to simply be with someone in their grief. (Think of what Job's friends didn't do.)

You ask questions that cause your spouse to explore what he or she hasn't before.

Your spouse frequently responds to you, "That's a good question"—but it's okay with you if you're not the person with all the good questions.

You refrain from interrupting.

You're comfortable with not having an answer for some of life's unfixables.

You use facial expressions that are receptive: soft eyes, nodding, eye contact.

You pray silently for your husband or wife while listening, and ask God for wisdom in responding.

[Click here for three communication tips based on wisdom gained from years \(and years\) of trial and error.](#)

The Good Stuff: "A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion. If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame." ([Proverbs 18:2,13](#))

Action Points: Got your 1-2 points for change? Write them down. Because speech overflows from our hearts (Matthew 12:34), pray that God will reveal the heart issues beneath your listening issues. Bonus: Have your spouse take this inventory evaluating you as a listener.

Wifely Wisdom

It's very easy to get comfortable with each other and not try so hard.

The next time you're at the store, why not pick up your hubby's favorite snack and surprise him! ❤️ 😊

LLE 💜



Send us
your prayer
requests

We're in your corner ..
and we're praying for
your marriage!

Couples Corner



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You Don't Listen

Editor's Corner by Aaron Eckard

I have a tee shirt that reads "It may look like I'm listening, but in my head I'm playing my drums".

I can blame my distractions in tracking with Laurie when she's talking to me on many things, but the truth is that I don't give her my full, undivided attention.

Many things vie for our attention. We naturally gravitate toward those we place a higher value on.

Aside from my relationship with Christ, however, what could be more important to me than her? And yet, time and time again, by not giving her my full attention when we're conversing, I'm showing her that my mind is preoccupied by other thoughts of less importance.

Matthew 6:21 says "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Whatever we value most, naturally commands our attention.

There's nothing wrong with most of the things I'm distracted by, but if they prevent me from showing Laurie that I value her more and that I desire to know what's on her heart, especially to the point of not remembering what she tells me, then it's time to get my heart in check.

Many things seek to capitalize on my time and attention, but I've come to realize that when my wife wants some time with me, I'm calling a "timeout" to my distractions and telling them to take a backseat. Sorry kids but mom gets to sit up front.

It not only makes for a fun ride, the journey is way more enjoyable. ❤️❤️

-AE

*For something to go
in one ear and out
the other, it has to
go in one ear first*



Love in Action!



In the podcast, Dave & Ann Wilson said that having your cell phone on the table when you're dining with your spouse is like having another person present.

Give your spouse your undivided attention when dining together by keeping your phone in your pocket or purse and resisting the urge to check it when you receive a notification.

Pro Marriage Tip:

Reach for your spouse more
than you reach for your phone

Married For A Purpose



How Good Are You at Listening to Your Spouse? (Part II)

'I Do Everyday' FamilyLife® by Janel Breitenstein (9/30/26)

Listening is a form of loving. It's a gift, really, of being fully there to receive a person.

Words tether us to each other. They are, in many ways (but not all), our relationship, the cord between us.

Authors John and Stasi Eldredge note in *Captivating: Unveiling the Mystery of a Woman's Soul*:

The gift of presence is a rare and beautiful gift. To come—unguarded, undistracted—and be fully present, fully engaged with whoever we are with at that moment. When we offer our unguarded presence, we live like Jesus.

So what's one way, through listening, that you could move into being fully present?

Reminder on how to use this inventory: With each number, see if it's a strength, weakness, or neither. Then, select 1-2 weaknesses from this list (and 1-2 from yesterday's) you'd like to improve. (We'll specialize these for listening to your spouse, but they apply to all relationships.)

1. You refrain from finishing your spouse's sentences.
2. You ask for clarification when you don't understand what your spouse means.
3. You don't feel the need to prove yourself as wise or helpful.
4. Rather than planning your responses, you try to set those aside in your head and focus on what's being said.
5. Your spouse is noticeably comforted after you spend time listening to them.
6. Your advice is highly individualized to your spouse, reflecting back what you've heard them say and steering clear of pat answers and clichés.
7. You have time in your schedule to listen to your spouse (and friends, children, etc.).
8. Before offering advice, you offer compassion and understanding: "I am so sorry. That sounds incredibly hard."
9. You share your own circumstances that relate, but are careful not to refocus the conversation on you, or to indicate your circumstances were worse/harder.
10. You think of your spouse's experience after you've left the conversation, internalizing their struggle. They're on your heart, so you pray for them, too.
11. More than a problem being fixed, you prioritize that your spouse feels heard, received, and understood.

Would you like to improve your communication? [Read on for four tips.](#)

The Good Stuff: "Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger." ([James 1:19](#))

Action Points: Write down your 1-2 points for change, and pray that God will create these from the inside out in your heart. Then tell your spouse about them for some accountability. Bonus: Have your spouse take this inventory evaluating you as a listener.

✉ Receive the 'I Do Everyday' email daily <[link](#)>

Marriage distraction leads to marriage drift

Dave & Ann Wilson FamilyLife Today®



- Husband Hack -

The Influence of Social Media on Family

Inspired by Daily Devotions for Dads Oct. 11 (Faithworks Ministries)

As a husband and father, I need to be mindful of the influences that affect me and my family.

I believe it's recognized and understood that our culture comes into the home through the doorway of media & entertainment, and many families have rules and guidelines to minimize potential threats, and protect the morals of their family.

We need to be mindful, however, of the subtle undermining of our values as social media quietly strolls in, welcomed thru personally curated content, prepared to feed an ever increasing appetite for entertainment that turns our focus away from the real world and toward a façade that is empty and isolated from the things that can fill our soul and the things that are truly important.

- AE ❤