

10 Ways Communication Can Break Down in Your Marriage

I write and speak about marriage for a living. It's my job and it's my ministry.

So what I'm about to say is hard, but I'm hoping it helps somebody. A few months ago, my wife and I were having a really tough time in our marriage. I'm talking tough to the point where we were questioning some of the things we teach, the things I've written about and the things we speak about. We just couldn't come to a resolve.

So we called for help. We called on a husband and wife who are our marriage mentors and occasional crisis marriage counselors. After several text messages and a couple phone calls, the husband shared his thoughts about the problems we'd been having: communication.

We were terrible at communicating. And if we didn't change it our marriage was going to continue to struggle. The same goes for your marriage. As your communication goes, so goes your marriage.

Here are 10 common communication breakdowns in marriage:

1. Not really listening. The biggest problem to communication is just not listening. Many of our communication problems would go away if we just intently listened to one another.

2. Speaking before thinking. Guilty! I'm guilty! So many times I say things as a reaction, and those times it usually doesn't go well. Take your time and think before speaking and responding to your wife.

3. Only talking about what you want to talk about. I call this throwing up on her. Sometimes I just overload her with things

I'm dealing with, not caring to hear what she's dealing with. Too many of those conversations and you might be calling your marriage mentors for help as well.

4. Raising your voice. You can help yourself in this area when you think before speaking as mentioned above. You may need to take a breather to gather yourself, but raising your voice doesn't serve you or your wife well.

5. Negative non-verbal communication. Your non-verbal communication—facial expressions and gestures—will impact your conversations as well. Maybe you didn't say anything wrong, but you sure did say something wrong with your negative body language, which can be received as worse.

6. Speaking in superlatives. "You always." "You never." "Every single time." Have you ever uttered those words? There are few things, if any, that your wife always does, never does or does every single time. Using these words can be harmful to your marriage.

7. Degrading your spouse. This should go without saying, but I'll say it anyway. Never ever degrade your spouse. You should look to build her up, to encourage her, to love her as you love yourself. Degrading her has no place in your marriage.

8. Playing the blame game. If a miscommunication or a mistake is made, don't let your first instinct be blaming your wife (even if it is her fault.) The blame game or pointing fingers doesn't work. You are one. That means you both have a joint responsibility in whatever happened. Talk through it together, find the learning opportunity for her and for you.

9. Seeking to be understood first rather than to understand. Strive to know what she is thinking, what she is feeling, what she is dealing with. Before you try to get her to understand you, first understand her and her point of view. It just may change your point of view before you even share it.

10. Bringing up the past. Do not keep score and do not bring up your past victories or your wives past losses (mistakes). There is no positive purpose in that. It is a losing strategy when it comes to communication in marriage. {eoa}

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