

Extinguish Flaming Arguments With Your Spouse With These 7 Healing Steps

If a husband and wife are unable to understand each other, they will have significantly greater challenges, conflicts, escalated conversations and unmet needs in their marriage. In a servant marriage, it is very important that both husband and wife have the skill of really understanding each other. How can you truly serve someone if you cannot understand him or her?

The first thing you need, is a clear definition of the word “understanding.” I am not going to clutter your mind or heart with numerous dictionary definitions. Instead, I am going to state a very simple definition:

Understanding: “to stand under”

What I love about this definition over several academic versions of this word is that 100 percent of the focus is on where you are, not where your spouse is, in the process.

The next step in developing this skill is to discover how well you stand under your spouse to understand him or her. You have heard the saying, “It is better to understand than to be understood.” There is real truth to that. As I understand Lisa, I get revelations of who she is and of her heart, which help me adapt and serve her better. If you and I grow in the skill of understanding, we open up all kinds of opportunities to have a great servant marriage.

The skill of standing under your spouse has seven distinct steps.

1. Hearing Their Heart

To hear someone's heart is to hear who they are during the communication as well as what they are saying. The person is communicating words, ideas, histories, humor (or lack of it), sarcasm, emotion or motives, all with various levels of frequency and intensity. To communicate with another human being and genuinely hear their heart requires significant intentionality on your part. Remember, when someone desires understanding, you must be fully present until you feel their weight.

2. Feelings

Emotions or feelings are not thoughts about something or someone, but rather about how someone feels. Feelings are not facts or truth. The spouse who desires to be understood will not be understood if the other spouse tries to put that spouse's feelings into a logical or moral formula.

Rather than avoid the messy, unpredictable world of feelings, go into this world with your spouse and find exactly where they are emotionally. This world works by asking them: "How did that cause you to feel?" or "What were you feeling?" Once you get one feeling word, ask for more.

3. Validating

Validating occurs when your spouse feels inside that you have actually heard them—when your spouse feels you are holding their weight. Validating is not agreeing with your spouse that their reality or feelings are truth. You are just validating that what they are feeling is what they are feeling at the moment. Validating says, "You're valuable," and "Where you are right now is permissible" without judgment and with some empathy for where your spouse is at the moment.

4. Take Responsibility

If you caused all or some of the pain or issue at hand, you'll want to take full responsibility for your part. To do so

requires some humility. As servants of our spouse, we will absolutely make mistakes. When we make mistakes that harm them, we must take full responsibility for those errors. By doing so, the situation gets smoother more quickly.

5. Ask Them What They Desire from You

The next step is to stay fully intent on who your spouse is and to ask them what they desire from you. Some challenges that your spouse faces simply need to be met with understanding. There are some circumstances where they might ask something specific of you, but simply offering to be of service is meaningful.

6. If Reasonable, Do It

When you ask your spouse if they desire something from you, if the request is reasonable, go ahead and follow through. Reasonable is what is important here. You cannot self-soothe your spouse or be able to accomplish the unreasonable in every situation.

Doing a reasonable thing, if needed, can also validate that you heard your spouse. Serving them in this way in a healthy relationship can be positive. In an unhealthy relationship, "You did me wrong, so here's your punishment," is not the heart of this tool of understanding each other.

7. Practice, Practice, Practice

If you do not practice this skill when your spouse desires to be understood, you will be unable to skillfully be there for them, and you will experience the same old results for years.
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