

Identifying Communication Road Blocks

I. Correct motivations are essential to growing in your communication skills.

PLEASE READ EACH VERSE AND BE SURE THIS IS THE DESIRE OF YOUR HEART.

- A. Are you willing to grow in your communication skills? Willingness is the key to any fundamental change in your life (Is. 1:19). Without a willing heart you will not be motivated to take any of the practical steps necessary to change your habits.
- B. Are you willing to please God? Your ultimate desire must be to please God. This motivation will cause you to take each of the biblical principles listed below (Romans 15:3) (Gal. 1:10) (1 Thess. 4:1).

Commit yourself in prayer by asking God to put these motivations in your heart.

II. Apply these biblical principles to your communication skills.

Read through the verses that follow each of the problems listed below. To enable you to better identify *your* problem areas rate yourself by marking to the side, O = Often, S = Sometimes, R = Rarely. (Husbands use the left side of the paper wives use the right).

Your attitudes

Your attitude is critical to being an effective communicator and is the basis for what you say and do. Without the correct attitude, your words will always come out wrong. You may be totally right in all that you say, but it's the *way* you say it that many times causes the wrong response from your spouse. Let's look at some of these attitudes.

- ◆ Do you have an arrogant or superior attitude when you speak to your mate (Prov. 14:3) (Prov. 8:13) (Prov. 25:15)?
- ◆ Does your tone of voice reveal a bitter and resentful attitude (Acts 8:23)?
- ◆ Do you have an indifferent attitude or do you make light of issues when your mate attempts to talk with you (Matt. 22:5)?
- ◆ Do you have an authoritarian attitude when making requests (Prov. 25:15)?
- ◆ Are you disrespectful or impolite when responding to your mate (Eph. 5:33) (1 Peter 3:7)?

Your words

Once you have examined your attitudes or *the way* you talk, next consider *what* you say. Your words either build up or tear down your mate.

- ◆ Do you cut and slash your mate verbally with harsh words (Prov. 15:1) (Ps. 52:2)?
- ◆ Do you use lying and deceitful words in an argument (Ps. 120:2) (Eph. 4:25)?
- ◆ Do hateful words come from your lips when you disagree (Ps. 109:3)?
- ◆ Do you use flattering words to get what you want (Prov. 2:16)?
- ◆ Do you swear and use filthy language when you get angry (Col. 3:8) (Eph. 4:29,31)?
- ◆ Do you exaggerate by using phrases such as, "you always" or "you never" when attempting to prove your point (Eph. 4:15) (Eph. 4:25)?
- ◆ Do you use condemning words to ridicule and silence your mate (Luke 6:37)?
- ◆ Do you use no words or silence to punish or manipulate your mate (Acts 7:57)?

Your actions

The specific actions taken while speaking with one another will either enhance or hinder your ability to effectively communicate. Consider these actions:

- ◆ Do you twist your mate's words to confuse your mate when you know that he or she has spoken truth and you simply don't want to admit it (Ps. 56:5)?
- ◆ Do you attack and belittle your spouse during a conflict (Prov. 12:18)?
- ◆ Do you refuse to communicate when conflicts arise (Matt. 5:25)?
- ◆ Do you interrupt or finish your mate's sentences (Prov. 18:13)?
- ◆ Do you repeat yourself over and over to force your opinions and your point of view (Matt. 6:7)?
- ◆ Do you dominate a conversation by the number of words you use to attempt to overpower your mate's point of view (Matt. 6:7)?
- ◆ Do you point out your mate's faults before you confess your own (Matt. 7:5)?
- ◆ Do you shift the blame to someone else or to other circumstances when your faults are revealed (Gen. 3:9-13)?
- ◆ Do you neglect to set time aside to communicate with your spouse (Song of Solomon 2:10-14)?
- ◆ Do you bring up your mate's past failures to win an argument (Phil. 3:13) (Heb. 8:12)?
- ◆ Do you explode in anger to manipulate and control the conversation (Prov. 16:32)?
- ◆ Do you refuse to listen because of the rage inside your heart (James 1:19-20)?
- ◆ Do you refuse to listen because of your stubborn pride (Acts 15:36-39)?
- ◆ Do you provoke your spouse to anger in order that you might have a reason to blame your mate due to their lack of self-control (Prov. 20:2)?

III. Steps to resolving your communication problems

1. In order of severity, list the problems that you struggle with in your communication.

(Refer to sections on your attitude, your words, and your actions to help identify specific areas)

Husband	Wife

2. Now ask your mate for his or her forgiveness for each of your faults and failures.

