

GUIDE TO EFFECTIVE & HEALTHY COMMUNICATION

Communicate your way to a sexy and intimate relationship

1. Make These Shifts in Your Attitude

- You are 100% responsible for problems in the relationship because you are a co-creator of the relationship environment.
- Going on automatic will catch up with you and you cannot afford to stay on automatic. It is crucial to be humble, flexible and creative.
- You probably need to work on your weakest link.
- How you perceive of your partner will affect how you treat him or her.
- How you treat him or her affects how he/she behaves; thereby, beware of your perceptions of your partner.
- It is not good to perceive your partner just based on history. Practice perceiving her the way you want him/her to be.

2. Effective & Healthy Communication Takes Practice



Just like working out develops our physical muscles, learning to resolve conflict involves developing our emotional muscles.

It is easier not to listen and not to communicate effectively than to be creative and constructive in your interactions.

Yet, like physical exercise, working out your emotional muscles can provide many long term benefits in your work and .life

3. How to be an Effective Communication Receiver

- **Be careful to not attribute negative motives to the other's sometimes seemingly irritating or hurtful statements or behavior.**

The worst scenario probably is that he/she is not very good at expressing or asserting herself. Your partner's intent is probably more self-protective than intentionally malicious.

- **It is easy to get defensive or reactive when feeling attacked or criticized.**

Instead, get curious about what the “attacker” is feeling or wanting underneath her self-protective and ineffective expression. Just decide that healthy communication will start with you.

- **Remember that true power is not “winning the argument;” it stems from non-reactivity and behaving in a way that gets you the results that you want.**

When you are not falling into the unhealthy patterns of reactivity, it actually makes it easier for the other person to see her own unhealthy behavior.

- **Be willing to see and accept your own weaknesses that the other person may see.**

It is very disarming to look for the truth in what the other person is saying even if it is only partially true. I will give examples of disarming in this class.

4. How to be an Effective Communicator

- **Communication 101- Use “I” statements; “I feel frustrated...,” not “you are a ...”**

There is less chance of the other reacting when you talk about your experience rather than describe the negative characteristics of the other person.

- **Use relaxation techniques before you speak.**

Especially when regarding an emotionally charged issue, use healthy breathing to help you relax. The key is to speak in a way that makes it easier for the other to listen.

- **Practice perceiving the other person as a willing listener**

Even when there is no history to back that up! How you perceive that person will affect your verbal and especially nonverbal communication style. (i.e.-tone, facial expressions)

- **Be willing to agree to disagree**

Every time you assert yourself, let the other person know that her perception is not wrong. (Agree to disagree).

- **Be open to or initiate a compromise**

After both people are heard and understood, initiate compromise if possible. Find ways to “honor” both people’s needs and wishes

NEVER GO AFTER THE TRUTH! INSTEAD...GO AFTER CONNECTION!

-Todd Creager

5. Healthy Communication Exercises

- **Feel your feelings and do nothing but breathe through them.**
The purpose of this is to develop tolerance for uncomfortable feelings.
- **Ask yourself what feelings you suppress.**
Look for hurt, fear, shame and anger.
- **Be aware of your inner critic**
When you see or feel it, practice self acceptance, and self-soothing.
- **Ask your partner for negative feelings she has towards you.**
Just receive them. Be like a journalist and come from curiosity as opposed to defensiveness.