

COUPLE COMMUNICATION®

Do You Have Communication Gaps?

Step 1. Mark each item twice: first with an "X" to represent your partner's *typical* communication; second with an "O" (circle) to represent the behavior you *wish for*. The difference between *typical* and *wish for* is a communication gap.

When you are with your partner, how often does he or she:

	Seldom	Often	Gap
1. Speak for you, put words into your mouth?	1 2 3 4 5 6	_____	
2. Share feelings?	1 2 3 4 5 6	_____	
3. Interrupt you to take over the conversation?	1 2 3 4 5 6	_____	
4. Acknowledge your concerns?	1 2 3 4 5 6	_____	
5. Avoid issues?	1 2 3 4 5 6	_____	
6. Force decisions on you?	1 2 3 4 5 6	_____	
7. Understand your point of view?	1 2 3 4 5 6	_____	
8. Join in resolving issues together?	1 2 3 4 5 6	_____	
9. Discuss, but leave issues unresolved?	1 2 3 4 5 6	_____	
10. Carry on pleasant, fun conversation?	1 2 3 4 5 6	_____	
11. Argue and fight?	1 2 3 4 5 6	_____	
12. Send clear, straightforward messages?	1 2 3 4 5 6	_____	

Total Gap Score _____

Step 2. Sum the communication gaps for a Total Gap Score.

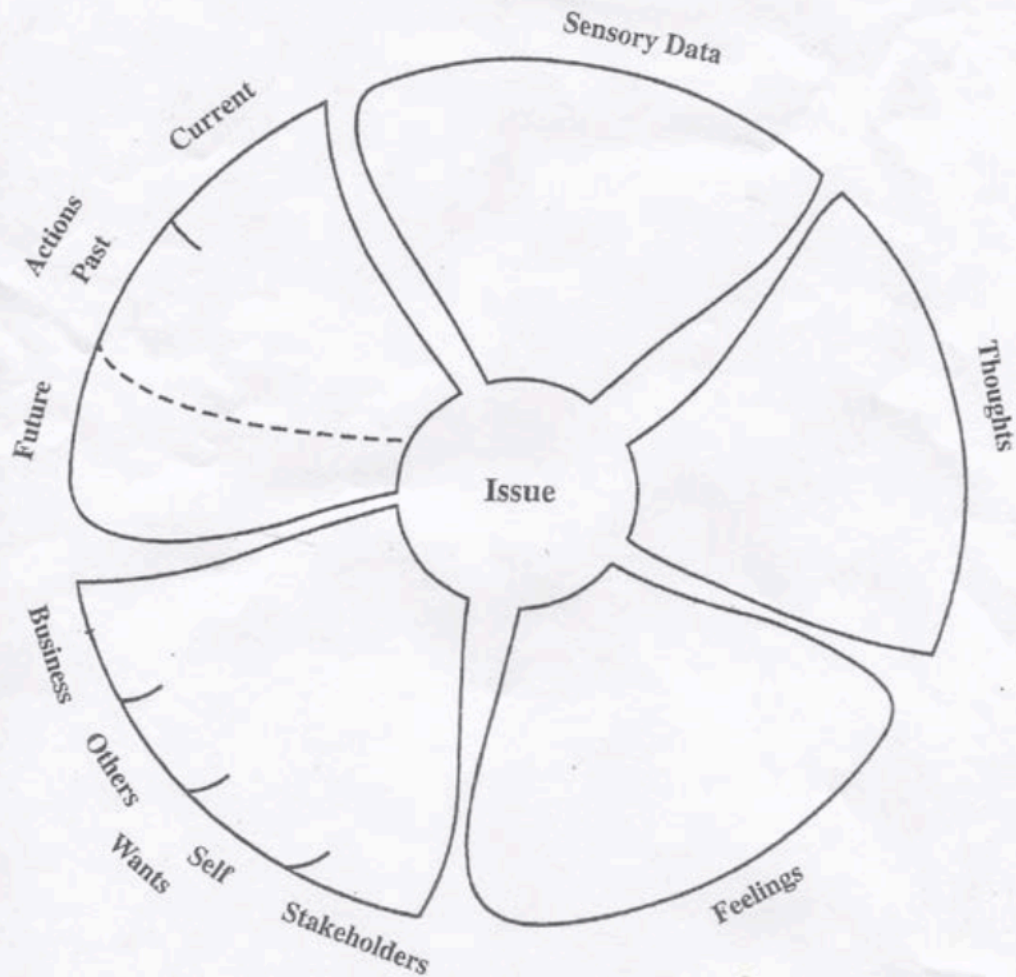
Step 3. Compare your Total Gap Scores with your partner's. The lower each person's Total Gap Score is below 20, the more satisfying and better communication is together. The higher a score is above 20, the less satisfying and more problematic communication is (for that person).

To Close The Gaps

If you and your partner would like to communicate better, ask for a brochure on the COUPLE COMMUNICATION® program. Contact:

LEE E. MCHATTON, M.S.

INFORMATION WHEEL®



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ADVICE FOR MARRIAGE

1. Always listen to each other. When you are wrong, say you are sorry; when you are right, shut up.
2. Don't tie the knot in a half-hitch; plan to stay married forever.
3. Never go to bed angry; talk until you get over it or get so tired you forget why you were mad.
4. Laugh together. If you can laugh at yourself it won't be hard.
5. Never embarrass or criticize or correct one another in public; and try not to do it in private either.
6. Remember that we're all the least loveable when we need love the most.
7. Beware, both in marriage and life, of the myth of perfectionism; it exists only as a lie.
8. On the days when you don't like each other, remember that you love each other; pray for the "good days" to come again and they will.
9. Tell the truth, only the truth, and always with great kindness.
10. Kiss for at least 10 seconds, everyday without fail; do it all at once or spread it out.
11. Examine your relationship at intervals; feel it, question it, know its vulnerabilities; keep it moving in the direction you both want.
12. Be content with what you have materially, honest about where you are emotionally, and never stop growing spiritually.
13. Remember that to love someone is to wish them the best; always wish each other the best.
14. Never yell unless the house is on fire; whisper when you argue.
15. Be friends, as well as lovers; in a blackout, share the flashlight; then make electricity together.
16. Always save your best for each other!

Source: Sharon Randall, Scripps Howard News Service

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BEING ON THE SAME TEAM

- **Pick up your mate.** Decide that you want to see your spouse succeed.
- **Make a plan** If you aim at nothing you hit it every time.
Identify ways to build healthy actions and steps to success.
- **Try to understand before you try to be understood** (Steven Covey)
- **Choose to enjoy/ to like what your spouse likes.**
 - Gary Smalley and John Trent -- **Love is a Decision**
 - Frank Minrith and Paul Meier—**Happiness is a Choice**
- **Let your spouse know what you need or want.** Sometimes we don't get because we don't ask.
- **Find creative ways to have both mates get what they want.** Cooperate, negotiate and find Win- Wins.
- **Pray together** regarding life choices and decisions and especially when dealing with conflict
- **Commit to being on the same side-same team.** Make a joint commitment that you will be of one mind and will work as a team to help each other succeed

SIX RULES FOR A FAIR FIGHT

Remember that the purpose of a fight is to enhance your relationship not to do damage.

WARM UP

Get in the right frame of mind. Pray for wisdom. Ask yourself : What is the will of the Lord? Organize your concerns: Why am I so upset? Is this the real issue?

Show respect

God is more concerned with whether you fight fair than whether you are right. The process is more important than the result.

Stick to one issue

Dealing with too many issues at one time creates confusion and distraction, making it more difficult to resolve a problem.

Focus on the present—don't keep a scorecard

It's unfair to confront our spouse with something that happened last month or even last week. It puts your mate at a disadvantage because he or she may have already forgotten the incident.

No Brush offs—don't hit below the belt

You know just how to push your mate's buttons. Choose to respect boundaries.

Don't interrupt

Try to use the three minute rule. Your spouse gets up to three minutes to express their perspective while you listen. (Use Covey's habit no. 5.) "Try to understand before you try to be understood". Attempt to paraphrase what you have heard. Then trade roles.

Seek to find a way to get on the same side.

If you are on the same team---same side there is a true resolution.

FIVE THINGS TO NEVER SAY TO YOUR SPOUSE.

"We can't afford it?-

What your spouse HEARS:

I don't care about the things that are important to you

"You think your day was bad"

What your spouse HEARS:

Enough about you, let's talk about me.

You're overreacting

What your spouse HEARS

Your feelings aren't important to me.

"Why can't you be more like so and so's spouse?"

What your spouse HEARS

My friend's spouse is better than you.

"I'm sorry but..."

What your spouse HEARS

I'm not really sorry

BIBLICAL METHODS OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

SOURCE: *BEYOND SEX ROLES* by Gilbert Bilezikian.
Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, pp. 212-214

1. Defer to each other; give the other person the advantage. Strive to please the other. Phil. 2: 3-4; Eph. 5: 21; Gal. 5: 13.
2. Divide responsibilities for decision making based on competence, experience, and spiritual gifting. Rom. 12: 3-6; 1 Cor. 12: 4-7.
3. Compromise. Seeking a middle ground is a biblically sound procedure. Luke 14: 31-32; Acts 6: 1-6; Acts 15.
4. Define the biblical principles involved in the debate.
5. Pray together for God's guidance, and wait for it.
6. Allow God to guide through circumstances. History has a way of reducing alternative options to one obvious course of action that a knock-down-drag-out contest of the wills cannot bring about.
7. If one person is affected more by the outcome of the decision, that person should have more to say about it.
8. Jointly research the debated issue with books, conferences, courses. Eph. 5:17; James 1: 5-6.
9. Defer the matter to a mutually trusted third party. 1 Cor. 6:5.
10. Engage in parts reversal. Assume the position of the other in order to identify with his or her thinking process.

Beyond Sex Roles is available for \$12.99 plus \$3.50 shipping and handling

from

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Style

HEALTH

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Monday, July 11, 2005

Toward a more perfect union

Counselor offers pointers for couples

By MARY NUGENT
Staff Writer

What makes the difference is outlook. "The ones who succeed are the ones with the attitude, 'I'm here and I'll do what it takes,'" said a Chicoan who teaches communication skills to couples and businesses.

With a master of science degree in counseling psychology, Lee McHatton is a certified communication instructor through a company based in Littleton, Colo. Since he was trained in Monterey five years ago, he estimates he has worked with more than 2,500 people in Chico.

His next session, free and open to couples, will be Aug. 28 at Neighborhood Church, 2801 Notre Dame Blvd., Chico.

"Sometimes people just hope they can communicate better, but a hopeless situation makes that difficult. Hope is a big thing, there is no price tag on that. If they invest their part in this, they will be exposed to a skill set to be effective in communicating."

"It's like a basketball clinic: You can't make a basket at first, but you know how to hold the ball and shoot it."

His workshop will convey efficient, straightforward steps, he said, and success will happen when participants follow through.

Besides his education and training, McHatton believes in marriage — in his own marriage with Sarah McHatton, and in the philosophy behind a committed union.

Sara McHatton helps out at his classes. The couple have two young children and she is a wedding planner.

People come to McHatton because they have relationship or parenting problems, or because they have troubles at work. They all have something in common: A desire to learn to communicate effectively.

McHatton has seen success repeatedly. He said the No. 1 ingredient for success is desire. "I've seen it with couples and businesses," he said. "People increase the



Jason Halley/Enterprise-Record

Lee McHatton, foreground, presents programs on relationships, including parents and children. He posed for a photo at Caper Acres in Bidwell Park Wednesday as James and Michelle Clinton were watching their son Matthew, 2½, play on the slide.

Tips for talking to your children

- Listen to them.
- Don't discipline when you're angry.
- Include them in the process of deciding on consequences.
- Apologize when you make mistakes as a parent.
- Demonstrate love to them in all situations.

skill level of communication and they learn to listen and talk better."

His literature outlines what people will learn with him. Couples explore how to create faster, better resolutions to conflict, expand understanding of self and partner and reduce tension and disagreements, among other things.

People having problems in their work environment discover how to increase personal power and influence, reduce tension and stress, and acquire greater skill in negotiating change.

Couples typically disagree about how to spend money and time, said McHatton, and they also disagree about how to raise children.

Parents often get trapped in a power struggle when issues arise about their children. "I studied to be a school psychologist, and I understand people learn in different modalities — visual, auditory — but they are all in the learning process."

In his private practice, McHatton counsels children ages 4-18. "I like kids. They are so honest."

McHatton has seen that some things tend to be universally true. "Females are more receptive to the therapeutic process," he said, but added it's individual. He also remembers a husband who wanted to change.

"He said she was not a good communicator. But after some time with me, he realized he was not a good listener. And this is not about blame and shame."

McHatton also said when people who attend the class volunteer

The power of two

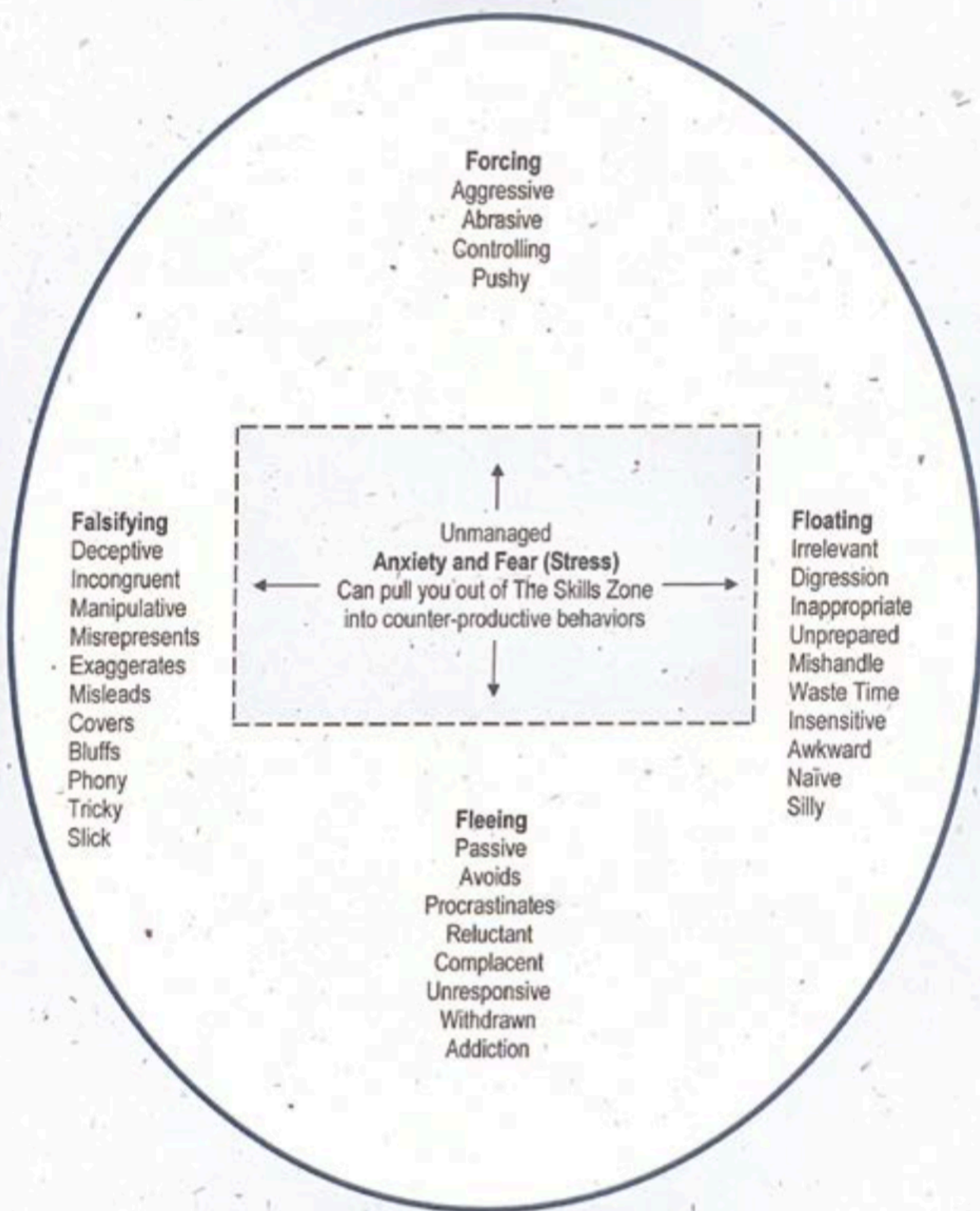
Lee McHatton's free session for couples to improve communication skills will be 9-10:30 a.m. Aug. 28 at Neighborhood Church of Chico, 2801 Notre Dame Blvd. It's free, but reserve a space by calling 879-8985, extension 2144.

to role-play, it reveals a desire to learn. "It's anxiety-provoking to volunteer but they learn more by doing it," he said.

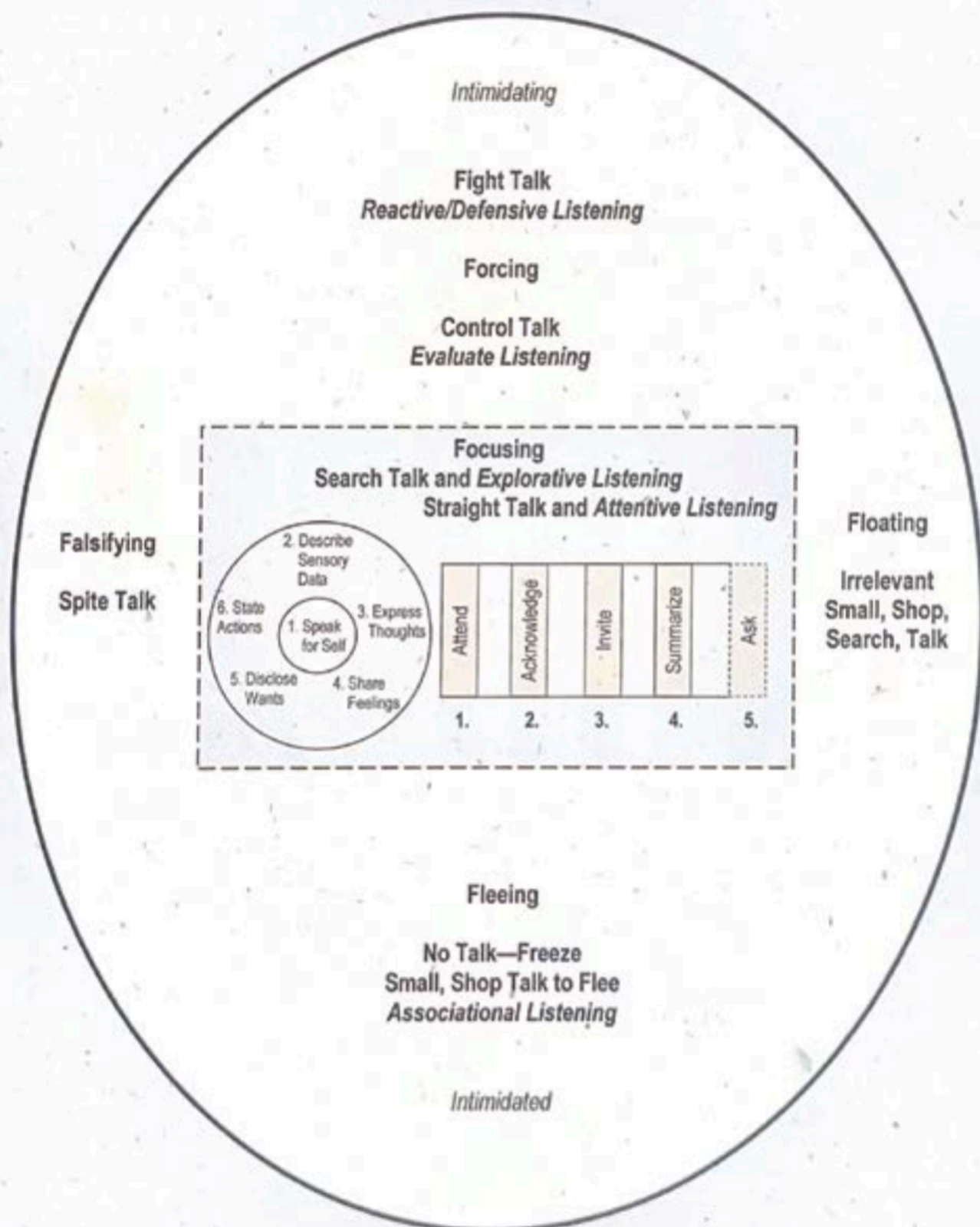
An example of a business that got some relief was an auto repair shop, which two brothers ran. "They could not get along and had the entire place polarized. The employees were in two separate camps. We discussed options and the younger one realized he really didn't want to be in the business anymore. He sold his half to his brother and they were, literally,

See COUPLE, 2B

OUT OF THE 'SKILLS ZONE' BEHAVIORS



STYLES AND ZONES OF COMMUNICATION



3. Hatred
2. Bitterness
1. Resentment

↑ *Unresolved Anger Turns Into:* ↑

ANGER

↑ *The 3 Emotions That Evoke Anger:* ↑

1. Frustration
2. Hurt
3. Fear

UNLOCK YOUR COMMUNICATION



"NO" Words that Halt Communication

Always
Never
You
Should
Blame, Fault
Problem
You need to
You have to
Chill Out
Control
Don't
Perfectionism
I don't understand why
Why don't you
No (with a tone of inflexibility,
no negotiating)
You're wrong
WHY?
You make me feel
You're right

Replacement "YES" Words

Often, Majority of the time, Usually
Rarely, Seldom, Not very often
I
Could
Responsibility
Issue
I'd like you to
I want you to
Contract another time
Manage
I'd rather, I'd prefer, Instead of
Excellence
I'm confused, Help me understand
I'm curious
I can consider that,
I'll think about it
I disagree
What, Where, When, How
I feel
I agree with a portion of that

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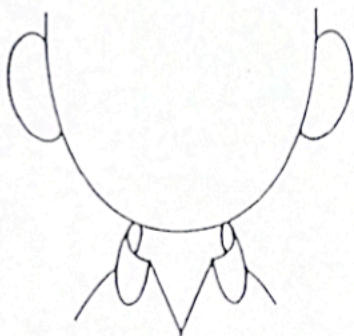
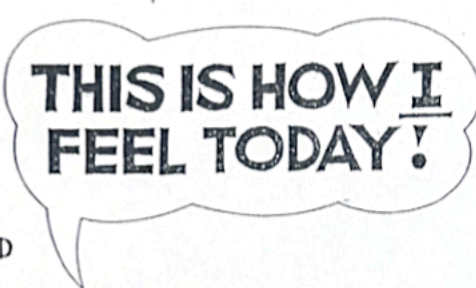
Emotional Pain Words

Using a scale of 0 to 10 (0 being no pain, 10 being the highest pain) indicate the level of emotional pain that you have experienced. Write your answer in front of each descriptive word/phrase.

Abandoned	Detested	Insignificant	Stepped on
Accused	Devalued	Invalidated	Shattered
Afraid	Didn't belong	Isolated	Stressed
All my fault	Didn't measure up	Knocked down	Stupid
Alone	Dirty	Judged	Suicidal
Always wrong	Disappointed	Left out	Taken advantage of
Angry	Discarded	Lied to	Terrified
Annihilated	Discounted	Lonely	Threatened
Anxious	Discouraged	Lost	Torn apart
Apathetic	Disgraced	Made fun of	Trapped
Ashamed	Dishonored	Manipulated	Trashed
Avoided	Disregarded	Mistreated	Tricked
Awkward	Disrespected	Misunderstood	Ugly
Babied	Dominated	Mocked	Unable to speak
Bad	Embarrassed	Molested	Unaccepted
Belittled	Empty	Neglected	Uncaring
Betrayed	Excluded	No good	Uncared for
Bewildered	Exhausted	No support	Unchosen
Bitter	Exploited	No way out	Unclean
Blamed	Exposed	Not being affirmed	Undesirable
Can't do anything right	Failure	Not cared for	Unfairly judged
Can't trust anyone	Fear, fearful	Not cherished	Unfairly treated
Cheap	Foolish	Not deserving to live	Unfit
Cheated	Forced	Not listened to	Unimportant
Coerced	Forsaken	Not measure up	Unheard
Condemned	Friendless	Not valued	Unloved
Confused	Frightened	Opinions not valued	Unlovable
Conspired against	Frustrated	Overwhelmed	Unnecessary
Controlled	Good for nothing	Paralyzed Powerless	Unneeded
Cornered	Guilty	Pressured	Unnoticed
Crushed	Hated	Pressure to perform	Unprotected
Cursed	Hate myself	Publicly shamed	Unresponsive
Cut off	Helpless	Put down	Unsafe
Deceived	Hopeless	Rejected	Unwanted
Defeated	Humiliated	Repulsed	Useless
Defenseless	Hurt	Resentful	Valueless
Defrauded	Hysterical	Revenge	Violated
Degraded	Ignored	Ridiculed	Vulnerable
Depressed	Impure	Ruined	Walked on
Deprived	Inadequate	Sad	Wasted
Deserted	Incompetent	Scared	Weak
Desires rejected	Indecent	Secluded	Worthless
Despair	Inferior	Self disgust	Wounded
Despised	Inhibited	Separated	
Despondent	Insecure	Shamed	
Destroyed	Insensitive to my needs	Silenced	

Vocabulary of Feeling Words

	<u>Slight</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Strong</u>	<u>Extreme</u>
Sadness	Disappointed Wistful Regretful	Dejected Despondent Lonely	Sorrowful Mournful Heart-broken	Desolated Anguished Forlorn
Fear	Uneasy Worried Apprehensive Nervous	Anxious Frightened Scared Alarmed	Dread Panic Aghast	Terror
Desire	Wishful Nostalgic	Yearning Wanting Longing	Craving Coveting Needy	Greedy Insatiable Possessive
Aversion	Dislike Disrespect	Repugnance Disdain	Contempt Disgust	Abhorrence Loathing
Anger	Frustrated Annoyed Irritated Irrked	Resentful Indignant Exasperated	Bitter Wrathful Rancorous	Enraged Furious
Guilt	Regretful Sheepish	Repentant Contrite Sorry	Remorseful Reprehensible	Self-hatred Self-flagellation
Shame	Embarrassed Abashed	Unworthy Chagrined	Ashamed Disgraced	Humiliated Mortified
Happy	Content	Cheerful Pleased	Joyful Ecstatic	Blissful Exuberant
Valuable	Competent	Worthy	Admirable	Loveable
Loving	Considerate	Affectionate	Devoted	In love
Energetic	Animated	Lively	Dynamic	Electric



BUILD YOUR MARRIAGE

By Carri Taylor

For me, the picture says it all. This is a visual metaphor for the difference between a Wedding and a Marriage. In the photo, first you see the front of the house tastefully done — exterior details completed and landscaped. Then behind the finished facade, you view the remainder of the house, still under construction. The beautiful front represents the Wedding. The rest being built signifies the Marriage.

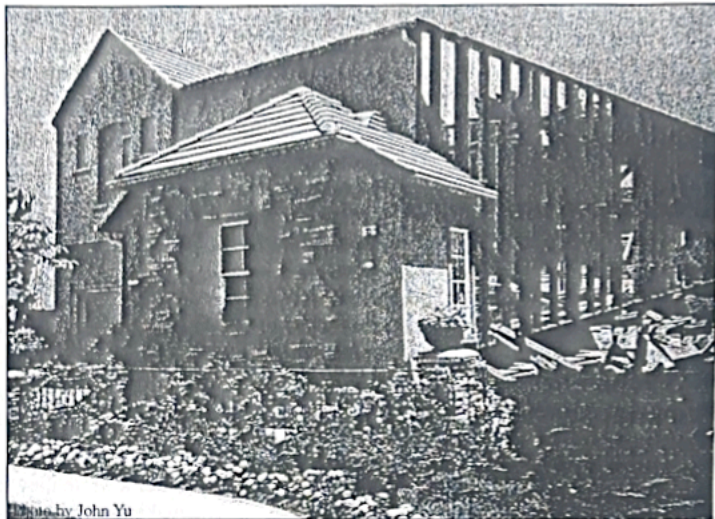


Photo by John Yu

Paul notes, however, that couples give little attention to planning for the marriage itself, and she says,

and so on. The homeowners-to-be determine if they have the resources to pull this off.

In building a house, if a couple can gather the resources, and the plans are agreed upon, they hire skilled people to carry out the construction process. Even if one or both of the partners have some of the skills to do the building themselves

I have often thought; what would happen if a couple spent as much time, money, and energy planning for and investing in their Marriage, as they do on their Wedding?

"The most common time for a marriage to end in divorce is in the first five years. And of those early divorces, about one-quarter end within two years."

In her book *The Starter Marriage and the Future of Matrimony*, Pamela Paul, an editor at American Demographics, says: "Weddings have morphed into massive extravaganzas, costing from \$20,000 on up. . . Couples devote 1 1/2 years to planning the wedding. They often choose a wedding planner. . . A recent issue of *Bride's* magazine was the largest consumer magazine ever. It weighed in at 4.9 pounds."

Think about how it goes if you build a new home. First comes the dream. The ideas of what this will look like start in the mind, move into a discussion, and finally get translated to paper. Since a house is very tangible and takes specific skills to bring it into existence, many people hire professionals — an architect and a builder. Then the plans get discussed, re-discussed and finalized. This is a valuable process to find out how realistic the ideas and desires for the house are. Also, the realities surface regarding time, materials, costs,

(the do-it-yourselfers), they will more than likely depend on other specialists to come alongside. In building a couple relationship, similar principles apply.

Whether for a house or a marriage, Murphy's law states (my translation) that plans will get changed and rearranged to accommodate new realities not foreseen ahead of time. Issues arise of differences in temperament (flexibility vs. rigidity, for example), of disappointments that can easily lead to disagreements or arguments (showing patterns of handling conflicts), and of abilities (or lack) to collaborate and proceed (get to a win-win resolution). These bring to light a few of the construction skills needed to build the Marriage.

I haven't met many people who would move into a house before it is completed and able to protect the people or possessions who will inhabit the structure. In fact, the law requires permits, licenses, and inspections along the way — for our own protection.

What about Marriage? A relationship is not tangible like a house, yet it is a psychological, emotional and spiritual structure that people enter, anticipating it to be a safe haven to protect them. Most couples do not spend much time preparing for and designing their relationship before the Wedding. Nor do they put many resources into "relationship professionals" ahead of the event. But, after they have gone flying into it without proper preparation, they can face enormous costs when their faulty Marriage structure fails to protect them. They expect it to do things for them that they have not bothered exploring, outlining, or discussing.

Focus on the Front

What if, for a new house, a couple spent all their time, money and energy on the front of it — on the walkway, the landscaping, the front entrance, front windows, and siding or paint? That's how it is for the Wedding. Upon arriving, all the guests are in awe of the beauty, the music, and they are caught up in the promise that the lovely facade holds. As the couple enters the front yard . . . proceeds on the walkway through the grandeur of the lush landscaping approaches the stately double door entry . . . then passes through the front door of the Wedding to enter the Marriage, the assumption

and hope are that the Marriage will be as grand as the Wedding.

Once the couple walks through that front door into the Marriage, sooner or later they discover that what they have built to this point seems more like a Hollywood set for a home — beautiful on approach but underneath only lean-tos are holding it up — than it does a real home. Things look great for the camera at the Wedding, but they are inadequate to support the Marriage. The plans work for the dialogue while shooting the scene, but they do not fit when the couple leaves the set (the Wedding).

Who realized how much would be needed to put this Marriage together? The dream resides inside each of the partner's heads, but without the required preparation, the relationship has a good chance of disintegrating, according to divorce statistics. Taking time to look at the foundational issues (that will hold up the Marriage) and the various rooms (idiosyncrasies of each partner) is important at the start.

Unpack Your Bags

Now what? Out come the bags the couple brought with them. As the unpacking begins, here comes the "stuff" they brought. This includes the belongings they thought they left behind — the "red-flagged items" that were overlooked (not wanting to see reality clearly because it might spoil the dream), or rationalized (he or she will change later), or denied (saw it, but gave it a different spin). The unpacking also includes articles they swore they would never bring with them — the modeling of their

parents. They even remember telling themselves they would never be like their parents.

Not all the bags hold negative contents. Both partners may be unpacking some very good materials with which to build this new home. But those items seem to get lost as the rest of the stuff becomes the focus and starts taking more space.

As the couple unpacks, they do not find the needed tools (communication and conflict resolution skills), or they become aware of how inadequate their tools are. How can people who love each other have so many misunderstandings? How do they fix their disagreements? Since these tools are the only ones they possess at the time, necessity forces their use as they continue construction on the house.

After a while they realize they are making a mess rather than building the home of their dreams. Then the blame-game begins. It is so easy to see the other person's negative baggage and inadequate tools, but not their own.

Wounds are inflicted — hopefully not at a physical level, but at an emotional and psychological level, for sure. The lovers begin the process of becoming enemies. This home not only doesn't protect them from the elements, it isn't even a safe place to be with each other.

Some Leave

For some couples, one or both may decide to leave. The discouragement and despair can be overwhelming and the mess too large to want to live in, live through, and

clean up. Pain surrounds them and things seemed better before the Marriage took place. Many walk and blame, leaving the unfinished place for others to live in and clean up. If children are involved by now, the broken pieces will become part of the baggage the couple passes on to them to carry through life.

Many in the blame mode believe that life with another person will make the difference. This may be true as long as they do not bring the same person — themselves (their previous beliefs and attitudes) — to the new relationship. In simple terms, changing partners will not solve the problem. The new partner may have different ideas and different tools (skills), but is that person any better at building a house (Marriage)? Have both learned to use relationship tools (skills)? Changing themselves makes the difference. Taking responsibility for one's own part of the adventure is essential.

Keeping Up the Front

For others, this may be the time they decide (not necessarily consciously) to live in the mess and keep it under cover the best they can — unwilling to admit their short-sightedness and failures — too embarrassed to ask for help. All energy continues to be spent on the front yard and facade of the home; keeping it well groomed and painted so it looks well maintained. The amazing thing about this choice is: even though the couple believes that their front has hidden the rest of the house behind them, most people see through it pretty clearly, like the picture at the beginning.

Another Way

At any point, a couple can stop, take stock, and determine to get the tools to build or re-model what they have put together thus far. For couples who have not yet reached the front door (the Wedding), they have a great chance of doing a superb job, if they get the right help from a relationship professional before they enter.

Others, already through the door, decide to remodel and rebuild, hopefully correctly this time. This is definitely a fine way to proceed, but danger can lie ahead with this choice without good help from architectural and building specialists. As in any remodel, one correction can lead to another and another and another. As the issues are uncovered, the dry rot, termites, lack of insulation, roof leaks, plumbing failures, and so on, begin to surface. The unspoken or even spoken agenda may be to point out how the other has done it wrong. The realization that this is going to be longer, harder, and more expensive can increase the discouragement level.

What is needed? It takes personal responsibility instead of blame, acknowledgment that they made the mess together, willingness to invest the time, energy and finances necessary to accomplish the goal. What goal? What kind of a house (Marriage) does the couple want to live in anyway? Has a realistic design for this Marriage ever been discussed? What resources do they bring? What tools do they require to do it right? *Who would be the one to help?*

If the couple determines to work together designing or redesigning

their relationship, they will have to identify the cost and determine their priorities. I would venture to say that in most cases, if they are willing to invest as much money, time and energy on their Marriage as they do (or did) on their Wedding, there will be hope. It may not even take as much. But, for the Marriage to move forward and the relationship to receive nourishment, both partners must commit to the process.

COUPLE COMMUNICATION

How do they begin? One place to start is to find a Certified COUPLE COMMUNICATION Instructor. This is someone who is trained in teaching couples how to use tools — communication and conflict resolution skills — which apply to building, maintaining, and repairing the relationship. The instructor works with couples who anticipate Marriage or who already are Married and contracts with them for building their relationship.

Many COUPLE COMMUNICATION Instructors also use instruments to help the partners discover the areas of strength, which are resources, and the places that need attention in the relationship. Administering and interpreting a relationship assessment, such as the PREPARE (before Marriage) or ENRICH (after Marriage) Inventory can be very valuable to a couple. Another option for couples prior to Marriage is to use the RELATE instrument.

These assessments help the partners see who they are and the contexts from which they each have come that will impact the home they are planning together. The couple learns the strengths and the

growth areas (places that may take special building tools) of their relationship.

However, if a couple only discovers the items in their bags and the kind of house they desire (from an assessment and discussion of it) without investing in the new tools (communication and conflict resolution skills), their front door may become a revolving door. The ideal approach is to gain tools to build the house that fits their particular situation.

Goals

What can happen when a couple finds a Certified COUPLE COMMUNICATION Instructor? For the couples who work with me, the following items represent the goals:

1. They each take a good look at the items they brought themselves — negative and positive.
2. They each develop an understanding of themselves as individuals in a new way.
3. They each begin understanding and appreciating the other in a new way.
4. They each learn communication skills that enable them to deliver themselves to one another in clearer and more loving ways.
5. They also learn communication skills to hear one another in a new manner.
6. They learn together how to clean up messes as they come up (resolve conflicts in a collaborative manner) so they can live "clear." What does that mean? The answer is that when any static or irritation occurs, they know how to develop an action plan to tune in to one another and move forward proactively.

The relational spills get cleaned up before dry rot sets in.

7. They design a maintenance plan — a whole new way to live together — a Marriage lifestyle that keeps the relationship fresh.

Other Certified COUPLE

COMMUNICATION Instructors may begin with the second point above, unless they offer a relationship assessment instrument. Each of them, however, helps the couple gain the tools to make a well-constructed home. This is a place in which a couple will enjoy living.

In my experience, as a couple commits to learning how to use new tools and build or remodel their Marriage, new results begin coming in quite quickly. Satisfaction in the relationship develops, and the partners find that the house they construct together is the home where they want to be.

Quotes from:

The Starter Marriage and the Future of Matrimony, by Pamela Paul, Villard Books Division of Random House, New York 2002

Author of "Build Your

Marriage," Carri Taylor, says:

On a personal note: I am married to a man who is very different from me in many ways. We could easily drive each other nuts and on a few occasions we have done just that. The elements that I believe make our Marriage a "nice place to live in" are: honor and respect for one another, appreciation for our differences, a desire to communicate clearly, listen intently, and stay "clear." My husband is not perfect, nor am I. Yet I do believe he is perfect for me as I am for him. We bring to each

other's lives the elements that challenge us to grow and expand ourselves. My hope for you is that you will tackle building or remodeling your Marriage so your relationship will be a "safe home."

Carri Taylor and her husband, Gordon, are each Certified COUPLE COMMUNICATION and PREPARE/ENRICH instructors working in Los Angeles and Orange County, California. To find them or another instructor, visit:

www.couplecommunication.com and then go to "Instructors Near You." Once there, click on your state. Or call 800-328-5099 and ask for a brochure and referral to an instructor in your area.

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Scripture Verses for

Couple Communication I



Sherod Miller • Phyllis Miller
Elam W. Nunnally • Daniel B. Wackman

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Chapter 1: Choosing Styles of Communication

Consider the following scriptures as they relate to styles of communication — particularly in reference to the way you talk to your partner:

The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life, but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit. *Proverbs 15:4*

A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver. *Proverbs 25:11*

Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones. *Proverbs 16:24*

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouth, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs that it may benefit those who listen. *Ephesians 4:29*

Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech. *1 Peter 3:9 and 10*

Drive out the mocker, and out goes strife; quarrels and insults are ended. *Proverbs 22:10*

Words from a wise man's mouth are gracious, but a fool is consumed by his own lips. *Ecclesiastes 10:12*

A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. *Proverbs 15:1*

Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone. *Colossians 4:6*

But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned. *Matthew 12: 36-37*

Chapter 2: Considering Issues

When concerns arise in your life, consider these words of scripture:

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." *Jeremiah 29:11*

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. *Matthew 11: 28-30*

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. *Philippians 4:6-7*

"Because he loves me," says the Lord, I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him." *Psalms 91:14-15*

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. *Galatians 6:2*

If the ax is dull and its edge unsharpened, more strength is needed but skill will bring success.

Ecclesiastes 10:10

Chapter 3: Using Your Awareness Wheel

Scripture speaks of what is inside of you — the awareness you can gain of yourself. Plus, it gives guidance on the way you talk. Consider what it says in the verses below:

The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart. *1 Samuel 16:7b*

The Lord searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts. *1 Chronicles 28:9b*

Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. *Psalms 51:6 and 51:10*

Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue lasts only a moment. *Proverbs 12:19*

Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will. *Romans 12: 2b*

Test me, O Lord, and try me, examine my heart and my mind. *Psalms 26:2*

Speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. *Ephesians 4:15*

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. *1 Corinthians 13:1*

A man finds joy in giving an apt reply — and how good is a timely word! *Proverbs 15:23*

The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in men who are truthful. *Proverbs 12:22*

Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully . . . for we are all members of one body. *Ephesians 4:25*

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer. *Psalms 19:14*

Chapter 4: Applying the Listening Skills

Consider how the scriptures, and especially those from Proverbs, refer to listening and gaining understanding:

Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry. *James 1:9b*

He who answers before listening — that is his folly and his shame. The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge; the ears of the wise seek it out. *Proverbs 18:13 and 18:15*

The purposes of a man's heart are deep waters, but a man of understanding draws them out. *Proverbs 20:5*

How much better to get wisdom than gold, to choose understanding rather than silver. *Proverbs 16:16*

He who listens to a life-giving rebuke will be at home among the wise. *Proverbs 15:31*

The way of a fool seems right to him, but a wise man listens to advice. *Proverbs 12:15*

He who cherishes understanding prospers. Listen to advice and accept instruction, and in the end you will be wise. *Proverbs 19:8b and 19:20*

Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding. *Proverbs 3:13*

Chapter 5: Mapping Issues

Consider what the scriptures say for times of serious discussions and decision-making together:

Those who plan what is good find love and faithfulness. *Proverbs 14:22b*

If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. *James 1:5*

From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. *Ephesians 4:16*

And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ.

Philippians 1:9-10

So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing. *1 Thessalonians 5:11*

Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. *Philippians 2:4*

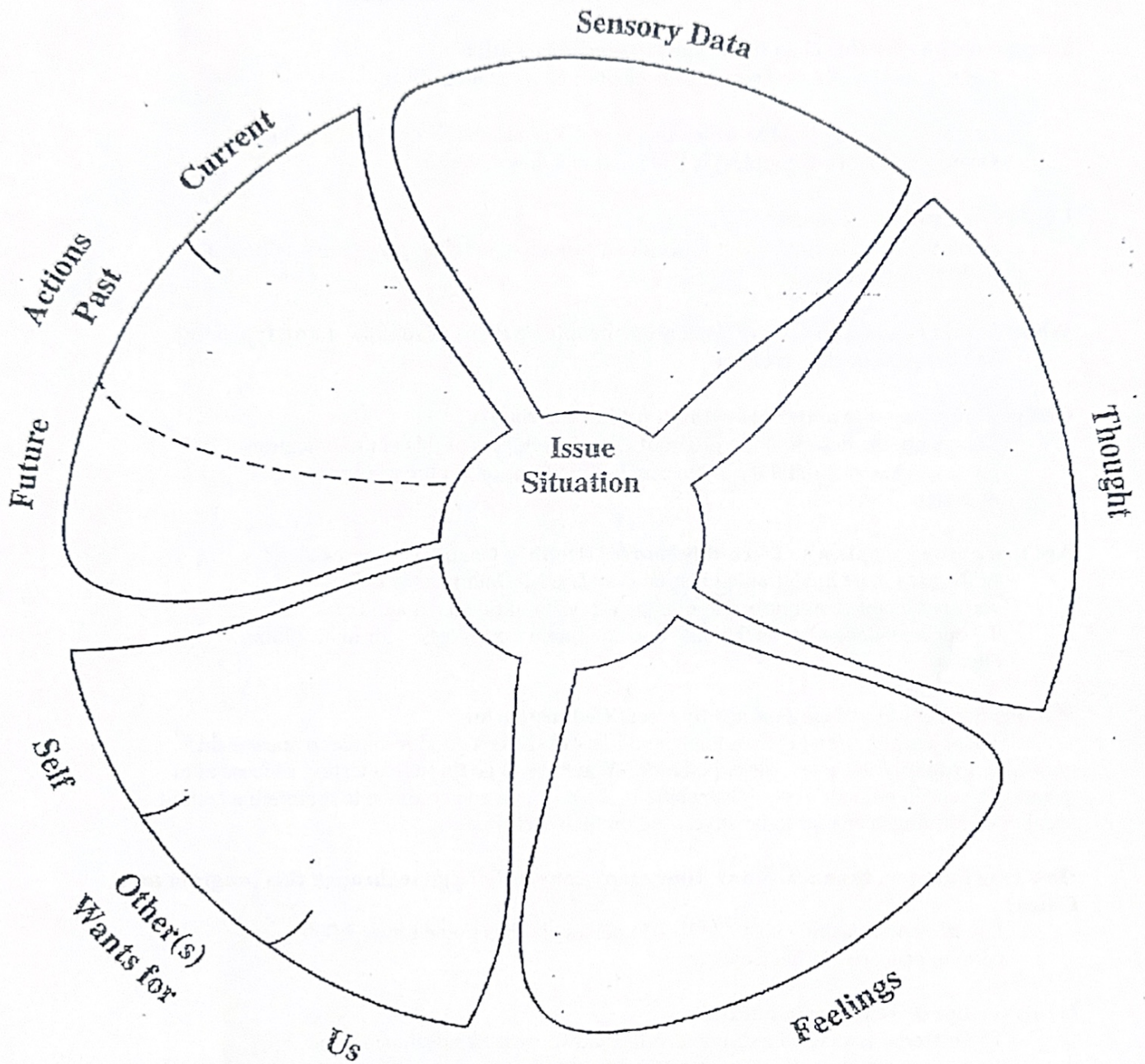
Let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. *1 John 3:18*

I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them. *Matthew 19:20*

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. *Colossians 3:15 and 17*

May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us; establish the work of our hands for us — yes, establish the work of our hands. *Psalms 90:17*

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