



# Communication

Communication is crucial to healthy relationships. At times communicating may seem easy and at others it may seem almost impossible. There are certain principles that are always helpful in fostering healthy communication. As simple or obvious as the principles may seem, they are often easy to overlook when they might matter the most. Practicing these principles and talking with your partner are great ways to begin to strengthen your communication skills. This week, take time to consider what principles you

could strengthen and share this with your partner.

The HOPE Principles for healthy communication:

1. **Take turns talking** – It is easy to talk over each other. Be purposeful in taking short turns in talking with one another. Be careful to make sure that you both get balanced “talking time”.
2. **Really listen to your partner, not just think of the next thing to say** – Half of communication is listening. If someone does not listen, then they will not know how to best respond. Not listening to your partner opens the door for more hurts and longer disagreements.
3. **Slow down the conversation** – Speak calmly and quietly to one another. If this begins to become difficult then take a break from the discussion and continue it later. Slowing things down will help in taking turns talking and really listening to each other. It will also help to make sure they you think before you speak.
4. **Infuse difficult conversations with loving statements** – During discussions it is very important to remind your partner of your love and care. Doing this will help keep the discussion on track towards meeting a healthy resolution.
5. **Don’t make assumptions; make sure you understand each other** – If you feel that you do not understand your partner, then take the time to lovingly express this. Doing this will help clarify the root of the discussion and result in a deeper healing process.

Practice these important principles of good communication, which are based on the Scripture Ephesians 4:15 "...speaking the truth in love." God wants us to learn to be good listeners. James 1:19 states, "Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry." God can use our marriage to teach us the principle of being quick to listen.

1. **SPEAKING:** Take turns speaking
2. **THE** next thing you say isn't what is most important. Really listen to your partner, don't be self-centered just thinking of the next thing to say
3. **TRUTH:** Don't make assumptions, make sure you understand what is true about each other
4. **IN:** Increase understanding by slowing down the conversation
5. **LOVE:** Infuse difficult conversations with loving statements

As you practice and discuss these principles, please answer the questions:

1. **What obstacles get in the way of implementing these principles in your marriage communication?**

2. **What ideas do you have to hurdle those obstacles?**

**Pray together for your marriage at least twice this week.**