



## **COMMUNICATION: Hearing and Being Heard**

Marriage Tune-Up | Part 2  
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There is so much more to communication than the words we say. Communication is about content but it's also about intent. It's about how we say what we say. But the single most neglected aspect of communication by far is listening. Caring enough to hear what the other is saying and saying things in a way that they can be heard is the ability that is sorely lacking in most troubled relationships. This ability spells the difference between couples that end up in the courtroom versus the bedroom. And the best news is this – you can become a better listener and learn how to communicate in ways that connect. Don't miss this message!

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If you keep on doing what you've been doing, you'll keep on getting what you've been getting.



“Healthy relationships are mountains to climb. There are rocks and cliffs and huge obstacles that get in the way. Sometimes the climbers have to double back and try another route. It's not always easy but they keep climbing. Unhealthy relationships are whirlpools. The love-hate cycle goes round and round with no real advancement. And ultimately, the relationship just goes down the drain.”

### **1. DO YOU WANT TO GET BETTER OR JUST FEEL BETTER?**

“Very few people are willing to deeply embrace their disappointment. And even fewer, when they've faced their disappointment and are filled with excruciating pain and sadness, are willing to firmly say, 'My pain is not the problem. The problem is my determination to relieve my pain any way I can.'” - Larry Crabb

*One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, “Do you want to get well?” John 5:5-6*

“Suddenly, the waters of the pool begin to boil, or bubble, or froth in some way, and pandemonium breaks out ... Every ailing person there is in competition with the rest of the multitude who are also hoping for a healing. Can you imagine the pushing, shoving, and tripping that takes place? And then,

even if one person was healed, it would not be the most needy person, because the one with the smallest ailment would be the most likely one to reach the pool first."

- Dr. Bob Deffinbaugh

"Problems cannot be solved by the same level of thinking that created them." - Albert Einstein

## **2. THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF COMMUNICATION**

### The Power of Listening

"Being listened to is so close to being loved that most people can't tell the difference." - David Oxberg

"A man is already half in love with any woman who will listen to him." - Brendan Francis

"Listening is a magnetic and strange thing, a creative force. When we are listened to, it creates us, makes us unfold and expand." - Brenda Ueland

### Roadblocks to Listening

## **MIND READING**



*You are the only one who knows what is in your own mind...*  
1 Corinthians 2.11 (CEV)

## **REHEARSING**

“Many people do not listen with intent to understand. They listen with intent to reply.” - Stephen Covey

Conversation, n.: A vocal competition in which the one who is catching his breath is called the listener.  
- Not Your Average Dictionary

## **FILTERING**

### ***GAZING POLITELY***

i have just wandered back into our conversation  
and find that you are still rattling on  
about something or other.  
i think i must have been gone at least twenty minutes  
and you never missed me.  
now this might say something about my acting ability  
or it might say something about your sensitivity.  
one thing troubles me though.  
when it is my turn to rattle on for twenty minutes,  
which I have been known to do, have you been missing too?  
- Author: Ric Masten



## **JUDGING**

When I listen to agree, I look at myself. When I listen to understand, I look to you.

“Unfortunately, many of us are too preoccupied with ourselves when we listen. Instead of concentrating on what is being said, we are busy either deciding what to say in response or mentally rejecting the other person's point of view.”

- Janet Dunn

## **DREAMING**

## **IDENTIFYING**

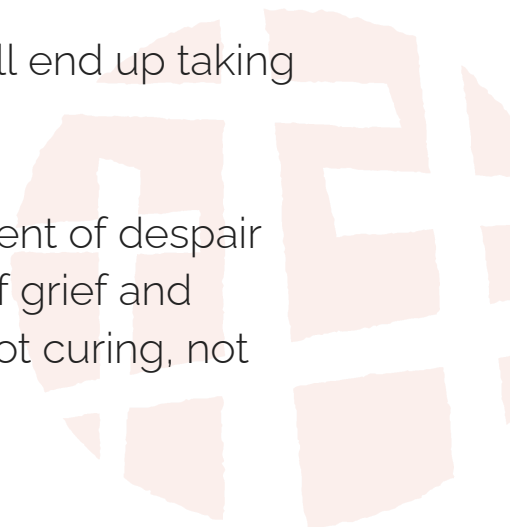
*Post this at all the intersections, dear friends: Lead with your ears, follow up with your tongue... James 1.19 (Message)*

## **ADVISING**

“Thoughts disentangle themselves when they pass through the lips or fingertips.” - Dawson Trotman

Because if we don't talk it out or write it out we'll end up taking it out on the wrong people.

“The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing, not curing, not



healing, and face us with the reality of our powerlessness, that is the friend who cares." - Henri Nouwen

### **3. BECOMING A BETTER LISTENER**

#### Be Influenced

Active Listening Techniques

"Asking that of couples is like requiring emotional gymnastics."  
- John Gottman

"...the marriages that seemed to work had one thing in common -- the husband was willing to be influenced by his wife. We found that only those newlywed men who are accepting of influence from their wives are winding up in happy, stable marriages." - John Gottman

#### Be present

Hearing is passive. Listening is active.

"You cannot truly listen to anyone and do anything else at the same time." - Dr. M. Scott Peck

*Dear friend, pay close attention to this...listen very closely...*  
Proverbs 5.1 (The Message)



❑ Be empathetic

"The act of listening requires a submersion of the self and immersion in the other... Learning to listen involves a paradox of control: controlling yourself and letting go of control of the relationship. It is like letting the other person drive. To listen, you have to let go." - Michael P. Nichols, *The Lost Art of Listening*

"You can't walk a mile in someone else's shoes until you take off your own shoes." - John Powell

*When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Matthew 9.36*

Unless and until you're influenced by my uniqueness, I'm never going to be influenced by your advice.

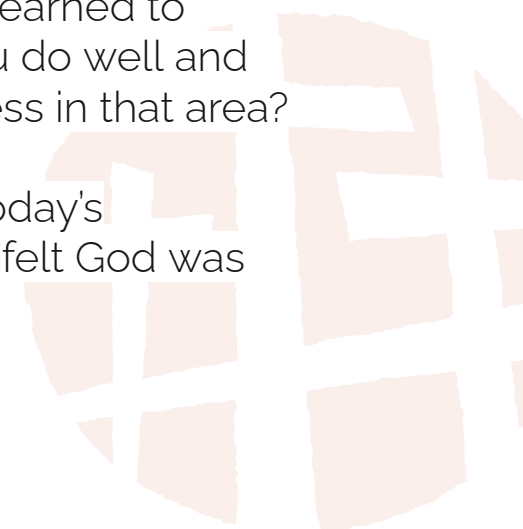
❑ Be open

*Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. James 5.16*



## ***DISCUSSION QUESTIONS***

1. Take some time to read the story of the healing of the paralytic by the pool of Bethesda (John 5:1-15). Pastor Keith pointed out how the question Jesus asked was very important, "Do you want to get well?" Why was this question of such great importance? What other lessons do you glean from this story?
2. According to available data, the average couple spends around 37 minutes per month talking to each other – not per day, per month. As a couple, whether dating or married, try to estimate how much time you spend talking to one another daily. Rate yourself in terms of your listening abilities on a scale of 1-10 with 1 being bad and 10 being great. Now ask your partner to rate you in terms of your listening abilities. Are those numbers the same, close, or far apart? If those numbers differ significantly, this would be a good conversation for later as to why your estimation and theirs are so out of sync.
3. Take some time to go back through the Roadblocks to Listening from today's message. Are there any roadblocks that are problematic for you? Where do you struggle and how? Are there any roadblocks that are not a problem for you or a problem that you learned to overcome? If so, what one or ones do you do well and what do you see as the key to your success in that area?
4. What was your greatest takeaway from today's message? Were there any areas that you felt God was prompting you to pay attention to?





5. Who are the people in your past or present who were great listeners? What was it that made them a great listener? What effect did they have on you because of how well they listened? In what ways have you tried to emulate their example?

