



5 Ways to Improve Communication Today

Whether it's with your kids or your partner, healthy (emphasis on *healthy*) communication is the game changer in a relationship. One of the biggest myths about communication is that talking is communicating. This is not the case. Most of us talk to our families and significant others but would admit that there is still a lack of communication. Here are 5 things you can start doing today to improve communication in your family and relationships.

1. **Pay Attention to Your Body Language and Tone-** Many studies have shown that only 7 percent of communication is verbal. That means 93 percent is nonverbal. This includes body language and tone. Pay close attention to your posture, your facial expressions, your tone and volume. Are you making eye contact, are your arms crossed or open, are you frowning or looking inquisitively at the person talking? Be intentional about opening yourself up in conversations... physically and emotionally.
2. **Be Careful Not to Repeat Yourself-** So often we repeat ourselves out of desperation to be heard, to convince the other person we are right and they are wrong and to make our point known in that moment. We want to be understood. Instead of repeating yourself, make your point then let there be a bit of silence. The fewer words you use will often be much more effective.
3. **Focus on What's At Hand-** Don't let what is being discussed at the time derail into what has happened in the past. When you revert to the past it tends to turn into the blame and shame game which builds resentment, hurt and a larger wedge in the relationship. Second, the issue at hand never gets resolved because you have veered off on to something completely unrelated. Force yourself to focus on what's at hand. If necessary, be the one to de-escalate a conversation by saying gently "I can see this isn't going to get any better by discussing further right now. Let's give a day then revisit it."
4. **Timing is Everything-** You know that moment your partner or child walks in the door from a full day? That is not the moment to pepper them with questions or berate them for something that upset you. The time to address issues is when everyone is rested and at peace... not tired and stressed out. There are very, very few things that need to be addressed immediately and urgently. So be patient and wait for the right time. This will more often get you the results you want.

- 5. Talk About How You Feel-** Talking about feelings often sounds uncomfortable but it doesn't have to be as difficult as you might think. One of the best ways to start a conversation is by saying "I feel...". This helps you own your feelings while helping to keep the other person from feeling defensive. This sets a calm tone and allows both parties to be open, therefore, make progress and resolve issues.

There are so many ways to improve communication but these are a few that you can put into action today. These small steps can make a huge difference. Give them a try and let us know how it goes. We are here to support you.

We appreciate you reaching out to us. Give us a call to learn more about how we can help your family relationships and the unique challenges you face.