



Tools for **Great** Communication in marriage

**FAMILY
BUILDERS
MINISTRIES**

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**Building Great Marriages & Families
...from Generation to Generation**

Webinar – September 27, 2011 – 8:00 p.m.

■ When Love Talk Becomes Bad Talk

- *Blame* – You say it's your spouse's fault and there is nothing wrong with you or with what you did.
- *Escalation* – You say or do something negative and your spouse responds negatively. You respond to their criticism by criticizing them, usually a notch or two more negatively.
- *Painful Put-Downs* – You subtly or directly put down the thoughts, feelings, actions, or worth of your spouse. You imply that your spouse is a loser.
- *Passive Aggression* – You pout, withdraw, or say nothing.
- *Hostile Sarcastic Humor* – Your words or tone of voice communicate hostility that you are not dealing with in an open and honest fashion.
- *Negative Interpretations* – You interpret your spouse's words or behavior more negatively than he or she intended.
- *Assumptions* – You assume you know how your spouse thinks or feels without checking it out.
- *Denial* – You insist that you don't feel angry, hurt, or sad when you really do.
- *Absolutes* – You use words like "never" and "always."
- *Fix It* – Instead of hearing the feelings of your spouse, you try to fix the problem by offering solutions. Most likely, your advice was not sought.

■ Positive Communication Tools

1. _____

"My dove in the clefts of the rock, in the hiding places on the mountainside, show me your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely."

(Song of Songs 2:14).

♥ **Tool Time:** Share three things that happened today and how it made you feel.

2. _____

“My dove in the clefts of the rock, in the hiding places on the mountainside, show me your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely.”
(Song of Songs 2:14).

3. _____

a) “No man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be” (James 3:8-10).

- Proverbs 15:1,4
- Proverbs 21:23
- Proverbs 27:14
- Proverbs 16:24
- Proverbs 21:19
- Proverbs 18:21

b) Words of _____.

c) Words of _____.

d) Words of _____.

- "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen" (Ephesians 4:29).
- "Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones" (Proverbs 16:24).

- e) Be wise in how you choose and use your words.
 - “Watch your words and hold your tongue; you'll save yourself a lot of grief.” (Proverbs 21:23, The Message)
 - “It is wonderful to say the right thing at the right time!” (Proverbs 15:23, New Living Translation)
- f) Use words that help.
 - The difference between a complaint and a criticism:
 - Complaint only addresses the specific action at which your spouse failed.
 - Criticism is more global. It adds on some negative words about your spouse’s character or personality.
 - THINK before speaking...
 - T** - Is it true?
 - H** - Is it helpful?
 - I** - Is it inspiring?
 - N** - Is it necessary?
 - K** - Is it kind?

4. _____

- “My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.” (James 1:19)
- “If then I do not grasp the meaning of what someone is saying, I am a foreigner to the speaker, and he is a foreigner to me.” (1 Corinthians 14:11)
- “Answering before listening is both stupid and rude.” (Proverbs 18:13, The Message)

“My dove in the clefts of the rock, in the hiding places on the mountainside, show me your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely.”
(Song of Songs 2:14).



TOOL TIME FOR COUPLES

1. When you and your spouse have a disagreement, what usually happens? Which of the negative communication tools listed do you tend to use?

 2. How could you improve the way you love your spouse with words?

 3. How could you improve the way you listen to your spouse?

 4. Together, decide on when you can set aside at least 10 minutes of uninterrupted time together each day to share what is going on in your lives. The focus of this time is on your feelings about each other and your life together. Discuss the following:
 - What did you most enjoy about the day?
 - What did you least enjoy about the day?

 5. To improve your positive communication, give at least one compliment daily to your spouse that will help you focus on the strengths in your marriage. It will also highlight the positive things that attracted you to each other.
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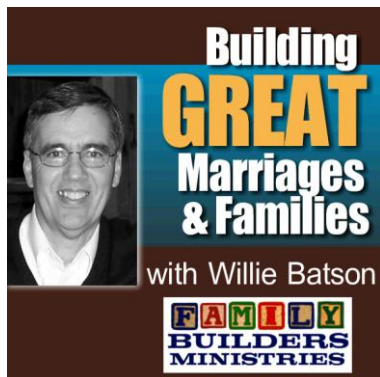
Suggested Reading for Further Marriage Growth

- *A Lasting Promise* – Scott Stanley, Daniel Trathen, Savanna McCain, & Milt Bryan (Jossey-Bass Publishers)
- *Divorce-Proof Your Marriage* – Gary & Barbara Rosberg (Tyndale House Publishers)
- *Loving Solutions* – Gary D. Chapman (Northfield Publishing)
- *Love and Respect* – Emerson Eggerichs (Integrity Publishers)
- *Sacred Marriage* – Gary Thomas (Zondervan)
- *Sheet Music* – Kevin Leman (Tyndale House Publishers)
- *Ten Great Dates to Energize Your Marriage* – David & Claudia Arp (Zondervan Publishing House)
- *The Five Love Languages* – Gary D. Chapman (Northfield Publishing)
- *The Second Half of Marriage* – David & Claudia Arp (Zondervan Publishing House)
- *Tools for a Great Marriage* – William Batson (Family Builders Ministries)

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