

## Couple Communication Techniques

Every day in my private practice I see couples who complain about their communication skills. They talk about listening, understanding, expressing feelings, too many words, not enough words, withdrawing, aggressive speech, and more. The truth is that most marriages could be improved upon without talking. Yes, I did say without talking. How is that possible? Chances are that you and your spouse have had the same “talk” many times. The problem lies in the fact that the problem is talked about over and over again...but the solution is not talked about. The answer to problem solving is to brainstorm several solutions –without judgment- and then choose one and put it to work for 30 days. If in 30 days the solution is found wanting, simply choose another of the solutions you came up with the first time.

There are a couple of key elements to effective communication. One is to define terms. For example, I can say “green” and there are many of us who think of different things...grass, money, golf course, the environment, color...and so it goes. One couple I had in my office exemplified this issue when the wife said she needed more “attention”. Now, we all know what attention is, right? Wrong! Her definition of attention and her husband’s were quite different. Therefore, he thought he was showing her attention but she didn’t see it quite the same way. I think that most of my job in counseling is to help couples and families define their terms. I am a therapeutic “interpreter” of sorts. I say things, like; “What he means is...” all the while he is shaking his head “yes”.

To make life easier for you as a couple, just simply DO what needs to be done to improve your relationship. If you want to improve your relationship without talking then start doing. I’m sure you’ve heard him or her tell you what they need in the relationship many times. So, just start doing it. Fighting it is getting you no where and digging a deeper chasm. After all, isn’t that what you want? Don’t you just want your spouse to hear your needs and begin to meet them? It is very simply the golden rule. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Put your pride or selfishness aside and serve your spouse. The rewards will be beyond what you could imagine.