


Relationship Advice: 5 Communication Keys Every Relationship Needs



 By Dixie Somers

The strongest relationships don't usually just happen. Relationships take building and work, and they may change or evolve over time. Good communication tends to be at the heart of every strong and long-lasting relationship.

When people are able to communicate better, they can enjoy happy times more fully and get through bad times without falling apart. Check out this [relationship advice](#):

Listen and Hear

Humans have a bad habit of wanting to talk and share too much about themselves. This is especially true of extroverts and people with dominating or energetic personalities. People also tend to feel better when they talk about themselves compared to talking about someone else. It takes thought and practice to force yourself to slow down and avoid talking too much about yourself or dominating every conversation.

Your friend, partner or spouse will be more comfortable and feel closer to you if you stop talking and just listen. This helps the person feel more valued and demonstrates that you care about them.

Importantly, there is a difference between just seeming to listen and really hearing and comprehending what your partner is saying. It can be easy to become a good listening actor: someone who appears to be listening attentively but is really just letting everything go in one ear and out the other. One common therapy trick for listening is to force yourself to repeat or paraphrase what the other person is saying. This can be uncomfortable or sound too much like a therapy session, but it can help to explain to your partner what you are doing and why. It's really all part of communication practice.

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Honesty and Vulnerability

Every relationship demands honesty. This is the cornerstone of trust and healthy communication. When both you and your partner fully believe that each of you is being truthful in everything you say, then barriers comes down and neither person feels like they need to hide something or investigate what their partner is telling them.

Showing a person vulnerability can also improve emotional trust and connection in a relationship. Trying to have all the answers all the time or put forth the idea that you are impervious to harsh words or difficult situations may actually make your partner less communicative or emotionally close. It is natural for a person to have sympathy when they see someone they care about being vulnerable, not having all the answers or needing help with a difficult situation. This sympathy is often the gateway to deeper and more honest conversations.

Stay on Topic

While casual discussion may be whimsical, arguments or disagreements tend to spiral out of control. In an effort to gain the upper hand in the argument, a person may naturally bring up other problems or issues with their partner. This only makes the situation worse and intensifies the argument.

Discussing problems and disagreements is a critical part of any strong relationship, but it's important to stay focused. Pick a problem and work through it until it is solved. Even if your partner is being stubborn or obstinate, don't try to load them with more issues. The goal is never to win an argument with your partner. The goal is to resolve the problem.

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Body Language

Nonverbal communication conveys far more than words during a discussion. Only about 7 percent of an average conversation is conveyed through spoken words. About 38 percent of the meaning is conveyed by tone of voice. The remaining 55 percent is conveyed nonverbally through body language, posture or facial expression. These are all averages, of course, and a person's communication style may alter them. Certain people may be more verbal and keep an even tone that often doesn't convey much. They may also be even more non-verbal, often using hands or gestures to express ideas instead of words.

Regardless of the numbers, nonverbal communication is a critical part of any relationship. It is important you keep track of your partner's body language and also be mindful of what you may be communicating with your own. You may be communicating things you don't intend to.

Share the Small Things

Some people believe that long, meaningful and deep conversations with their partner hold more value than small and everyday conversations and events. Research by one team of psychologists suggests the opposite may actually be true. While occasional deep conversations are certainly important and necessary for a true and lasting relationship, the quality of everyday communication was more impactful.

This means sharing the small things that may seem

insignificant. There are several reasons behind this phenomenon. First, the small, daily communication keeps a constant but not smothering connection going. Too many deep and heavy conversations may actually be too much for the average person, and they will respond by seeking distance instead of intimacy. Second, the small and everyday details often reveal as much or more about a person than long and deep conversations. An attentive partner will pick up these daily cues and gain better understanding and connection.

Everyone should regard communication as a skill. The good news is that any skill can be learned and even a person who doesn't seem like a very strong communicator now can become better with attention and practice. Be proactive, do some reading or see a counselor for help and strategies to improve and strengthen your relationship. If the relationship doesn't improve or your spouse is simply unwilling to make the attempt, this could be a sign of problems beyond just poor communication. Divorce may be something to consider. It is important for your own health not to remain stuck in a relationship that isn't working or with a person who clearly doesn't show caring or respect for you.

Dixie Somers is a freelance writer and blogger for business, home, and family niches. Dixie lives in Phoenix, Arizona, and is the proud mother of three beautiful girls and wife to a wonderful husband. Dixie recommends visiting [Divorce Matters](#) if your partner is unwilling to commit to change in an unhappy relationship.