

Levels of Communication

Please read through these levels of communication and determine at what level you normally communicate with your spouse. Place percentages by each level of communication, so you can see at what level you normally communicate throughout your day. Then trade papers with your spouse.

1. Cliché level.

This is the most superficial level of communication and can be experienced with a total stranger. This cliché level sounds like this: “Hey, how goes it.” “What’s happening?” “Everything is great!”

2. The acts & facts the day.

This level of communication is a little deeper and requires more time and effort, but it is still very superficial. When you are giving the acts and facts of your day, you are simply communicating what you did, where you went, and what happened. It is also very important when communicating at this level that you sense that your spouse is truly interested in this information.

3. Sharing ideas, opinions, and how you feel about what happened that day.

This level of communication requires a deeper level of security and honesty with one another, because you are now revealing your personal thoughts, ideas, and feelings. You are explaining what you think and how you feel about what happened that day. Jesus asked His disciples often what they thought. He asked Peter, “*What do you think, Simon?*” (Matt. 17:25).

4. Giving and receiving encouragement from one another.

This level of communication requires an even deeper level of love and security with your mate, because you must sincerely encourage one another about the thoughts and feelings that they have expressed. Without daily encouragement and a demonstrated willingness to talk over these thoughts and feelings, you probably won’t proceed to any deeper levels of communication. Solomon said, “*A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger*” (Proverbs 15:1). “*By long forbearance a ruler is persuaded, and a gentle tongue breaks a bone*” (Proverbs 25:15). In the New Testament we are to “*exhort (or encourage) one another daily*” (Heb. 3:13). Do you sense this encouragement from your spouse, and are you also giving it?

5. Giving correction or instruction to one another concerning your day.

Correction and instruction require an even greater level of love, security, and honesty with your mate, because you must be willing to listen and humbly acknowledge your faults when corrected (James 5:16). Are you secure enough in your relationship to confess your faults, and listen to correction? Or, do you become defensive and resentful when you are corrected by your mate?

6. Decision making and planning for the future.

Can you communicate respectfully with your mate when he or she disagrees with a decision you have made? Can you listen without interrupting, find an agreement, and reach a decision over issues that you disagree over? Without possessing the skills of the previous levels of communication you will not be able to make decisions and plan for the future well. Note how comfortable the people were with John the Baptist, when they asked him for his instruction and guidance concerning their personal lives (Matt. 3:10-15). They were obviously assured and secure in the fact that he truly cared for them, and that his counsel was according to the Word of God.

7. Sharing your personal hopes, fears, hurts, goals.

This is the deepest level of communication, which then results in the greatest depth of true companionship and friendship in your marriage. Only the most loving, secure, and honest relationships will venture into these issues. Someone will never open up to share their deepest fears or hurts with a critical or harsh person, or with one who refuses to listen, receive correction, or who won’t compromise in decision making. You will only open your heart in this manner when you have developed these skills of communication, and believe that your spouse is someone who you would consider safe. You pour out your heart to God in this manner, only because you trust that He loves you, has your best interests in mind, and is a true refuge for you (Ps. 62:8).