

Connections + PREP®:

RELATIONSHIPS AND MARRIAGE

Student Workbook

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Interpersonal Relationship Series for Secondary Students
The Dibble Institute for Marriage Education

SECTION III

COMMUNICATION

“Communication is to a relationship what breathing is to maintaining life.”

Virginia Satir

Communication helps us find meaning in our world. We are constantly giving and receiving messages to those around us whether we are aware of it or not. Communication takes many different forms; it can be verbal, such as spoken or written language, or it can be nonverbal in the form of facial expressions or body language. Our *patterns* of communication become part of us from an early age, usually being established first at home within the family. As we grow older, new relationships develop outside of the home and we take our communication patterns with us. Good communication skills become foundational to the quality of the relationships we expect to have throughout our lifetime. *How* we communicate is as important as *what* we communicate.

DEALING WITH CONFLICT

Most of the problems that occur between people in a relationship center around the inability to communicate in an effective way. Each person may think that his/her method is correct which can lead to serious conflict between them. Some styles of communication are positive while others are negative and tend to add to the problems. Knowing how you and your partner settle differences is an important element in improving understanding.

TAKE A LOOK:

1. What is your usual pattern of communication for handling conflict?

arguing	silent treatment	physical aggression
leave	alcohol/drugs	talk it out
cry	blame someone else	hold your feelings inside

2. How important is it that you “win” an argument?

very important	moderately important	not important
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3. If you believe there is a problem, what do you do?

confront the issue	ignore the issue	tell an outside party about it
try to solve it alone	wait for my partner to bring it up	

4. In order to end the conflict, what would you do?
 - a) give in even though you believe you are right
 - b) try to convince your partner to see it your way
 - c) wait and bring it up again at another time

5. What do you think?
 - a) if my partner loves me, he/she will agree with me
 - b) we both have to agree on every issue
 - c) it is all right not to agree on everything
 - d) I always let my partner make the final decision

6. Choose any two conflict solving methods from question 1 and explain how problems might occur for a couple when the two methods collide in a relationship. You may also choose other methods that you can think of from your own experience.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT:

“If you want to have a great relationship, the way you handle differences matters more than what those differences are.”

Fighting for Your Marriage

EXPLORING FURTHER:

Communication is much more than just *what* we say, it is also *how* we say something. The Speaker/Listener Technique can make a difference in how well you communicate with others. Practicing the Speaker/Listener Technique in the following situations will help you say what you need to say and hear what you need to hear. Tone of voice and facial expression also contribute to the message being sent.

Situation 1: _____

Situation 2: _____

Situation 3: _____

Situation 4: _____

Situation 5: _____

<p style="text-align: center;">THE FLOOR* <i>Speaker/Listener Technique</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Rules for the Speaker:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Speak for yourself. Don't mind-read!2. Keep statements brief. Don't go on and on.3. Stop to let the Listener paraphrase. <p style="text-align: center;">Rules for the Listener:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Paraphrase what you hear.2. Focus on the Speaker's message. Don't rebut. <p style="text-align: center;">Rules for Both:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The Speaker has the Floor.
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