

The ABCs of Effective Communication

- 1) Attend fully
- 2) Build a relationship of trust by being your authentic self while trying to put yourself in the other person's shoes
- 3) Connect by pausing, paraphrasing, probing, and positive presuppositions
- 4) Don't interrupt, judge, or lecture
- 5) Eliminate "buts," criticism, judging, lecturing, "the parent voice," and personal referencing
- 6) Focus on what the other person is trying to communicate, not on what you plan to say next
- 7) Give love and encouragement, not advice

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"You do not have to change your values, opinions, or beliefs when walking emotionally with another person and, ideally, you won't be trying to change theirs either" (Gary & Joy Lundberg. 1995. *I Don't Have to Make Everything All Better*. NY: Penguin Putnam).

Listening to Understand



Set clear boundaries and expectations

Validation is the act, process, or instance of confirming or corroborating the meaningfulness and relevance of what another person (or self) is feeling.

Validation is being with someone where they are, not where you think they OUGHT to be.

Sample Validating Phrases

Oh no! I know how much that meant to you.

I don't blame you one bit!

I'll bet that was hard.

Tell me more.

That must be really (insert emotion).

Sample Validating Questions

And then what did you do/say?

How did you feel about that?

What are you going to do?

What do you hope will happen?

What do you think about that?

What does that mean?

Would it help if I . . . ?

Listening with Love



“Listening with love involves trying to understand what a person is feeling, as well as what he is saying. With constant practice, we can learn how to listen with love, thus improving family relationships” (*Family Home Evening Resources Book*, 1997, p. 202).

“Listen to your **child** ... with all of you. Rather than thinking of what to tell him, listen to what he is telling you. Listen patiently to the end, until he has emptied his heart. Encourage him, looking directly into his eyes, with ‘I see,’ ‘Um-hum,’ ‘Is that right?’ ‘And then what?’ Listen, and savor the joy of having this child.

Listen to your **spouse** ... with all of you. Not while pondering a business problem or tonight’s dinner or what is wrong. Look into his/her face, see the beauty there, cherish the expression, the eyes, the mouth; feel the care, the concerns. Listen with understanding and love. Listen.

Listen to your **parents** ... with all of you. Listen to their direction, their counsel, their remembrances and reflections. Listen to the wonder of their age, and respect and honor them. Listen to them. It is your sweetest gift.

Listen to a **conversation** ... with all of you. Be more anxious to hear than to tell. Resist interrupting. Rejoice in the good thinking of others, provoke them to worthwhile ideas. A lively conversation requires a totally involved listener.

Listen to the **Lord** ... with all of you. Stay on your knees a little longer, listening. Pause in the day, listening. Be sensitive to every divine impression, to every noble feeling, to every worthy idea. Listen and learn what he has in mind for you. Listen to the Lord...with all of you.”

(Winnifred C. Jardine, “Listen with All of You,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1974, p. 51.)

“Husbands and wives, learn to listen, and listen to learn from one another. ... Taking time to talk is essential to keep lines of communication intact. If marriage is a prime relationship in life, it deserves prime time! Yet less important appointments are often given priority, leaving only leftover moments for listening to precious partners” (Elder Russell M. Nelson, *Ensign*, May 1991, p. 23).

“We seldom get into trouble when we speak softly.... The voice of heaven is a still small voice; likewise, the voice of domestic peace is a quiet voice” (Elder Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, June 1971, p. 72).

“Occasionally we hear something like, ‘Why, we have been married for fifty years, and we have never had a difference of opinion.’ If that is literally the case, then one of the partners is overly dominated by the other or, as someone said, is a stranger to the truth. Any intelligent couple will have differences of opinion. Our challenge is to be sure that we know how to resolve them. That is part of the process of making a good marriage better” (Elder Joe J. Christensen of the Seventy, *Ensign*, May 1995, p. 65).