

Listening with Love

Definitions

Definition of Charity (the pure love of Christ)

“And charity suffereth long, and is kind, and envieth not, and is not puffed up, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, and rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, if ye have not charity, ye are nothing, for charity never faileth. Wherefore, cleave unto charity, which is the greatest of all, for all things must fail— But charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ; that ye may become the sons of God; that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; that we may have this hope; that we may be purified even as he is pure. Amen.” (Moroni 7:45-48)

Definition of 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 Resource Book*, 1997, p. 202).

Love is a feeling of deep devotion, concern, and affection. The greatest example of God's love for His children is found in the infinite Atonement of Jesus Christ. Love for God and fellow men is a characteristic of disciples of Jesus Christ.

Communications in the family will often be a sacrifice because we are expected to use our time, our means, our talent, and our patience to impart, share, and understand. Too often we use communication periods as occasions to tell, dictate, plead, or threaten. Nowhere in the broadest sense should communication in the family be used to impose, command, or embarrass. To be effective, family communication must be an exchange of feelings and information. Doors of communication will swing open in the home if members will realize time and participation on the part of all are necessary ingredients.

<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1976/04/family-communications?lang=eng>

Jones Stephens wrote, “I have learned that the head does not hear anything until the heart has listened, and that what the heart knows today the head will understand tomorrow.”

<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1976/04/family-communications?lang=eng>

to have a strong marriage you must eliminate all forms of hurtful communication and instead communicate in ways that nurture, edify, uplift, encourage, and make your spouse feel valued and loved.

Listening with Love

Learning to Listen...“with ALL of you”

“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 **friend** ... with all of you. Listen to his worries and his frustrations, to his thoughts and joys. Feel with him, ache with him, be excited with him. Be the receptacle for his pent-up emotions. Just listen.

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.)

Have any of you brethren ever had your wife say something like I heard recently: “Joe, are you listening?” She wasn’t the only one who wondered if I was listening. Some time ago I was taking a nap and our little granddaughter Allison came and lifted up one of my eyelids and said, “Grandpa, are you in there?” We should be “in there” and responsive to our mate.

<https://www.lds.org/manual/marriage-and-family-relations-participants-study-guide/part-a-strengthening-marriages/lesson-5-responding-to-challenges-through-positive-communication.p1?lang=eng>

Listening with Love

Learning to Understand

Parroting v. Paraphrasing v. Validating

Listening with the Heart

Doctrine and Covenants 38:24 “And let every man esteem his brother as himself, and practice virtue and holiness before me.”

James 1:19: “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath”

Listen to Learn

In his invocation for this session of conference, Elder Hugh W. Pinnock prayed that we might listen carefully. Many articles in Church literature have dealt with the important art of listening.¹ They support a proverb that teaches this vital lesson: “Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise” (Proverbs 19:20).² Surely wisdom will come as we listen to learn from children, parents, partners, neighbors, Church leaders, and the Lord.

Parents and teachers, learn to listen, then listen to learn from children. A wise father once said, “I do a greater amount of good when I listen to my children than when I talk to them.”³

<https://www.lds.org/manual/eternal-marriage-student-manual/communication?lang=eng>

Listening to the Spirit

3 Nephi 11:3–6

2 Nephi 9:31 “And wo unto the deaf that will not hear; for they shall perish.”

Brother Green was having trouble listening to an inexperienced counselor in the bishopric speak. The counselor read slowly and haltingly. But, as Brother Green prayed for help to listen by the Spirit, he heard an answer to a gospel question that he had never understood before. He knew the Lord had blessed him for listening with his heart. (See John A. Green, “A Lesson from My Conscience,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1981, p. 43.)

Listening with Love

Love in Marriage

“[Love in marriage] is deep, inclusive, comprehensive. It is not like that association of the world which is misnamed love, but which is mostly physical attraction. When marriage is based on this only, the parties soon tire of one another. ... The love of which the Lord speaks is not only physical attraction, but spiritual attraction as well. It is faith and confidence in, and understanding of, one another. It is a total partnership. It is companionship with common ideals and standards. It is unselfishness toward and sacrifice for one another. It is cleanliness of thought and action and faith in God and his program. It is parenthood in mortality ever looking toward godhood and creationship, and parenthood of spirits. It is vast, all-inclusive, and limitless. This kind of love never tires or wanes. It lives on through sickness and sorrow, through prosperity and privation, through accomplishment and disappointment, through time and eternity” (Faith Precedes the Miracle [1972], 130–31).

<https://www.lds.org/manual/marriage-and-family-relations-instructors-manual/part-a-strengthening-marriages/lesson-3-nurturing-love-and-friendship-in-marriage?lang=eng>

“Love is like a flower, and, like the body, it needs constant feeding. The mortal body would soon be emaciated and die if there were not frequent feedings. The tender flower would wither and die without food and water. And so love, also, cannot be expected to last forever unless it is continually fed with portions of love, the manifestation of esteem and admiration, the expressions of gratitude, and the consideration of unselfishness” (“Oneness in Marriage,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1977, 5).

<https://www.lds.org/manual/marriage-and-family-relations-instructors-manual/part-a-strengthening-marriages/lesson-3-nurturing-love-and-friendship-in-marriage?lang=eng>

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

“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 in Conference Report, Apr. 1991, 28; or *Ensign*, May 1991, 23).

<https://www.lds.org/manual/marriage-and-family-relations-instructors-manual/part-a-strengthening-marriages/lesson-5-responding-to-challenges-through-positive-communication?lang=eng>

While serving in the Seventy, Elder James E. Faust said that one of the less obvious but more significant reasons for divorce is “the lack of a constant enrichment in marriage, ... an absence of that something extra which makes it precious, special, and wonderful, when it is also drudgery, difficult, and dull.” He counseled: “In the enriching of marriage the big things are the little things. It is a constant appreciation for each other and a thoughtful demonstration of gratitude. It is the encouraging and the helping of each other to grow. Marriage is a joint quest for the good, the beautiful, and the divine” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1977, 13–14; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1977, 10–11).

Listening with Love

<https://www.lds.org/manual/marriage-and-family-relations-instructors-manual/part-a-strengthening-marriages/lesson-3-nurturing-love-and-friendship-in-marriage?lang=eng>

"Keep your courtship alive. Make time to do things together—just the two of you. As important as it is to be with the children as a family, you need regular weekly time alone together. Scheduling it will let your children know that you feel that your marriage is so important that you need to nurture it. That takes commitment, planning, and scheduling" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 86; or Ensign, May 1995, 65).

<https://www.lds.org/manual/marriage-and-family-relations-instructors-manual/part-a-strengthening-marriages/lesson-3-nurturing-love-and-friendship-in-marriage?lang=eng>

While serving in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Elder Gordon B. Hinckley spoke of "the kind of respect that regards one's companion as the most precious friend on earth." He said: "Companionship in marriage is prone to become commonplace and even dull. I know of no more certain way to keep it on a lofty and inspiring plane than for a man occasionally to reflect upon the fact that the helpmeet who stands at his side is a daughter of God, engaged with [God] in the great creative process of bringing to pass His eternal purposes. I know of no more effective way for a woman to keep ever radiant the love for her husband than for her to look for and emphasize the godly qualities that are a part of every son of our Father and that can be evoked when there is respect and admiration and encouragement. The very processes of such actions will cultivate a constantly rewarding appreciation for one another" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1971, 81–82; or Ensign, June 1971, 71–72).

<https://www.lds.org/manual/marriage-and-family-relations-instructors-manual/part-a-strengthening-marriages/lesson-5-responding-to-challenges-through-positive-communication?lang=eng>

Listening with Love

Disagreement v. Criticism in Marriage

Elder Joe J. Christensen of the Seventy (page 20 in the Marriage and Family Relations Participant's Study Guide):

"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 in *Ensign*, May 1995, p. 65).

<https://www.lds.org/manual/marriage-and-family-relations-instructors-manual/part-a-strengthening-marriages/lesson-5-responding-to-challenges-through-positive-communication?lang=eng>

"'Ceaseless pinpricking,' as President Spencer W. Kimball called it, can deflate almost any marriage. ... Generally each of us is painfully aware of our weaknesses, and we don't need frequent reminders. Few people have ever changed for the better as a result of constant criticism or nagging. If we are not careful, some of what we offer as constructive criticism is actually destructive" (see Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 85; or *Ensign*, May 1995, 64–65; see also Spencer W. Kimball, "Marriage and Divorce," 1976 Devotional Speeches of the Year [1977], 148).

<https://www.lds.org/manual/marriage-and-family-relations-instructors-manual/part-a-strengthening-marriages/lesson-5-responding-to-challenges-through-positive-communication?lang=eng>

One form of criticizing is the practice of comparing a person's weaknesses to the strengths of others. How can this practice affect a marriage?

"In family discussions, differences should not be ignored, but should be weighed and evaluated calmly. One's point or opinion usually is not as important as a healthy, continuing relationship. Courtesy and respect in listening and responding during discussions are basic in proper dialogue. ... How important it is to know how to disagree with another's point of view without being disagreeable" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1976, 79; or *Ensign*, May 1976, 52).

<https://www.lds.org/manual/marriage-and-family-relations-instructors-manual/part-a-strengthening-marriages/lesson-5-responding-to-challenges-through-positive-communication?lang=eng>

Listening with Love

Anger in Marital Communications

While serving in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Elder Gordon B. Hinckley taught: "We seldom get into trouble when we speak softly. It is only when we raise our voices that the sparks fly and tiny molehills become great mountains of contention. ... 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).

<https://www.lds.org/manual/marriage-and-family-relations-instructors-manual/part-a-strengthening-marriages/lesson-5-responding-to-challenges-through-positive-communication?lang=eng>

Elder Lynn G. Robbins of the Seventy explained: "No one makes us mad. Others don't make us angry. There is no force involved. Becoming angry is a conscious choice, a decision; therefore, we can make the choice not to become angry. We choose!" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 105; or *Ensign*, May 1998, 80).

<https://www.lds.org/manual/marriage-and-family-relations-instructors-manual/part-a-strengthening-marriages/lesson-4-responding-to-challenges-in-marriage?lang=eng>

One woman repeatedly went to her bishop to express grievances against her husband. Finally the bishop asked her, "Why did you marry this man you consider so insensitive and intolerable?" The woman thought for a moment and said, "Well, I suppose he had some good qualities, but I can't remember any. He must have changed." The bishop asked her to go home and pray that her heart would be softened so that she would begin to remember the characteristics that she had once admired in her husband. She found that, with time, she was able to recognize and focus on her husband's admirable qualities. Before, she had been so consumed with seeing his faults that she had failed to see his good qualities.

<https://www.lds.org/manual/marriage-and-family-relations-instructors-manual/part-a-strengthening-marriages/lesson-5-responding-to-challenges-through-positive-communication?lang=eng>

Listening with Love

Scriptures Related to Anger & Communication

“Put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.”

[James 1:19–20](#)

“Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

“For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.”

[James 3:2](#)

“For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.” [3 Nephi 11:29](#)

“He that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention.” [Doctrine and Covenants 88:124](#)

“Cease to find fault one with another.”

“For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. (James 3)

Listening with Love

Covenants & Communication

The word covenant sometimes refers to an agreement between persons, but in the context of the gospel it refers to an agreement between us and the Lord. In a covenant, the Lord sets the terms and we promise to keep them (see Bible Dictionary, "[Covenant](#)," 651). When we keep our promises, the Lord is bound to fulfill His promises (see [D&C 82:10](#)).

When troubles come to a marriage, what might the husband and wife do if they view their relationship as a contract? What will they do if they view their relationship as a covenant? Elder Bruce C. Hafen of the Seventy observed: "When troubles come, the parties to a contractual marriage seek happiness by walking away. They marry to obtain benefits and will stay only as long as they're receiving what they bargained for. But when troubles come to a covenant marriage, the husband and wife work them through. ...Contract companions each give 50 percent; covenant companions each give 100 percent. Marriage is by nature a covenant, not just a private contract one may cancel at will" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 34; or Ensign, Nov. 1996, 26).

<https://www.lds.org/manual/marriage-and-family-relations-instructors-manual/part-a-strengthening-marriages/lesson-4-responding-to-challenges-in-marriage?lang=eng>

President Howard W. Hunter advised: "Be faithful in your marriage covenants in thought, word, and deed. Pornography, flirtations, and unwholesome fantasies erode one's character and strike at the foundation of a happy marriage. Unity and trust within a marriage are thereby destroyed" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 67; or Ensign, Nov. 1994, 50).

President Ezra Taft Benson, the 13th President of the Church, counseled: "If you are married, avoid flirtations of any kind. ... What may appear to be harmless teasing or simply having a little fun with someone of the opposite sex can easily lead to more serious involvement and eventual infidelity. A good question to ask ourselves is this: Would my spouse be pleased if he or she knew I was doing this? Would a wife be pleased to know that her husband lunches alone with his secretary? Would a husband be pleased if he saw his wife flirting and being coy with another man? My beloved brothers and sisters, this is what Paul meant when he said: 'Abstain from all appearance of evil' ([1 Thessalonians 5:22](#))" ("The Law of Chastity," in Brigham Young University 1987–88 Devotional and Fireside Speeches[1988], 52).

<https://www.lds.org/manual/marriage-and-family-relations-instructors-manual/part-a-strengthening-marriages/lesson-3-nurturing-love-and-friendship-in-marriage?lang=eng>

Years ago, when it was common for a General Authority to tour a mission and interview all the missionaries, Elder Spencer W. Kimball, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, was visiting with an elder who was just about to finish his mission.

"When you get released, Elder, what are your plans?"

"Oh, I plan to go back to college." And then with a smile he added, "Then I hope to fall in love and get married."

Elder Kimball shared this wise counsel: "Well, don't just pray to marry the one you love. Instead, pray to love the one you marry."

Listening with Love

Dinah Maria Mulock Craik (1826-1887)

from A Life for a Life

Oh, the comfort—
the inexpressible comfort of feeling safe with a person—
having neither to weigh thoughts nor measure words,
but pouring them all right out,
just as they are,
chaff and grain together;
certain that a faithful hand will take and sift them,
keep what is worth keeping,
and then with the breath of kindness blow the rest away.

Craik, Dinah Maria Mulock. A Life for a Life. London: Collins' Clear Type Press, 1900.

<http://www.potw.org/archive/potw273.html>

If you want something to last forever, you treat
it differently. You shield it and protect it. You never abuse it. You don't
expose it to the elements. You don't make it common or ordinary. If it ever becomes tarnished,
you lovingly polish it until it gleams like new. It becomes special because you have made it so, and
as it grows more beautiful and precious as time goes by.

Eternal marriage is just like that. We need to treat it just that way. I pray that we may see it for the
priceless gift that it is, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2003/04/eternal-marriage?lang=eng>

We should pray to become more kind, courteous, humble, patient, forgiving,
and, especially, less selfish. In order to recognize our personal problems or weaknesses which
hinder us from being better marriage partners, we should come to the Lord in prayer and reap
the benefits of this powerful Book of Mormon promise: "If men come unto me I will show unto
them their weakness ... ; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then
will I make weak things become strong unto them" ([Ether 12:27](#)). And so the need to pray.
Many Church leaders and marriage counselors indicate that they have not seen one marriage in
serious trouble where the couple was still praying together daily. When problems arise and
marriages are threatened, praying together as a couple may be the most important remedy.
<https://www.lds.org/manual/marriage-and-family-relations-participants-study-guide/part-a-strengthening-marriages/lesson-5-responding-to-challenges-through-positive-communication.p1?lang=eng>

Brother Brent Barlow posed a question to a group of priesthood brethren: "How many of you would like to receive a revelation?" Every hand went up. He then suggested that they all go home and ask their wives how they could be better husbands. He added, "I followed my own advice, and had a very informative discussion with [my wife] Susan for more than an hour that afternoon!" ("To Build a Better Marriage," Ensign, Sept. 1992, 7). A conversation like that could be a revelation for any of us.

Listening with Love

Quiz: https://www.lds.org/bc/content/shared/content/images/gospel-library/manual/35850/35850_000_005_02-handout2.pdf

https://www.lds.org/bc/content/shared/content/images/gospel-library/manual/35850/35850_000_005_03-handout3.pdf

[Colossians 3:8](#)

Listening with Love

What are some troubles or difficulties that can come to a married couple? (Consider writing participants' answers on the chalkboard. Answers may include those listed below.)

- a. Disagreements
- b. Selfishness
- c. Hurt feelings
- d. Bad health
- e. Childlessness
- f. Aging
- g. Family members with disabilities
- h. Trying to find fulfillment when all the children have moved away from home
- i. Death of loved ones
- j. Financial problems
- k. Wayward children
- l. Natural disasters

Point out that some challenges come as a result of difficulties in the marriage relationship.

Others come as a natural part of life. <https://www.lds.org/manual/marriage-and-family-relations-instructors-manual/part-a-strengthening-marriages/lesson-4-responding-to-challenges-in-marriage?lang=eng>

What benefits can come to a husband and wife when they listen carefully and lovingly to each other? (Answers may include those listed below.)

- a. They learn more about each other's true feelings and motivations.
 - b. They seek to understand before making judgments or offering advice.
 - c. Each person is more likely to feel valued and loved.
 - d. Each person is less likely to be defensive and more likely to communicate openly.
- What can get in the way of couples really listening to each other? (Answers may include busy schedules, failure to take time to listen, and lack of interest in each other's responsibilities.)
 - What can marriage partners do to become better listeners? (In addition to asking for participants' ideas, consider sharing those listed below.)
- a. Take time to talk together. Eliminate distractions, giving all attention to one another.
 - b. Listen to understand. Do not interrupt the person who is talking. If necessary, ask questions such as "Can you tell me more about that?" or "How did you feel when that happened?" or "I'm not sure I understand. Are you saying that ... ?"
 - c. Avoid getting angry or offended. Remember that in many cases, more than one opinion can be right.

<https://www.lds.org/manual/marriage-and-family-relations-instructors-manual/part-a-strengthening-marriages/lesson-5-responding-to-challenges-through-positive-communication?lang=eng>

Listening with Love

Finances & Communication

Some of the most difficult challenges in marriage arise in the area of finances. “The American Bar Association ... indicated that 89 percent of all divorces could be traced to quarrels and accusations over money” (Marvin J. Ashton, “One for the Money,” Ensign, July 1975, 72). Be willing to postpone or forgo some purchases in order to stay within your budget. Pay your tithing first, and avoid debt insofar as possible. Remember that spending fifty dollars a month less than you receive equals happiness and spending fifty more equals misery. The time may have come to get out the scissors and your credit cards and perform what Elder Jeffrey R. Holland called some “plastic surgery” (“Things We Have Learned—Together,” Ensign, June 1986, 30).

<https://www.lds.org/manual/marriage-and-family-relations-participants-study-guide/part-a-strengthening-marriages/lesson-5-responding-to-challenges-through-positive-communication.p1?lang=eng>

Listening with Love

Closure

Remember the central importance of your marriage.

- Pray for its success.
- Listen.
- Avoid “ceaseless pinpricking.”
- Keep your courtship alive.
- Be quick to say, “I’m sorry.”
- Learn to live within your means.
- Be a true partner in home and family responsibilities.

<https://www.lds.org/manual/marriage-and-family-relations-participants-study-guide/part-a-strengthening-marriages/lesson-5-responding-to-challenges-through-positive-communication.p1?lang=eng>

Elder Neal A. Maxwell:

“William Edward Norris said:

“If your lips can keep from slips,

Five things observe with care:

To whom you speak; of whom you speak;

And how, and when, and where.

Opening Ourselves To Communication

“Thus one of the biggest blocks to Christian communication is that we are so afraid of being misunderstood. So, when in doubt, we withhold. Yet Paul said to speak the truth in love; we can then take the chance. We worry (and understandably so) that some communications will only produce more distance. But silence is very risky, too. ...

“Usually, when we do not know somebody, it is difficult for us to trust them, and this becomes a restraint upon communication and growth. Opening the windows of the soul helps us to build healthy relationships. But if those windows are always closed or the blinds are drawn, it is difficult to help; one simply does not know what is needed” (All These Things Shall Give Thee Experience, 81–82).

<https://www.lds.org/manual/eternal-marriage-student-manual/communication?lang=eng>

Scenario: <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1981/09/breaking-the-cycle-a-case-study-of-conflict-in-marriage?lang=eng&query=communication+in+marriage>

Listening with Love

When is marriage easy?

When is marriage hard?

Key Principles

Tips for Communicating with Kids

if uncomfortable with a topic, do other things while talking - make cookies, rake leaves, etc....
kids will be uncomfortable with the direct eye contact on embarrassing topics

Tips for Newlyweds

Don't be afraid to have the difficult conversations - husband as life partner - must have all the information in order to make good decisions for the family.

think it really comes down to the extreme trust a husband-wife have to have for the long haul - building that trust is key via small steps, small steps

Anny: In terms of my marriage, I think much of our success has boiled down to the Golden Rule. When I'm tempted to be impatient, obnoxious, or judgmental, I picture myself in similar situations and imagine what sort of response I would want. Turns out the desired response is never impatient, obnoxious, or judgmental.

The other key I learned from my 7-year-old nephew, Jacob. It took me six or seven days to answer Brian's proposal and during that time I was desperate to discern the correct decision. I did all the things you're supposed to do -- fasting, prayer, blessing, scripture, temple, seeking wise counsel, writing, etc. etc. Finally, the Lord answered me with clarity through a phone call with Jacob. We were chatting about his birthday and out of the blue, he asked if he could help me decide whether or not to marry Brian. He asked several questions, paused, and then asked, "Is he your kindest friend?" At that moment, I knew I could say "yes" to the proposal because I could say "yes" to that question. We often talk about marrying your best friend - which is true -- but maybe kindness is just as important. It is possible to speak truth, disagree, and have tough conversations without surrendering honesty or authenticity and STILL be kind. And kindness prevents a multitude of things that are relationship/communication killers -- e.g. sarcasm, yelling, accusations, interrupting, etc.

Listening with Love

"Honey, how do these pants (this dress, this hair - whatever) look?"
we ask, and what we expect yet what we want are two different things - husband is in a tough spot - so how is he going to know what you are really looking for? The compliment, or, you really really want to know how the pants look?
so communication - how do you convey what you really want to know?

"waht do you think about these new pants?
"they look good"
"that's the right answer, but really - now this is the tell me the truth - is the length good, do they fit my butt?"
getting specific on what to look at helps the engineering husband

both are working, who is going to take care of what (divide up the household chores) - and then help without being asked when you see your partner is drowning and can't do it all for one reason or another -
showing partner appreciation - small note of thanks or simply taking the time to write I love you hmhm - when angry with each other - step away, breath, calm down - if raising voices it will never end well
never go to bed angry :-) said my mother-in-law

[Have you recognized the love of God in your life?](#)

Additional Information

We manifest our love for Heavenly Father by keeping His commandments and serving His children. Our expressions of love for others may include being kind to them, listening to them, mourning with them, comforting them, serving them, praying for them, sharing the gospel with them, and being their friend.

<https://www.lds.org/topics/love?lang=eng&query=%22listening+with+love%22>

Listening

<https://www.lds.org/manual/family-home-evening-resource-book/lesson-ideas/listening?lang=eng>

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<https://www.lds.org/liahona/2012/09/sharing-the-gospel-by-sharing-you?lang=eng>