

Coaching: Marriage Matters



Week 16

Listening for Learning

Hearing someone and listening to someone are two different actions. The act of hearing is the recognition that someone is speaking. The act of listening is being attentive to what is being said.

In marriage, listening is much more important than hearing. For instance, when you truly listen to your partner, you will wait until your partner is finished sharing to begin your reply. You will also refrain from drawing a conclusion before your partner has finished sharing.

When you decide to be an active listener, it creates an atmosphere of empathy with your spouse. And when you pay attention to the details and nuances of what is being said—you become more aware of what is being shared at the innermost level, what is at the root of your partner's concern.

If you are disinterested, distracted, self-defensive, or presumptuous when your partner is sharing, these behaviors can create barriers to listening. And if you really want to reply to your partner with love and compassion, listening is the prerequisite to any meaningful response. Careful listening is a gift you give to your partner who desires and deserves to be heard.

Sometimes listening is difficult because you may have an apprehension about dealing with what your partner is sharing. In this case, rather than tuning your partner out, share with your partner how difficult it is for you to process what is being shared.

There are also instances when your partner wants to talk about something that you have no particular interest in. In this case, it's important to make the effort to lend your time and your ear to your partner which will ensure your partner does not feel discounted or ignored.

While communication issues are one of the most common and frequent complaints in marriage (from both husbands and wives), if you want to improve and enhance your marriage, commit to really listening to your partner and experience how rewarding this can be to both of you!

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