

## How to Communicate Effectively With Your Spouse

Communication, especially with those closest to you, might seem extremely easy. After all, we use words, gestures, expressions and body language to get our points across. And when we do that, the other person should automatically receive the message we are sending them and respond. Right?

Wrong. The problem comes not with the message being sent, but with the interpretation of that message. Therefore, we have to make sure that when we do communicate with our spouses, that we send clear, non-conflicting signals and speech to get our message across.

To begin with, the first rule of thumb when communicating with a spouse or person who is close to you, is to always use "I" statements. These are statements that are suggested a lot by therapists and psychologists because they really do work. When speaking with your spouse, you want to keep them from getting the wrong message, and to understand that this is how YOU feel or think. So when you start to speak, make sure the first words out of your mouth are "I feel that..." "I think that..." "I need..." etc. To start a sentence with "You always..." "You need to..." or other such statements places them on the defensive and also communicates to them that you are deciding what they think and feel.

Secondly, make sure that you say what you mean, and mean what you say. If you don't, you may say something, but your posture, body language, or facial expression may conflict with what you are saying, and the person you are talking to is going to be receiving mixed messages. Especially when you are very close to someone, you get to be an expert at reading their body language and expressions. So if you say "It's fine if we go out to eat", but at the same time you are thinking that you really don't want to, your body language will generally give it away. So say what you mean, and mean what you say.

The next way to avoid mixed messages with your spouse is to rephrase messages that you are unsure of. Instead of assuming that you know what the other person is trying to get across, if you are unsure, simply rephrase what you think they are trying to get at. For example, you see your spouse doing the dishes. You walk up to your spouse and they say to you, "Sometimes I really wish you would help more around here". To you, this could mean a multitude of things. Do they want more help with the house in general? Are they simply calling you lazy? Do they just want help with the dishes? Maybe he or she is just tired and doesn't want to be doing dishes right now. So instead of assuming any of the above, a great way to communicate effectively is to say "Are you asking me to help more around here meaning the house, or would you like some help with the dishes?" Clarity is everything, and assumptions generally end up causing hurt feelings on both sides.

Finally, when communicating with your spouse, make sure that both of you are in a calm, rational mood when speaking with each other. If there is a lot of tension in the room, or if either of you is angry with the other, communication will generally be limited to expressions of anger, blame, and defensiveness. Take a "time out" for a while if you are both angry, and agree for the moment to disagree until you have both calmed down enough to speak to each other in a calm, collected manner.

Communication can be very easy when you take into account how the other person is receiving your messages. Make sure that your message is clear, honest, and reflective of your own feelings and non-placing feelings or thoughts on the other person. Take time to process your own thoughts and feelings, so that instead of "reacting" you "respond". There is a huge difference between a reaction and a response. A reaction is an instantaneous reply to what you are hearing. A response is thought-out, calm, and collected. Take just a few extra moments to process and respond instead of reacting.

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

### About the Author

Stephanie Davies is a 27 year old Missourian with a loving husband and an 8 year old son. She currently owns and operates her own business, Mystickal Incense & More, which sells handmade candles, incense, bath & body products and other handcrafted products at <http://www.mystickalincense.com>