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COMMUNICATION, ARTICLES, BOOKS & MORE!

This month's newsletter is about communicating – specifically communication within couples. We all know that 'communication is the secret to a great relationship'; however, I don't think many of us learn *how* to communicate well. We look at the 'how' of courageous couple's communication. And there's also links to articles, talks, and books.

And don't forget, our last article was about Addiction – the 'what', 'why' and 'what to do'. Click [here](#) to learn more, and to access all our previous articles.

If you're interested in our previous articles, please click [here](#)

COURAGEOUS COUPLE'S COMMUNICATION!

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Do you ever *want* to say something to your significant other, but you hold back, thinking "I can't hurt them" "They wouldn't understand" "They don't care" "I feel too vulnerable"? Well, you're not alone. Communication, or the lack of it, is the number one thing that couples seek help for, when it comes to Couples Therapy. Why? Because if we can't learn how to ask for what we want, we get angry, resentful, hurt, upset and we even feel disconnected. They're sure fire emotions and behaviour to erode a relationship. But there is hope. Read on to find out what you can do to courageously communicate within your relationship.

If you've got a suggestion for an article, or there's something more you would like to hear about, please send us an email - click [here](#)

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Why Do We Communicate The Way We Do?

Well, this goes back to your childhood. We learn the most effective ways to communicate in our immediate environment. If we had to yell to be heard as a child, we learn that this is how we communicate as adults. If we were 'seen and not heard', then we probably won't know that it's okay to ask for what we want. If we felt we had to lie to keep ourselves safe, guess what ... we'll do the same in our adult relationships. While these might have been helpful coping strategies in childhood, unfortunately they don't bode well for intimate adult connection.

What Type of Communication is Best?

Well, in a perfect world we would all 'give and take'. We would practice 'active listening' – where we listen without judgment, and listen without jumping to conclusions. We would take it in turns in discussions. We would understand how our partner feels, and express that we understand. And we would ask for our needs to be met, and meet our partner's needs (as much as possible). Sounds a bit like a Disney movie, doesn't it?

How Do We Have Courageous Communication?

Use these ten tips to help you step into difficult conversations, rather than detour around them.

1. **Comfort** – ensure you're both in a space that's comfortable, and if it's a difficult topic to talk about, consider somewhere 'neutral'. Best not to talk about money last thing at night when you go to bed.
2. **Connection** – ensure you give your partner your full attention. Turn off or put down any distracting technology. Lean in towards your partner a little bit.
3. **Contact** – eyes that is. Ensure you have eye contact. Look at your partner ... but don't stare them down ... that would be weird!
4. **Clarify** – using an "I feel ..., about (what – not who) What I would like is ..." statement. Own your feelings, communicate that you're aware that you're responsible for your own thoughts, feelings and behaviours. And don't use this as an opportunity to blame your partner.
5. **Collaborate** – invite your partner to share their perceptions. Ask them an open question (not a question that has a one or two word answer).
6. **Cease ... don't do it!** – whatever you do ... don't interrupt! Stay focused, attentive, and connected. Even if you don't agree. Yes, even if you don't agree.
7. **Clarify ... again** – reflect back to your partner what you think your partner is saying. You could say something like "What I hear you saying is ...". This lets your partner know that you really care about what they're saying, and you're ensuring you're understanding the message they're conveying.
8. **Consider** – work together on the issue, discuss different perspectives and ideas, and consider what is the most important thing for the relationship (this may not be what's most important for each individual).
9. **Calmly** – if you're trying to solve a problem, communicate your ideas about solutions with tentativeness – "Maybe we could try" "What if I did ... and you did ..." or "I'm stuck, what do you think?"
10. **Communicate continually** – keep the communication flowing, be willing to listen, make sure you are really hearing what your partner is saying, and don't be afraid to ask for more information.

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The Take Away

Honest, open and authentic communication takes work, and it takes risk; however, according to research, couples who are courageous in their communication are happier in their relationship, feel closer to their partner, and report higher sexual satisfaction.

Articles

Happy Couples : How to Keep Your Relationship Healthy

<https://www.apa.org/helpcenter/healthy-relationships.aspx>

This article describes the steps you can take to keep your romantic partnership in good working order.

Relationships and Communication

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/relationships-and-communication>

Good communication is an important part of all relationships and is an essential part of any healthy partnership.

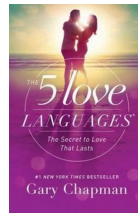
Talks

Talks That Might Just Save Your Relationship

https://www.ted.com/playlists/202/talks_that_just_might_save_you

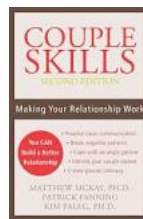
No matter how long you've been together, it never hurts to have a little refresher course on what really matters.

Books



The Five Love Languages by Garry Chapman

Explores the all-important languages of love, helping each partner discover which actions are interpreted by the other as loving and affirming, and which as indifferent and demeaning.



Couple Skills : Making Your Relationship Work by Kim Paleg, Matthew McKay, and Patrick Fanning

Couple Skills focuses on action and change. You can pick and choose what you most want to learn, focusing only on skills and chapters that are relevant to your needs. Each chapter covers one skill.

As always, if you would like some help, please feel free to contact us on 0488 954 195, admin@awakenpsychology.com.au or [click here](#)

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