

What is Effective Communication??

Jack and John are walking home from Mass one day. Jack wonders whether it would be all right to smoke while praying. John replies, "Why don't you ask the Priest?" So Jack goes up to the Priest and asks, "Priest, may I smoke while I pray?" The Priest says, "No, my son, you may not. That's utter disrespect to our religion." Jack goes back to his friend and tells him what the good Priest told him. John says, "I'm not surprised. You asked the wrong question. Let me try." And so John goes up to the Priest and asks, "Priest, may I pray while I smoke?" To which the Priest eagerly replies, "By all means, my son. By all means." (from: <https://www.fropky.com/effective-communication-vt27128.html>)



For me, after almost 40 years of pastoral counseling, the NUMBER ONE element of a healthy relationship is COMMUNICATION. How we share with another will make or break the bond between two people. It is about the words we use, *how* we use them, and what the rest of our body is broadcasting. It is about **honesty**, the courage to speak what you feel is truly going on inside, and about **listening** to the other, the courage to put your agenda aside to deeply hear what the other person is communicating. It is about being **vulnerable**, willing to risk your pride and comfort for the greater good of the relationship.

When I've had couples in for pre-marital counseling, we concentrate on communication. In fact, I tell them that they will go through some painfully challenging times in their marriage but, if they learn healthy communication skills and practice them, they will be able to overcome *any* obstacle in their path. Join that to **perseverance**. There needs to be the commitment to stay the course even when the weather gets rough.

First priority is to learn, improve, and stay on the journey together. There will be screw up's and victories. But the personal resolve to always be learning and changing is priceless.

The Bible has a single word that sums all of this up: LOVE. Love is the vital communication that gives life and hope to any relationship. It energizes, inspires, and transforms. Jesus was all about love in its most abundant form. He loved the unlovable, empowered the powerless, and healed the broken. And he continues today. He communicated the perfect essence of God: undiluted, relentless, passionate LOVE. This free gift is available to us today. You don't have to jump through hoops to get it. It's a gift from One who loves you right where you are.


Do you really want it? The Bible outlines some of the features of this love:

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never fails.

Jesus consistently demonstrated a love that **serves**. Love pours itself out for the greater good of the other. In fact, love achieves its fullest expression when it flows freely into one person, only to be freely given away. Love is a gift to be shared. But it is always shared from a servant's heart, not from an agenda or manipulation. The cool thing is that when we can actually receive and give this kind of love, we discover our true identity and purpose! Understanding who we are positions us to effectively communicate with those we care for. It allows us to listen both to our deepest desires and to the deepest desires of others. Real communication.

This Valentine's Day, I invite you to commit yourself to grow in love and learn how to communicate it. You'll never be the same. Are you ready for a change? Ask God to lead you in this ongoing quest. Let Him communicate with you.

Happy Valentine's Day, 

Scott

P.S. I'm here for you if you ever want to talk. No judgments. Just encouragement and support. Call 906-493-5233.