



## TWO TO DANCE AND TO TALK

### COMMUNICATION—THE GAME OF CHINESE WHISPERS

Type “communication” in a search engine and you will receive millions of hits. We communicate with our surrounding starting with our first scream in the delivery ward until our last breath. At work we receive a lot of feedback so that help us learn, but in our private life we don’t which is why many of us have problems in our relationships.

#### WHAT THE COMMUNICATION SHOULD BE LIKE IN A RELATIONSHIP?

No matter where you are in the world, good communication boils down to the following: **Partnership** meaning a) not imposing one’s point of view, b) expressing true intentions, c) respecting partner’s opinion, d) focusing on partner’s specific behavior, e) being open to receiving verbal and non-verbal signals,

**Effective** meaning checking for the other side’s correct understanding of the author’s intentions in meritum, goal and emotional.

#### WHAT HINDERS GOOD COMMUNICATION IN A RELATIONSHIP?

In short, everything that makes us different, especially in heterosexual relationships. John Gray’s famous book “Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus” became a first step in explaining communication style differences. The main ones are:

##### Goal perception

*Women:* a goal usually has many layers or points of view, a wider eye-view includes many pieces,

*Men:* a goal maybe multilayered, focus on the main part by narrowing of eye-view,

##### Attitude toward achieving the goal

*Women:* a goal is to find a solution satisfying many points of views,

*Men:* the priority is achieving a solution even without including other points of view.

##### Value put on the emotional component of communication

*Women:* high, accented in upbringing, aimed to develop conforming behavior, building relations and decreasing tension, e.g. commenting, discussing, or complaining,

*Men:* low, not accented in upbringing or even encouraged to ignore or block as unnecessary, e.g. “stop crying and just do it”,

##### Goal of communicating

*Women:* searching more often for support than a solution,

*Men:* searching more for solution rather than support

#### HOW TO STOP THE VICIOUS CYCLE AND BUILD MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING?

Our communication style is first shaped in childhood, and later by modeling the behavior of significant people around us including the media. Though we cannot change it completely, changing some elements helps achieving different, desired outcome and reactions.

Try being attentive to these aspects of your communication style e.g. for a week:

##### Single– vs multilayered

*Women:* one topic, ‘park’ any other aspects to return to them separately,

*Men:* pay attention to other connected topics, acknowledge to return to later,

##### Support vs solution

*Women:* acknowledge and appreciate the offered solution, state your expectation of this conversation,

*Men:* ask for the purpose of this conversation, if it is to help, discuss, or simply hear out.

##### Expressing vs not expressing expectations

*Women:* state your expectations in a precise and task-oriented manner,

*Men:* be attentive to non-verbal signals as cues of additional expectations.

##### Soft and polite vs hard and to-the-point

*Women:* express your thoughts precisely and unapologetically, avoid language softeners such as “perhaps I’m wrong but...” or “I believe that...”,

*Men:* smile and keep eye contact, assume non-aggressive body stance, appreciate and acknowledge, be mindful of critical opinions.

Build a connection and prevent mix-ups in your relationship starting with your next conversation!

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## 3 C's OF NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION!

### Context

includes the environment of situation, the history between the people, and other factors like each person's role.

### Clusters

prevents allowing a single gesture or movement to determine a person's state of mind or emotion.

### Congruence

checks for matching of verbal and nonverbal parts of the message.

Jeff Thompson, Ph.D. for [Psychology Today](#)

*"In the end it is a conversation that keeps us together, be it in marriage or in friendship."*

**Oscar Wilde**

## DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS ABOUT MONEY

When money is the background of any conflict, it is poisonous for any relationship. The result - lack of conversation, hurt feelings and distance. That's why it is worth trying to talk again about it to build a healthier relationship where money is not a taboo.

It is perfectly normal that though two people are in a relationship, they have different attitudes and opinions on money and personal finances. One is always more thrifty than the other. The key is to accept this difference and come up with a mutually agreed upon solution.

Here are a few steps to build better understanding and better finances:

- Together build a list of all your income streams and your spending, especially if it is hard for you to stick to a budget or if the partner is not even interested in building one.
- Review all spending starting with day-to-day ones, monthly and annual. Make sure to include all credit cards, mortgage payments, and retirement contributions.
- List all the issues and emotions attached, however phrase them without criticizing the other side. Make sure not to get into a fight.
- Make a list of all the actions you both can take to improve your finances. Make sure to acknowledge and appreciate each idea.
- Write down the plan and include the date you return to this conversation. Make it a point not to discuss it outside the established appointment for the next talk.

Don't give up if you have trouble using the above steps to find solutions yourself. Find a professional to help you to take a fresh look at the whole situation, to overcome the communication barrier and to build a plan.

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