

# **WILL YOU COMMUNICATE WITH ME?**

In the last lesson you learned the importance of emotional and physical intimacy. You also learned the importance of telling your partner what is important to you.

In this lesson, you'll learn more about communication strategies and the different ways people understand what is said to them.

## **COMMUNICATION IS AN INTERACTION BETWEEN FOUR ELEMENTS**

Would you believe that 85% of communication is nonverbal? That's why there are tortuous misunderstandings with texts and emails. You don't see or hear the nonverbal parts of the message.

Complete communication consists of four common elements. **When any one element is missing, communicating what you truly mean is difficult.**

## **CONSIDER THESE FOUR ELEMENTS:**

1. **The words you use are crucial.** When you respond without thinking, you won't phrase things as carefully as when you are being thoughtful.
  - **Use "I" statements as much as possible.**  
"I felt frightened when you didn't call when you were going to be late. Would you help put my mind at ease by sending a text or giving me a quick phone call?"
  - You want to communicate your feelings. Using the example above as a template, say "I felt \_\_\_\_\_ when \_\_\_\_\_. Would you please (or would it be possible to) \_\_\_\_\_?"
  - You want to avoid, "You scared me to death when you were late. Don't you care about me?"
  - **Avoid using words such as "always" or "never."** Stick to what is happening now

even if it has happened 100 times in the past. When you say “never,” your partner will point out a time when they did do it.

2. **Tone of voice can reveal your subconscious feelings.** Some professions train themselves to keep emotion from their voice. How you say the same words can change the meaning completely.
  - Hearing the words “I love you” can be a wonderful experience. Imagine how you would receive the words if someone snarled at you when they said them... or used an angry tone of voice... or they were said matter of factly in the same way as “Have you seen my shoes?”
  - **Tone of voice coupled with body language adds more meaning to the words.** Consider your emotional response to the following utterances of “I love you.”
  - In one case they are saying the words while looking off in the distance at something and scowling. In the other situation they are looking deeply into your eyes, holding your hand while

saying “I love you.”

3. **Body language**, as in looking off in the distance or looking in your eyes, gives you a more complete understanding of the words spoken. **In many situations, you’ll know how someone is feeling by watching how they stand and position their body.**
  - Other body language signals are the set of the jaw, smiling, scowling, or the position of the head and hands.
  - How would you interpret this: Your partner is standing in front of you with lips in a thin line and their hands clenched in a fist held stiffly by their sides? Or this: Your partner is in front of you with their face relaxed and mouth in a slight smile. Their arms extended towards you.
4. **Your actions will communicate whether your words are true or not.**
  - For example, if you tell someone they’re important but don’t keep your

commitments, they'll doubt their importance.

## COMMUNICATION AND LEARNING STYLES

In the United States, people believe it's important to look someone in the eye when speaking. However, there could be good reasons why people don't look at you when they listen or even talk to you.

**Consider these ideas:**

1. **Auditory learners usually look down or away from you when listening.** They become distracted by too much sensory input.
2. **People sensitive to sensory information will limit what they see, hear, feel, and touch.** They will avoid looking at you, so they don't experience sensory overload. Sensory overload could cause them to shut down emotionally.
3. **Introverts and extroverts process information differently.**

- An extroverted thinker can talk while they work something out. They might begin with one idea and then end up in a totally different place.
- An introvert processes information internally. They take in all the information they need and give only the end results.
- If you ask an introvert and an extrovert a question, and they both know exactly the same amount of information, the extrovert will answer immediately, and the introvert will wait a few seconds. This time lag is related to how they process information.

4. **The way men's and women's brains are constructed contribute to communication differences.** The brain has a part called the corpus callosum which runs between the two sides. It's responsible for transmitting information from one side of the brain to the other.

- Women's corpus callosum is twice as large as men's. This means women have an eight-lane highway while men have a

four-lane highway between the right and left brain.

- It will generally take guys longer to assess a situation, switch to the other side of the brain to find out how they feel, and then switch back to the left side to communicate what they discovered.
- By the time men have accessed their thoughts and feelings and gotten them out, women could be wondering what's wrong with them. True, this is only a matter of seconds, but it can result in communication challenges.

## **SUMMARY AND REFLECTION**

Communication is a combination of words, tone of voice, body language, and actions. All need to be in sync for good communication.

After you take a few minutes to reflect on the following questions, you'll be ready to address the topics of the next lesson, sexuality and sensuality.

# HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO DO TODAY

## REFLECTION

1. Recall a time when someone totally misunderstood a text or email you wrote. Imagine how you would have spoken the words and what body language you would have used.
2. What family and friends seem to be extroverted thinkers?
3. What family and friends seem to be introverted thinkers?

4. What family and friends seem overwhelmed by too much sensory information?