

Communication

One of the keys to having a healthy relationship is maintaining good communication. The following tips and guidelines should help facilitate positive communication between you and your partner.

- Wait for the right time. If something is bothering you and you'd like to talk to your partner about it, make sure that you bring it up at an appropriate time. Wait to talk to your partner in person and when he or she is not doing anything important. Avoid interruptions by talking to your partner in a private place, unless you do not feel safe. Try not to start a serious conversation with your partner when he or she is going to sleep or stressed about something else.
- Watch your body language. Show your partner that you are listening and engaged by maintaining eye contact, sitting up straight and not answering your phone or texts. Don't cross your arms, sigh or roll your eyes.
- Check your wording. Sometimes the way that we frame a discussion can impact the way that people understand us. People immediately become defensive and less receptive when they believe that they're under attack. To avoid this sort of interaction, try using phrases that begin with "we" and "I," instead of "you." For example, instead of saying, "You have been distant with me," you may instead choose to say, "I feel as if we haven't been as close lately."
- Take a moment. Step back and take a breather before you start the conversation. You might even want to wait a day or two to assess your feelings about the issue you want to address.
- Once the conversation is over and the issue is resolved, let it go. Holding onto past wrongs can cause resentment and bitterness.

For more information and tips on healthy communication in relationships, please visit www.loveisrespect.org.

This content was adapted from the following sources:

- Gottman, J.M. & Silver, N. (1999). The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work. New York: Crown Publishers, Inc.
- McKay, M., Davis, M., & Fanning, P. (1983). MESSAGES: The Communication Book. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications.