

# COMMUNICATION

## AVOID NEGATIVE COMMUNICATION

Part of the way we develop good communication is to avoid negative communication patterns. Here are some negative patterns to avoid:

Avoidance (don't talk about it)

Withdrawal of one party

Changing the topic

Agreeing too easily

Arguing

## 5 LEVELS OF COMMUNICATION

- 1) Cliches, casual conversation
- 2) Reporting of facts
- 3) Ideas and judgements
- 4) Feelings and emotions
- 5) Open, honest sharing on a deep, personal level

## PRACTICE POSITIVE COMMUNICATION

A very important key to good communication is to consistently practice positive communication. Following are some biblical principles (from Eph 4:15, 29; Col 4:6; Jm 1:19, 1:26, 3:9-12; Proverbs 16:24, 10:19, 10:32, 11:9, 11:12-13, 12:18, 12:25, 13:3, 15:1, 15:28, 16:21, 16:24, 17:9, 17:27, 21:23, 25:11, 26:20, 26:28, 29:11, 29:20; I Pet 3:10):

- 1) Avoid unwholesome, unedifying, evil, deceitful, perverse, destructive, reckless, negative communication
- 2) Don't share negative experiences of your spouse/friends with others
- 3) Sometimes better to say nothing than fuel an argument or stir up strife

- 4) Pursue positive/edifying communication. Conversation should be "full of grace" and "seasoned with salt". Kind, gentle and pleasant words all benefit the hearer.
- 5) Be "quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to become angry"
- 6) Think before you speak; don't speak in haste.
- 7) Keep secrets and confidences.

### **WAYS TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION**

Here are some ways to improve communication from the Navigators:

- 1) Don't assume you know - ask.
- 2) Provide an open, permissive, accepting atmosphere.
- 3) Use compliments freely.
- 4) Pray for each other, and together.
- 5) Be willing to disagree, but in a gentle way.
- 6) Concentrate on being a good listener.
- 7) Build up your friend/mate's self-esteem.
- 8) Seek more to understand than to be understood.

- 9) When you are wrong or have sinned against your friend/mate, admit it and ask forgiveness. Put it into words: "Will you forgive me?" and "Yes, I forgive you".

## **LISTENING**

God gave us two ears and only one mouth -- I wonder if He was trying to tell us something! The Bible says that we should "be quick to listen, slow to speak" (Js 1:19); we should listen before we answer (Prov 18:13); listening leads to wisdom (Prov 19:20).

Here are some steps to improve our listening skills:

- 1) Give the speaker your undivided attention
- 2) Show your attentiveness with body language
- 3) Rephrase or re-state key statements
- 4) Let the other person finish the sentence
- 5) Express your feelings (use "I feel"; avoid negatives like "you never..")
- 6) Be careful about supplying solutions, when an attentive and sympathetic listener is needed