

Look before you speak!

Everybody likes to speak. Few think of listening. Most people think that 'Communication' is conveying what is in one's mind. There are many manuals and courses to guide you to make yourself

There are few things we need to keep in mind about listening in family life. The first thing is to have an active interest in the person. Listen to the person, not only to the words. Let your listening show how much you love your mate.

heard, how to motivate people with your words etc. Rarely do we hear much about courses on listening. However listening is a very important factor in building relationships especially family life.

Listening is not the same as hearing. Hearing is passive. Listening implies actively paying attention.

Moreover hearing focuses on the content. When I listen, I pay attention to what is said and also to the person of the speaker. So, listening is not only receiving what is said, but also a relationship between me and the one who is speaking. Hence, attentive listening strengthens family relationship.

Quality of my hearing will depend on the quality of my listening. That will depend on a few things such as my mental and physical disposition at the time of listening, attitude and feeling towards the speaker, my interest in the subject etc.

Problems occur in family life when both partners want to speak while both are not inclined to listen. An example is when both come together after a day of hard work and both are tired. Both have something to say and each one is itching to say that. Both want to get the attention and complain, "You are not listening to me." At such time your husband will feel disgusted if you begin to pour out your mind when he is not in a mood to listen. If it happens often, your husband will experience a internal resistance to listen to you and finally not paying attention to you will become a habit. Similarly, if you are the husband and you begin to tell many things or ask many questions when your wife is not inclined to listen, she may not hear most of what you say and if you do it often, she will lose interest in listening to you. Gradually you will see that you are moving apart from each other. So the first principle here is, "Look before you speak." See if your partner is tired, preoccupied or busy. Speak when you partner is free enough to listen to you. When both are tired or preoccupied it is better to limit the conversation to the essentials, but show your concern for each other through nonverbal signs.

And when you listen, do it with full attention. If you are unable to give full attention, ask for a time when both of you are disposed to listen to each other. But later it is your duty to remind if your partner forgets, so that you do not give the impression that you are avoiding the issue.

When two young persons are in love they listen, not only to what is said, but also to the person. In fact they give more importance to the person than the words spoken. So also in family life, listening has a special significance because you are interested not only in the topic but also in the person. Your spouse is your life partner and your wellbeing and happiness depends very much on his or her wellbeing and happiness. So when you pay attention to your partner you not only hear the content but also to show concern and interest in the person through your body language. But most of the time we get carried away by the topic and forget the person. So, we don't get sufficiently connected.

