

Commandments of Clean Communication

1. **Avoid judgmental words and loaded terms-** Words or zingers that convey to you partner that he or she is flawed. "Total lack of effort...childish behavior... acting helpless... thoughtless as usual".
2. **Avoid global labels.** Global labels are generalized condemnation of a partner's identity. Stupid... crazy...selfish...lazy...curse words etc.
3. **Avoid "you messages of blame and accusation.** "you are never home on time"... you never go anywhere with me... you leave me all the work...You never ask what I want...You're a lot more interested in your work than me". Consider using "I" messages. For example:
"You're never here when there's work to be done" (you message)
" I feel tired and irritated when I put the groceries away alone (I message)
4. **Avoid old history.** Clean communication sticks with the issue at hand, for example if someone was to say "New Year's the same dammed thing". The message it's sending is "You're bad, you're bad, and you're bad!
5. **Avoid negative comparisons.** Negative comparisons never resolve anything. Their sole function is to punish and attack. Clean communication doesn't make your partner feel bad about him or herself.
6. **Avoid threats.** The basic message contained in a threat is: you're bad, and I'm going to punish you. The "you are bad" message is painful enough, but the deliberate intention to hurt is tremendously destructive to your relationship.
7. **Describe your feelings rather than attack with them.** When you describe your feelings, you use clarifying words to make them understood, "I'm sad and tearful"... "I am feeling rather hurt and withdrawn". When attacking often your affect becomes a weapon, your voice gets loud, harsh, threatening, or sarcastic.
8. **Keep body language open and receptive.** Your body says how open and willing you are to communicate. When you have pinched lips or a tight jaw, when you are frowning, or when your arms are folded or when you're leaning away or pointing an accusing finger. For good open communication, keep good eye contact, nod while you're listening, keep your arms uncrossed, lean slightly forward if you are sitting and keep your face loose and relaxed.
9. **Use whole messages.** Whole messages consist of observations, thoughts, feelings, and needs or wants;
Observation are states of fact that are neutral without judgements or inferences, "Yesterday it rained nonstop from 10:00 till 3:30"
Thoughts are your beliefs, opinions, theories, and interpretations of a situation. Its only your understanding and not absolute truth. "my idea was...., I wondered if... I worried that... or the why I say it was..." then state your feelings.