



COMMUNICATION

“Marriage is a team sport; you either win together or lose together.”

DAILY DIALOGUE AND DAILY COMPLIMENTS

Daily Dialogue is an intentional effort to talk about your relationship, rather than discussing your activities that day. The focus of this dialogue should be on your feelings about each other and your lives together. Set aside five minutes per day to discuss the following:

- *What did you most enjoy about your relationship today?*
- *What was dissatisfying about your relationship today?*
- *How can you be helpful to each other?*

Daily Compliments help you focus on the positive things you like about each other. Every day give your partner at least one genuine compliment. These can be general (*“you are fun to be with”*) or specific (*“I appreciate that you were on time for the concert”*).

• COMMUNICATION SKILLS TO INCREASE INTIMACY •

1. **Give full attention to your partner when talking.** Turn off the phone, shut off the television, make eye contact.
2. **Focus on the good qualities in each other and often praise each other.**
3. **Be assertive.** Share your thoughts, feelings, and needs.
A good way to be assertive without being critical is to use “I” rather than “You” statements. (e.g. *“I worry when you don’t let me know you’ll be late”* rather than *“You are always late”*).
4. **Avoid criticism.**
5. **If you must criticize, balance it with at least one positive comment.**
(e.g. *“I appreciate how you take the trash out each week. In the future can you remember to also wheel the trash can back from the end of the driveway?”*).
6. **Listen to understand, not to judge.**
7. **Use active listening.** Summarize your partner’s comments before sharing your own reactions or feelings.
8. **Avoid blaming each other and work together for a solution.**
9. **Use the Ten Steps approach.** For problems that come up again and again, use the *Ten Steps for Resolving Couple Conflict*.
10. **Seek counseling.** If you are not able to resolve issues, seek counseling before they become more serious.