

Good Listening in Relationships

Why do couples have such a difficult time understanding each other? As we evolve it is becoming more and more difficult to really hear what other people are saying. Really listening and understanding another person doesn't just happen automatically.

When people communicate, the message is often lost or misinterpreted for many reasons. The first place communication gets lost is if the receiver is unaware that their partner is trying to send an important message. So it can help to clearly ask them if they are available to have a discussion. The second place communication gets lost is if the receiver is not available intellectually or emotionally. So the person in need of being heard needs to be willing to wait until the receiver can listen with full attention.

The next problem with listening occurs because in most interactions. At the same time someone sends us a message we are busy in our own heads formulating our response. This keeps us from really hearing and understanding the information being sent. In order to truly listen to and understand your partner it is important to practice putting your thoughts, emotions, perceptions and beliefs on the back burner and work on really understanding what is going on inside their head. This doesn't mean that you have to agree with what they are saying. It does mean you have to work hard to understand why they are saying and feeling the way they are.

When couples achieve this level of hearing one another, they are giving a true gift that will increase intimacy and energy in a relationship. If your marriage is struggling find a safe place to learn to effectively communicate.

Submitted by Linda Miller-deBerard LCSW 1/20/2009