

## EXAMINE YOUR COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

We often talk about improving couple communication, but we do not always define what bad communication is. Here are ten examples of faulty communication:

1. Avoiding conflict. Hostility builds beneath the surface.
2. Oblique messages. Veiled comments or requests may get the message over, but often cause resentment.
3. Using another family member as a go-between. This creates destructive triangles in the family.
4. Getting family news second-hand. This is a sure indication that there is something wrong with the system.
5. Withholding important information. This creates a vacuum and opens up the way for fantasy, guesswork, or self-blame.
6. Avoiding sensitive areas. Examples are death, money, sex, religion, drugs, alcohol and family skeletons. The result is misunderstanding, guesswork, and the perpetuation of ignorance.
7. Lying – about anything. This always tends to shake trust and erect barriers.
8. Superficial listening. It is always best to give a straight message, even if it has to be – “I do not have time right now, but lets talk about it later.”
9. A closed attitude. This is a put-down because it means you are not interested in the opinions or concerns of another family member.
10. Refusing to respond or make the first move. This creates a barrier which can harden into alienation.

You might like to check your communication patterns under these ten headings, and see if you can find room for improvement.