

EXERCISES IN COMMUNICATION

These exercises are for couples who are having problems with communication or with 'hearing' or recognising each others needs. Please ensure that you have at least an hour free. Print out two copies, one for each of you. Unplug the telephone, make sure that you have both been to the loo and that you have no need to move from your chair for anything. Get yourselves a drink of wine, beer, soft drink, coffee or tea, whatever you like to relax with. Make sure that you have a clock or timer to hand and choose to sit in your comfiest chair.

THE GROUND RULES

1. Each couple takes it in turns to answer the questions ie partner A asks partner B Q1 – partner B then answers Q1 and when finished, asks partner A the same question. The person whose turn it is to answer must not under any circumstances be interrupted but listened to and really heard and understood. Do not interrupt even if you haven't understood what the other partner is saying.
2. Each person has a maximum of three minutes to answer each question – set the timer or note the time. You can finish before the three minutes is up but must not go over that time.
3. The person speaking has the right to be listened to and the person listening should respect what is being voiced and should not make any verbal or non-verbal expression that is negative or which indicates boredom or scorn, disrespect or lack of value and acceptance.
4. Honesty is of absolute importance but what is said should be said with respect and love – these exercises will only work if honesty and respect are the main ingredients
5. Agree not to leave your chair for an hour at least, whatever the provocation or without agreement from both sides.

If you BOTH agree to these ground rules then please begin.

TEN QUESTIONS

Q1. What do you feel are the three things in this relationship that make you really unhappy? (Just list the three things, please no blaming the other partner)

Q2. Tell me what I can do to make that better for you?

Q3. What three things do you like most about me?

Q4. Tell me what your three greatest personal goals are in life (not connected to the relationship necessarily).

Q5. How do I make your life better?

Q6. What would you do with your life if I dropped dead tomorrow?

Q7. What can I do sexually to make you enjoy it more? (this one may be too difficult for some couples so leave it out if both agree)

Q8. Tell me how you want the next ten years to be in our lives?

Q9. In the next week, tell me one thing that we can do together that will make you really happy (please try to carry this one out)

Q10. When/if we start to argue, how can we change the downward spiral into argument? (strategies for this are saying TIME OUT and then leaving the room for five minutes argument or saying WE ARE ARGUING – LET'S STOP and then both stopping and changing the subject whatever it is about)