

Talking Points

PRINCIPLES

1. **Speak without cursing, attacking, or name calling.** Say words to strengthen others. Ephesians 4:29
2. **Speak with kindness and in a caring manner.** Forgive from the heart. Ephesians 4:32
3. **Listen completely** without interrupting or becoming angry. James 1:19 Proverbs 18:13
4. **Listen to the heart** of the one speaking, not just to the words. 2 Timothy 2:7,14
5. **Seek to understand the message of the other.** Proverbs 18:2
6. **Speak with respect to all others** - including husbands and wives to each other. 1 Peter 2:17a, 3:7a; Ephesians 5:33
7. **Speak truthfully and in a loving manner.** Ephesians 4:15
8. **Speak without complaining and arguing.** Philippians 2:14
9. **Express thanks, appreciation, and gratitude** for what others do and for who they are. Ephesians 5:4; 1 Thessalonians 5:18
10. **Encourage those around you.** Hebrews 3:13
11. **Put the needs of others before your needs.** Speak with humility. Philippians 2:3
12. **Wise people listen to the advice of others,** including your spouse. Proverbs 12:15, 19:20
13. **Making demands drives people away.** Love and respect draw them closer. Proverbs 15:1
14. **Don't blame others.** Blame is a result of the fall and not consistent with our life in Christ. Genesis 3:12
15. **Be agreeable,** rather than argumentative or quarrelsome. Proverbs 26:21, 27:15

Talking Points

AVOID:

- ◆ **“YOU” statements.** Use “I” statements.
- ◆ **Using extremes,** such as “always” and “never.”
- ◆ **Asking “why” questions.**

NEGATIVE PATTERNS:

- ◆ **Criticism** - attacking the character of another, rather than talking about the behavior/action.
- ◆ **Contempt** - convey disgust by mocking, sarcasm, cynicism, eye rolling, hostile humor, etc.
- ◆ **Defensiveness** - shifting blame to another.
- ◆ **Stonewalling** - emotionally disengage, giving no feedback with words or expression.
- ◆ **Escalate** - bring the emotional level higher with attacks, tone of voice, volume.
- ◆ **Invalidate** - conveying that the other person's feelings, ideas, or thoughts have **no value or they are wrong.**
- ◆ **Negative interpretation** - when you take a statement as negative or believe the intent was to hurt. **Instead: Assume Good Will!**
- ◆ **Withdrawal/Avoidance:** when disagreement arises, you withdraw or avoid the conversation.

HELPFUL STRATEGIES:

- ◆ **Call timeout** to lower the emotional level - decide on time-in, 15 minutes to 24 hours later.
- ◆ **Respectfully disagree rather than arguing.** State your opinion and listen to the other, rather than trying to convince the other person that they are wrong and you are right.
- ◆ **Spend at least 15 minutes/day + 2-3 hours/week date** talking, alone, without distractions.