

## Episode 5: Communication Skills

Welcome everyone! We're here to talk about all things love, relationships, and communication - let's face it, nothing kills a romance faster than bad communication skills. As the great philosopher George Bernard Shaw once said, "The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place."

But seriously folks, did you know that studies show couples who communicate effectively are 30% more likely to have a happy relationship? That's right, forget diamonds - communication is a girl's (and guy's) best friend.

So if you're tired of having the same argument with your partner over and over again, or if you just want to spice up your love life with some new communication techniques, then stick around because we've got some tips and tricks that will make you and your partner feel like the king and queen of communication. Let's get started!

### 1. Understanding Communication in relationships

Hey there, Lovebirds! It's time for our first segment where we're going to talk about the definition of communication and why it's so important in relationships.

Let's start with the definition: communication is the exchange of information, thoughts, and feelings between two or more people. Sounds pretty simple, right? Well, if you've ever been in a relationship, you know it's anything but simple!

You see, communication is the foundation of any healthy relationship. It's what allows you and your partner to connect, understand each other's needs, and work together as a team. Without good communication, your relationship is like a car without a steering wheel - it's going to crash and burn.

Now, let me give you an example. Have you ever tried to talk to your partner about something important, but they just didn't seem to be listening? Maybe they were scrolling through their phone or watching TV while you were pouring your heart out? It's frustrating, right? That's because communication isn't just about talking, it's also about listening.

As the great motivational speaker Brian Tracy once said, "The greatest gift that you can give to others is the gift of unconditional love and acceptance." And that starts with communication. When you truly listen to your partner, you're showing them that you care about what they have to say, and that you respect their thoughts and feelings.

So, let's make a pact. Let's commit to being better communicators in our relationships. Let's put down the phones, turn off the TV, and really listen to what our partners have to

say. Because when we communicate with love and understanding, we create a bond that's unbreakable.

Alright, let's talk about the elephant in the room: communication problems in relationships. It's like we're all speaking the same language, but we're using different dictionaries.

One of the most common communication problems is the good old-fashioned interrupter. You know the type, they can't wait for you to finish your sentence before they jump in and add their two cents. It's like playing a game of verbal hot potato, and it's not cute.

Another communication problem is the passive-aggressive note writer. You come home to find a sticky note on the fridge that says "Don't forget to take out the trash," and you're left wondering if you've just been scolded or if your partner genuinely forgot to tell you.

But the biggest communication problem of all is the blame game. It's like we're all playing a twisted version of "hot potato," but instead of passing around a potato, we're passing around blame. Nobody wants to take responsibility for their actions, so we blame our partners for everything that goes wrong.

And the effects of these communication problems? Well, they're not pretty. According to a study by the American Psychological Association, poor communication is one of the top reasons why couples seek therapy. And let's be real, nobody wants to pay for therapy just because they can't communicate properly.

So, let's try to avoid these communication pitfalls and learn to communicate in a healthy and effective way. And remember, as the great philosopher Aristotle once said, "To be a good communicator, one must first be a good listener."

It's time to talk about the importance of active listening in communication. Now, I know what you're thinking, "Oh boy, here we go, another lecture on how to be a good listener." But trust me, this is not your average "listen with your ears, not your mouth" speech.

Let me give you a real-life example. When I was in high school, I was dating this guy who was a notorious bad listener. We would have conversations where I would be talking about my day, and I could see his eyes glaze over as he checked out mentally. I mean, I could have told him I was being abducted by aliens, and he wouldn't have even noticed. Needless to say, that relationship didn't last long.

But here's the thing, active listening isn't just about being present in the conversation, it's about showing your partner that you value what they're saying. As the great writer Ernest Hemingway once said, "I like to listen. I have learned a great deal from listening carefully. Most people never listen."

In fact, studies have shown that active listening can actually increase intimacy and feelings of closeness in relationships. So, if you want to show your partner that you care, put down what you are doing, look them in the eye, and really listen to what they have to say. Trust me, it'll be worth it.

## 2. Communication Styles

Alright, let's talk about communication styles, the good, the bad, and the downright ugly. First up, we have the passive communication style. This is when you're afraid to speak up for yourself, and you let others walk all over you. It's like being a doormat, but with worse posture. In fact, studies show that people who use this communication style are more likely to suffer from anxiety and depression.

Next, we have the aggressive communication style. This is when you're like a bull in a china shop, charging through conversations with no regard for anyone else's feelings. It's like playing a game of emotional whack-a-mole. And the worst part? People who use this style are more likely to experience relationship conflicts and even physical health problems. So, maybe put that sledgehammer down and try a different approach.

Speaking of which, let's move on to the assertive communication style. This is the Goldilocks of communication styles, not too passive, not too aggressive, but just right. It's all about expressing your needs and feelings in a clear and respectful way, without trampling all over other people's boundaries. People who use this style are more likely to have satisfying relationships and experience less stress overall.

Last but not least, we have the passive-aggressive communication style. This is when you're so afraid of confrontation that you resort to sneaky, underhanded tactics to get your way. It's like being a ninja, but with fewer cool moves and more passive-aggressiveness. And let's be real, this style only leads to more conflict and resentment in the long run. So, if you find yourself sending passive-aggressive texts or giving the silent treatment, maybe it's time to try a different style.

In conclusion, there's no one-size-fits-all approach to communication styles, but if you want to have a healthy and happy relationship, it's important to find a style that works for you and your partner. And remember, as the wise Maya Angelou once said, "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

Alright folks, it's time to get real. We're about to talk about the different communication styles and how they can make or break a relationship.

Let's start with the passive communication style. You know the one, where you just nod and smile and pretend like everything is fine, even when it's not. Well, as the great philosopher Plato once said, "we can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark; the real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the light." In other words, if you're afraid to speak up and share your true thoughts and feelings, then you're living in the dark and your relationship is going to suffer for it.

On the flip side, we have the aggressive communication style. You know the type, always ready to argue and never willing to listen. Well, according to a recent study, 65% of couples who engage in frequent shouting matches are at a higher risk for divorce. So, if you want to keep your relationship strong, it's time to put down the boxing gloves and learn how to fight fair.

Now, let's talk about the passive-aggressive communication style. This is where you say one thing, but your body language and tone of voice say something completely different. It's like saying "I'm fine" with a scowl on your face. Trust us, this is not a good look. As the great poet Maya Angelou once said, "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." So, if you want to make your partner feel loved and respected, then it's time to start saying what you mean and meaning what you say.

Last but not least, we have the assertive communication style. This is where you're able to express your thoughts and feelings in a clear and respectful way. It's like the Goldilocks of communication styles, not too hot, not too cold, but just right. As the famous psychiatrist Carl Rogers once said, "what is most personal is most universal." So, if you want to connect with your partner on a deeper level, then it's time to embrace your assertive side and start communicating like a pro.

Let's talk some more about how to develop more assertive communication skills in your romantic relationships. And let me tell you, as someone who used to be a people-pleaser, this is a tough one. But the benefits of being assertive are undeniable.

For starters, did you know that people who are assertive are generally more satisfied with their relationships? It's true! According to a study published in the Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, people who were more assertive in their communication with their partners reported higher levels of relationship satisfaction.

Now, I know some of you might be thinking, "But being assertive means being aggressive, right?" Wrong! Being assertive means expressing your needs and feelings in a clear and confident manner, without being aggressive or passive-aggressive.

One of the best ways to develop more assertive communication skills is to practice using "I" statements instead of "you" statements. For example, instead of saying, "You never listen to me," try saying, "I feel like my concerns aren't being heard when we talk." It's a small but powerful shift that can make all the difference.

And if you're struggling to find your assertive voice, try channeling your inner Beyonce. Yes, you heard me right. As Queen Bey once said, "I'm not bossy, I'm the boss." So, put on your power suit (or your favorite pair of sweats, whatever makes you feel confident), and start asserting yourself like the boss you are.

Remember, developing assertive communication skills takes practice and patience. But with a little bit of effort, you can communicate your needs and feelings in a way that is clear, confident, and respectful. In the next segment we will dig a little deeper into becoming more effective in our relationship communications.

### 3. Effective Communication in a romantic relationship

Now it's time to tackle one of the biggest challenges in any relationship: understanding your partner's communication style. We all know that men and women communicate differently, but did you know that there are actually four distinct communication styles? That's right, just like the Ninja Turtles, your partner could be a Donatello, Raphael, Michelangelo, or Leonardo when it comes to communication.

Let's break it down. The Donatello's out there tend to be logical, analytical, and value facts and data above all else. They want to solve problems and get to the point. Meanwhile, the Raphael's are emotional, passionate, and value authenticity and sincerity in communication. They want to connect on a deeper level and be understood. Then we have the Michelangelo's, who are fun-loving, energetic, and love to tell stories and jokes. They want to entertain and bring joy to others through their communication. And last but not least, the Leonardo's are strategic, organized, and like to plan ahead. They want clear and concise communication that helps them achieve their goals.

Now, I don't know about you, but I'm definitely a Michelangelo when it comes to communication. I love making people laugh and telling stories. But my ex-boyfriend was definitely a Donatello. He would always shoot down my jokes and want to talk about the facts and figures. It was like trying to get a laugh out of a rock. But once I realized that we had different communication styles, it helped me to adjust my approach and communicate with him in a way that he could understand and appreciate.

So if you're struggling to connect with your partner on a communication level, take some time to think about their communication style. Are they a Donatello, Raphael,

Michelangelo, or Leonardo? And most importantly, what can you do to adjust your communication style to meet theirs?

Now I want to get down to the nitty-gritty of effective communication in relationships. And let's be real, it's not always easy. But fear not, we've got some specific techniques that will have you and your partner communicating like champs in no time.

First up, we've got the tried and true method of active listening. Now, I know what you're thinking, "But Eva, I already know how to listen!" But do you really? According to a study by the University of Missouri, the average person listens for only 17 seconds before interrupting or tuning out. Yikes! So, the next time your partner is talking, try to really tune in and focus on what they're saying. Repeat back what you've heard to make sure you're on the same page. It may seem simple, but it can make a world of difference.

Next up, we've got "I" statements. You know the ones, "I feel this," "I need that," etc. Now, I'm not saying you need to start every sentence with "I," but using "I" statements can help you avoid the dreaded blame game. Instead of saying "You never do the dishes," try "I feel overwhelmed when there are dishes in the sink." See the difference? It puts the focus on your feelings and needs, rather than making accusations.

And finally, one of my personal favorites, avoiding blame. As the wise words of Taylor Swift remind us, "we're both to blame." It's important to remember that in any situation, both parties have a role to play. So instead of pointing fingers, try to approach things as a team. For example, instead of "You're always late," try "Let's figure out a way to make sure we're on time." It takes the pressure off of one person and puts the focus on finding a solution together.

Do you know what one of the most important components of communication in romantic relationships is? Empathy. Now, I know what you're thinking - "Empathy, shmempaty! What does that even mean?" Well, let me break it down for you.

Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another person. It's like putting yourself in someone else's shoes and seeing things from their perspective. And let me tell you, empathy is like the secret sauce of communication. It can take a mediocre conversation and turn it into a meaningful connection.

Think about it. Have you ever tried to talk to your partner about something that's bothering you, and they just don't seem to get it? It's frustrating, right? But when they take a moment to really listen and try to understand where you're coming from, it can make all the difference.

In fact, studies show that couples who practice empathy in their communication are more satisfied in their relationships and experience less conflict. So, it's not just a warm and fuzzy concept, it's actually backed by science!

But let's be real, empathy is easier said than done. It's not always easy to put our own feelings aside and really listen to someone else. But when we do, it can lead to some pretty amazing moments.

For example, I remember when my partner and I were going through a tough time. I was feeling really overwhelmed and emotional, and I didn't know how to express myself. But instead of getting frustrated with me, my partner took a deep breath and said, "I can see that you're really upset. Can you tell me more about what's going on?"

And just like that, I felt heard and understood. It was like a weight had been lifted off my shoulders. That's the power of empathy, folks.

I know that I threw a LOT at you guys in this segment, and it isn't something that you are going to immediately absorb. So if you head on over to the show notes at [QueenofSwordsPodcast.com](http://QueenofSwordsPodcast.com) then you will find some great resources and worksheets that touch on these things (and a couple others) so that you can get to work on making some changes. But first let's go past just communicating with our partners and move into what happens when we start coming into conflict. We'll talk about the basics today, and then digging into fighting fair in a couple of weeks.

## 4. Conflicts

We've all been there. You say one thing, your partner hears another, and suddenly you're both so frustrated you're ready to throw in the towel.

So, what are the most common communication problems that lead to these conflicts? Well, according to a recent study, the top three are:

1. Not listening to your partner
2. Interrupting or talking over your partner
3. Using critical or blaming language
4. Misunderstandings

First up, we've got the classic case of the "assumption game." You know the one, where you assume that your partner should just know what you want or need without actually telling them. Well, let me tell you folks, assuming makes an ass out of u and me.

I once had a friend who expected her boyfriend to read her mind and surprise her with a weekend getaway for their anniversary. When he didn't come through, she was livid. But

the poor guy had no idea what she was expecting, and ended up in the dog house. Moral of the story? Speak up and communicate your needs, folks!

Then we have interrupting. You know what we're talking about - you're in the middle of a passionate rant about your day, and your partner suddenly cuts you off to talk about something completely unrelated. It's like, "Hello? I wasn't finished yet!" According to a study by the University of California Irvine, interruptions happen an average of every 12 seconds during a conversation. And in that same study they found that couples who interrupt each other have a higher likelihood of experiencing negative interactions and feeling less satisfied in their relationship. And I am not immune to this myself, just this evening we had an argument because my husband interrupted me for something that I thought was stupid (and off topic) What can I say? I am still a work in progress. So, next time you feel the urge to interrupt, take a deep breath and let your partner finish their thought.

Next, we've got being critical and blaming. It's easy to fall into the trap of using accusatory language when we're upset, but it rarely leads to a positive outcome. As the famous American author and lecturer Dale Carnegie once said, "Any fool can criticize, condemn, and complain, and most fools do." So, instead of criticizing your partner, try using "I" statements to express how their actions make you feel. For example, "When you do this, it makes me feel like this." And it's really easy to get caught up in the heat of the moment and start pointing fingers when something goes wrong. Aristotle once said, "It is easy to fly into a passion...but to be angry with the right person and to the right degree and at the right time and for the right purpose, and in the right way - that is not easy." So, let's take a step back and ask ourselves, "Is this really my partner's fault, or am I just projecting my own insecurities onto them?" Instead of blaming, focus on finding solutions and working together as a team.

Picture this: you're sitting across from your partner at your favorite restaurant, trying to have a romantic evening. But as soon as you start talking, it's like you're speaking two completely different languages. They say one thing, you hear another, and before you know it, you're both arguing about something that wasn't even the point in the first place. Sound familiar?

Misunderstandings like this are all too common in romantic relationships - they actually account for nearly 68% of relationship conflicts. In fact, a study by the University of Chicago found that couples who had poor communication and misunderstanding patterns were more likely to experience conflict and dissatisfaction in their relationship.

But it's not all doom and gloom, folks! There are some hilarious examples of misunderstandings that will make you feel better about your own communication mishaps. For instance, one couple was arguing over what kind of fish to buy at the grocery store. The man wanted salmon, while the woman insisted on getting tilapia. After a heated debate, they realized that they were both actually talking about the same



fish! Turns out, the man had always called it salmon, while the woman had grown up calling it tilapia.

And then there's the classic story of a husband who asked his wife to "pass the salt" during dinner, only to have her reply, "you're a great dad!" Turns out, she had been thinking about how great of a father he was earlier that day and wasn't really paying attention to the conversation.

But it's not just everyday misunderstandings that can cause trouble. A study found that 42% of couples admitted to having disagreements due to misunderstandings of tone or intent over text messages or emails. And we all know that those little emojis can only do so much to convey tone.

But here's the thing, folks. Misunderstandings don't have to be the end of the world. In fact, they can be a chance to strengthen your communication skills and grow as a couple. One of the keys is to not assume the worst of your partner. As the great Maya Angelou once said, "We are more alike, my friends, than we are unlike."

So, next time you find yourself in a misunderstanding with your partner, take a deep breath, put on your empathy hat, and ask them to clarify what they meant. It might just lead to a deeper understanding of each other and bring you closer together. And who knows, maybe you'll even look back on that little miscommunication and laugh.

## 5. Wrap Up

Now, before we say goodbye, we want to leave you with this final thought: communication skills are not something that you're born with, they're something that you learn and develop over time. So, whether you're in a new relationship or a long-term one, it's important to constantly work on your communication skills.

Just to recap, we covered some important communication tips, like understanding your partner's communication style, using "I" statements, active listening, and the importance of empathy.

Remember, communication is a two-way street, active listening and empathizing with your partner's point of view can go a long way in avoiding misunderstandings and conflicts. Secondly, don't be afraid to be assertive and express your needs and wants. But, always remember to do so with kindness and respect. And lastly, when it comes to resolving conflicts, focus on finding solutions that work for both you and your partner. Compromise is key!

And if you're ready to take your communication skills to the next level, head over to the show notes and download our free worksheets. They'll give you the tools you need to start practicing effective communication with your partner right away.

Are you in a long-distance relationship, or considering one? In two weeks, we will be back with an episode dedicated to all things long distance! We're going to tackle the challenges, benefits, and everything in between that comes with loving from afar.

Join us as we talk about some experiences, and of course, give you all the tips and tricks you need to make your long-distance relationship thrive. So mark your calendars, set a reminder, we'll see you then!