

# 10 STEPS TO BETTER COMMUNICATION: A GUIDE TO BUILDING A STRONGER MARRIAGE

*fixmymarriagefast.com*



IMPROVE UNDERSTANDING, REBUILD TRUST, AND STRENGTHEN  
YOUR BOND THROUGH BETTER COMMUNICATION.

# Table of Contents

1. Introduction
2. Step 1: Active Listening
3. Step 2: Use “I” Statements
4. Step 3: Avoid the “Four Horsemen” of Communication
5. Step 4: Set Aside Regular “Check-In” Times
6. Step 5: Practice Empathy and Validation
7. Step 6: Be Mindful of Body Language
8. Step 7: Use Soft Start-Ups in Conflict
9. Step 8: Build a “Communication Safe Zone”
10. Step 9: Practice Patience and Stay Calm
11. Step 10: Be Consistent
12. Conclusion
13. Bonus: Communication Worksheets
14. Resources for Further Learning



# Introduction

Communication is the foundation of any successful marriage. It's the bridge that connects partners, helping them understand each other's needs, emotions, and perspectives. When communication falters, misunderstandings arise, creating distance and resentment. On the flip side, effective communication can turn a "Marriage From Divorce" into a fulfilling partnership.

In this guide, we'll break down 10 practical steps that can help you enhance communication, deepen understanding, and strengthen your marriage.



# Step 1: Active Listening

Active listening is the cornerstone of meaningful communication. It goes beyond simply hearing words—it's about truly understanding your partner's message, tone, and body language.

How to Practice Active Listening

Focus Entirely on Your Partner: Eliminate distractions like phones or TV.

Engage Non-verbally: Use eye contact, nodding, and leaning forward to show that you're listening.

Repeat Back What You Heard: Paraphrasing your partner's words can confirm your understanding and prevent misinterpretations.

Quick Exercise:

Spend 5 minutes practicing active listening with your partner. Focus entirely on what they're saying without planning your response.



## Step 2: Use "I" Statements

Using "I" statements allows you to express your feelings without making your partner feel attacked.

### Why "I" Statements Work

They shift the focus from blame to personal feelings.

They encourage open dialogue by reducing defensiveness.

### How to Use "I" Statements

Instead of: "You never listen to me!"

Try: "I feel unheard when I'm talking."

Instead of: "You always forget!"

Try: "I need more reminders about our plans."

Practice:

Take a common complaint and rewrite it using an "I" statement.



# Step 3: Avoid the “Four Horsemen” of Communication

The “Four Horsemen”—criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and stonewalling—are behaviors that can destroy relationships if left unchecked.

How to Replace the “Four Horsemen”

Criticism → Use constructive feedback: Focus on behavior, not character.

Contempt → Practice appreciation: Express gratitude often.

Defensiveness → Accept responsibility: Own up to mistakes.

Stonewalling → Take breaks: Step away from conflicts and return when calm.

Real-life Example:

A couple might transform, “You never help around the house!” (criticism) into, “I’d appreciate your help with the dishes tonight.”



# Step 4: Set Aside Regular "Check-In" Times

Scheduled check-ins create space for meaningful conversations and problem-solving.

## How to Structure Check-In Times

Daily 15-Minute Check-Ins: Spend 5 minutes each on sharing positives, discussing concerns, and planning together.

Weekly Check-Ins: Use longer sessions for deeper discussions about issues or goals.

## Example Agenda:

5 minutes: Share something positive.

5 minutes: Address concerns calmly.

5 minutes: Plan together for the week.



# Step 5: Practice Empathy and Validation

Empathy means trying to understand your partner's emotions, even if you don't agree with them.

## How to Show Empathy

**Acknowledge Feelings:** Use phrases like "I understand why you feel that way."

**Validate Concerns:** Even if you don't share the same view, acknowledge that their feelings are real and important.

## Role-Play Scenario:

Imagine your partner is upset about a miscommunication. Instead of dismissing it, try saying, "I understand that this made you feel frustrated. Let's talk about how we can prevent it next time."





# Step 6: Be Mindful of Body Language

Non-verbal cues like eye contact, facial expressions, and posture can make or break communication.

## Tips for Positive Body Language

**Maintain Eye Contact:** It shows interest and sincerity.

**Use Open Posture:** Avoid crossing arms, as it can signal defensiveness.

**Be Aware of Facial Expressions:** Ensure your expressions match your words.

## Exercise:

Spend a day observing your own body language. Pay attention to how it might be perceived by your partner.



# Step 7: Use Soft Start-Ups in Conflict

Soft start-ups help introduce difficult topics gently, reducing defensiveness and encouraging open dialogue.

## Examples of Soft Start-Ups

"I'd like to talk about something that's been bothering me. Can we discuss it?"

"I know this is hard, but I want us to work through it together."

## Quick Practice:

Think of a recent disagreement. Reframe it using a soft start-up.



# Step 8: Build a "Communication Safe Zone"

A communication "safe zone" is a designated space where both partners can share feelings, concerns, and needs without judgment.

## How to Create a Safe Zone

Set Ground Rules: No interrupting, no criticism, focus on listening.

Choose a Specific Location: This could be a cozy corner of your living room or even a favorite coffee shop.

## Action Step:

Designate a "safe zone" in your home and set clear ground rules with your partner.



# Step 9: Practice Patience and Stay Calm

Staying calm during heated discussions is critical for productive communication.

## Techniques to Stay Calm

**Deep Breathing:** Inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds, exhale for 4 seconds.

**Count to 10:** Give yourself a moment to collect your thoughts before responding.

**Take a Break:** If a discussion becomes too heated, agree to take a break and resume when calmer.

## Real-Life Example:

One couple reported significant improvement by simply taking a five-minute breather during intense discussions.



# Step 10: Be Consistent

Consistency is key to building trust and understanding over time.

## How Consistent Efforts Build Trust

Regular communication becomes a habit, reducing misunderstandings.

Consistency reinforces reliability, which is fundamental to trust.

## Weekly Challenge:

Choose one communication habit (e.g., daily check-ins, empathy) and maintain it for a week. Reflect on how it impacts your relationship.



# Conclusion

Good communication doesn't just happen overnight. It's built through small, consistent efforts over time. By applying these 10 steps regularly, you can transform your relationship into a thriving partnership, even if it once felt like a "Marriage From Divorce." Remember, every conversation is an opportunity to grow closer.



# Bonus: Communication Worksheets

Active Listening Checklist:

Mark off specific listening behaviors during conversations.

"I" Statement Templates:

Practice rewriting common complaints using "I" statements.

Daily Communication Log:

Track communication efforts, noting positives and areas for improvement.



# Resources for Further Learning

- Recommended Books:
  - The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work by John Gottman
  - Hold Me Tight by Dr. Sue Johnson
  - Nonviolent Communication by Marshall B. Rosenberg
- Courses:
- Check out Save My Marriage Today for comprehensive communication and relationship strategies.





# Encouragement

Take the first step toward better communication and a stronger marriage. Download our worksheets, apply these steps consistently, and watch your relationship transform.

For more personalized support, explore our blog posts or book a coaching session today!

[www.fixmymarriagefast.com](http://www.fixmymarriagefast.com)

