

Improving Your Relationship by Setting Aside Special Communication Time

By Peggy L. Ferguson, Ph.D.

Sometimes it is like the relationship gets lost in the process of living day to day and you spend all your energy taking care of all the details of that life. You might think about it occasionally and yearn for more communication with your beloved. You entertain the notion of actually sitting down and talking about feelings and your thoughts about the nature of your relationship. You used to talk about goals, dreams, ambitions, feelings, and things that happened when you were young. You used to make plans about vacations, and dreamy days spent together, just "being" and loving each other.

You may have even made some effort at having a date night, only to find that the conversation was short lived and that you rather quickly resorted to the "weather report", the "kids report", and the "chores list". After a while the date nights didn't seem worth the bother. Maybe you are just a little bored with your relationship. Maybe you feel like you have just drifted away from each other. You probably can't even remember when you stopped really having fun together and started "sleep-walking" through your marriage.

When it feels like your marriage is on "automatic" there are some things you can do to change that. If in the past, when you have carved out time to spend together, but struggled to find something out of the ordinary to talk about, you can take it one step further. There are some things that you can do to "jump start" the interest and passion in your marriage. You can rekindle the spark by carving out a "special time" for your relationship, and making it a priority. If you set aside a specific time each day or each week for couple communication or for relationship enrichment experiences, you will find your efforts worthwhile.

There are a number of different ways that you can open up the lines of communication and bridge the gap between you and your loved one. There are couples enrichment weekends that are sponsored by local churches, and structured or semi-structured communication exercises such as "[Couples Feelings Meetings](#)" and "The Honey Jar".

The "Honey Jar" is a conversation starter for couples, that assists in opening up those lines of communication and restoring the sense of "Us" that may be eroding. It consists of sentence stems, printed separately on business-type cards, and fitting neatly into a one quart mason jar thus "The Honey Jar". It also

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conveniently fits into a quart freezer bag to be tucked away in your purse, luggage, or vehicle glove compartment. It is designed to generate conversation about oneself and about the relationship in a non-threatening way. It has been found to be very helpful to couples at any stage of their committed relationship. A simple communication exercise that is established as a "Sacred event" can be tremendously helpful in assisting in creating the desired changes in your relationship. "Sacred event" can be defined as something over which nothing else takes priority. You decide on the day(s), time and place for the get together and let nothing derail you from spending this time together in sharing. An open, healthy, vital relationship benefits from such communication time, with that proverbial "ounce of prevention" outperforming the "pound of cure".

When spouses feel taken for granted, unimportant, shoved aside, or even bored with their spouse, these feelings can set the marriage up for conflict, a mindset of negative perceptions, hostility, rigidity, infidelity, and even divorce. A marriage can be revitalized before it gets into big trouble by simply restoring open, caring, interested communication. Something so simple can restore a sense of partnership and renewed interest in the relationship.

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"The Honey Jar" is a conversation starter for couples. It consists of 250 sentence stems, each one serving as an open-ended prompt to generate discussion. The Honey Jar is more than a jar of sentence stems. The Honey Jar was field tested by real couples for therapeutic value. It can assist couples in restoring a sense of self-confidence in re-establishing their connection and commitment. As couples use their time, attention and willingness to take risks with each other, a close, loving connection can re-emerge.

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