



## **Episode 6 - Transcript Communication in Marriage Pt. 1**

### **The Basics**

Tim: Thank you for joining Elaine and me today as we embark on a brand new series we're calling Communication in Marriage. And, although much of what we discuss today and in the next upcoming episodes will have to do with any relationship, we do want to specifically focus on communication as it relates to marriage.

Elaine: Today's episode is titled "The Basics of Communication. Communication in marriage is so critical, really in relationships in general. It's been said that communication is the lifeblood of any relationship. I love what you tell couples, Tim, when they're struggling in this area.

Tim: So what I usually say is communication is to marriage what skating is to ice hockey. If you don't know how to skate well you're probably not going to do a good job on the ice, in the game. In marriage, until we can learn to communicate well we're going to struggle in our relationship.

Elaine: The American Heritage Dictionary defines communication as the act of sharing thoughts or messages and information. We know from many references in Scripture that relationships are important to God. In order to have healthy god-honoring relationships it's important to understand the value of good communication. So we all need to be known and to know others. Someone once said that communication is depositing a part of yourself into another person. We've listed several passages in our show notes about communication and how to communicate to one another. Be sure to go over and look at those at our website at [www.relationalimpact.com](http://www.relationalimpact.com). But, today of all those amazing scriptures and all the truth about communication, I chose a particular passage out of Ephesians chapter 4 verses 25 through 32. To stress this point Ephesians 4:25 specifically says "wherefore putting away lying speak every man truth with his neighbor, for we are members of one another."

Tim: That's a great passage. This next passage is not very positive and sort of highlights the negative side of us. This is from the book of James chapter 3 starting in verse 6 where James writes, the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body and sets on fire the course of nature and it is set on fire by hell. For every kind of beast and bird of reptile and creature of the sea is tamed and has been tamed by mankind but no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil full of deadly poison.

Elaine: So true

Tim: The point that stands out to me is that James says "the tongue has a way of defiling the whole body." And, it can defile a marriage. It can defile relationships within a family. It can defile relationships at work. The Bible is encouraging us and urging us to pay attention to what you say, how you use your tongue. One of the things I do want to point out here is even though we can't fully control and tame the tongue, I think we can manage it.

Elaine: So true, Tim. And, we can all do better in that area. I'm sure. Colossians 4:6 says "Let your speech always be with Grace seasoned with salt that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

These are just a few of the many passages that show us the way to communicate and how important it is to God that we communicate in a right way, in a good way, in a way that lifts one another up.

Tim: When we do our workshops, we have this one workshop on communication, one of the questions we will ask the attendees is "What do you think the purpose of communication is? What do you think the purpose of having conversations is? And, why is that important? Some of the answers we get are:

#1 To connect. This could be emotionally. This could be simply to catch up after a long day. It's easy to drift from one another in marriage. We've talked about how busyness is a culprit for us and how it can steal our time together. Another purpose that we hear, is that communication is there to maintain unity. You can't really be a team without good communication. Some say the purpose of communication is to develop teamwork and to practically work together. I'll disclose here that I'm not a big sports fan. Anybody who knows me knows that. But, I do know a little bit about the Spurs. I've heard my friends talk about them and one of the compliments that my friends give the Spurs is that they work as a team or at least they did. It doesn't matter how good an individual player is, if he or she cannot learn to play as a team, the team will not be successful. So communications is really important.

Elaine: We'll just looking at these purposes for communication, I would say that one of the main purposes for me would be to connect. Because it's how I know you and you know me. And, I

love our connect time. I feel like, just taking a few minutes everyday to connect just makes me feel like, okay, Tim knows what's going on with me and I know what's going on with him.

Tim: Yes and we would agree that one of the purposes of communication is to connect. I think of a light switch in your house. When the switch is connected to the power source we have the effect of that. The positive effect. We have light and electricity in our room. But, if the switch is off then we don't have any positive effects from that power source. So we have to be able to connect with one another so the life can flow between each other as a couple.

Elaine: It's so true, we go through seasons of busyness and we can tell the difference between when we are connecting and when we're not. I'm sure you guys can too, as well. When it comes to connecting with one another in marriage there's four main ways a couple can connect. Emotionally; relationally; physically and spiritually. Let me just talk about the physical connection first. That would include our sexual connection but not just sexual. Something as simple as a meaningful touch or gentleness can be a physical connection. And, then the spiritual connection, and that would be our prayer time together, worshiping together, sharing one another's mission and vision; maybe even being on mission together; learning about spiritual things together; that's how we connect as a couple spiritually.

Tim: And then there is the emotional connection. This takes place when we share on an emotional level, which we're going to talk a little bit more about in a moment. This is going deep, you know, sharing at that heart level. And then the relational connection can be any shared experience like having fun, playing games together; going on outings. Just the social side of your relationship. This is a very important part as well.

Elaine: Well what's so interesting is different couples tend to connect better in certain areas than others. But, if we really want to find the true fulfillment that we all long for we will be connecting on all 4 cylinders as they say. So some couples might connect on the relational level but not on the spiritual level.

Tim: Like, they are best friends.

Elaine: Right, they really get along. They like each other. They have fun together but they don't share a spiritual connection. Others may connect on the spiritual level but not necessarily on the physical level, for whatever reason. It's definitely to our advantage as a couple to connect on all levels.

Tim: So we said that the purpose of communication is to connect. We could say that the goal of communication or a conversation is understanding. Here is a cartoon, here's what he heard his

wife say “Honey why don't you put your head in a vice and I'll turn the handle until your skull explodes.” This is what she actually said “Honey, why don't we turn off the TV and just talk.”

Elaine: I know, Tim, that you have felt that way at times.

Tim: I love that one.

Elaine: When I've said “Hey, can we talk? I can see that deer-in-the-headlights look in your eye, like, oh no what have I done.

Tim: Yes, So understanding one another is so very important. In fact First Peter 3:7 tells us husbands to live with your wife in an understanding way. That's not the easiest thing to do because we have to learn more about each other. I think because communication is so important there are obvious obstacles to communication especially in marriage. Just to list a few, one of those we already mentioned and that is sometimes we're just too busy. We have to schedule times to connect otherwise life will steal it, other things will steal it from us.

Elaine: Another obstacle is unresolved conflicts. We build these invisible walls between us. Maybe there's an offense that's unresolved. Maybe there was just an irritation and we just put it in her backpack of offences and we don't deal with it. Before you know it there is a lot of stuff there that hasn't been dealt with.

Tim: Sometimes it's a guilty conscience. Like if you're doing something that you don't want your mate to know about this is going to hinder your ability to connect and to communicate.

Elaine: True and then there's the whole defensiveness. Just protecting yourself. You're responding defensively when your mate is trying to connect with you. And that just sends off red flags. It says “hey what's going on?”

Tim: Well going back to when you said “Can we talk?” It's like, sometimes I put my ironman suit on and think woah let me get prepared for this. Another obstacle could be your upbringing. We've talked a little bit about that in episode 2. But, you know, people tend to be either a stuffer or a dumper when it comes to conversations. And like, Elaine and I. Now, I don't like to call Elaine a dumper because for some reason that doesn't fit her. For me, I was a stuffer. I would not want us to talk about things that bothered me. I didn't want to bring it up. I would just rather avoid it. Elaine, you would be more apt to talk about it and share all the events of your day. Sometimes I would get a glaze over my eyes at a certain point.

Elaine: Yea, I would use up all my words in just a little bit of time.

Tim: I did not have a very good communication skills going into marriage. I was raised with brothers. We simply didn't share things like that. It just wasn't a natural expression of our relationship. I have met a lot of guys who share the same experience. We have to learn how to communicate.

Elaine: Another obstacle is gender difference and like you said earlier, Tim, I'm able to verbally process things and I don't think about things in my mind for very long. I like to verbally talk it out. I call it brainstorming. I like to process what I'm thinking as I talk. That can be exhausting for you. I have learned, through the years, to find a girlfriend to do most of that with so Tim doesn't have to endure it. Then men are generally more internal and as a general rule men process internally. That's just the difference between male and female. Now there are exceptions to that rule and we all know them. Those are general terms.

Tim: The way that kind of worked with us is, you would want to talk about something and then I'm naturally thinking how can I solve this problem and of course you didn't want me to solve the problem. You wanted me just to listen, right? And, empathize. As long as I knew that going into the conversation I was fine. What we've had to do along the way is I have to just stop and ask "Is this something you want me to just listen to or do you want my input? Or do you want me to help you solve this? And you would tell me which it was and set me free.

Elaine: Yes it did! Well everyone has learned certain communication habits and we've developed a particular communication style.

Tim: A lot of the information we're covering now is really in the context of common sense communication. You can find levels of communication anywhere. This is not necessarily scriptural but this is just kind of something that we can all identify with. There seems to be about five levels of communication. So if you looked at this as a pyramid the first level of communication would be the cliché level. We call this elevator talk. You really don't have to have a relationship with a person to talk to them on this level.

Elaine: The second level would be fact. You have to imagine moving up the pyramid as we go through these different levels. You're in the elevator talk, then you move into fact. When you're in the facts stage of communication you're talking about important things like your bank account balance or your kids. Different important things like, "My mom is coming to stay for a while" which would be amazing!

Tim: That's very important.

Elaine: The next level is opinion. And opinions are different from facts. Facts are what we know. Opinions are what we think. So when you're sharing your opinions you're now moving to where you're talking about a position that you hold on the facts. That's a little more risky. When we start getting into the opinions level we want to make sure the person we're communicating with is a safe person and then we can get to that level.

Tim: The next level is the feelings level. So we've got cliché, fact, opinion, now Elaine, I have observed, in the couples that I worked with through the years, that most of those couples are living in the bottom three levels. They're living in the cliché, fact and some opinion level. I think that's because it's the safest. As you go up this pyramid and deeper into your relationship you will have to share your feelings. And of course, I had a problem with this growing up, I didn't really pay attention to my feelings. I actually didn't know what I was feeling. I remember one specific instance, we were leaving an event and you asked me the question like "How did that make you feel when this person said that to you?" I honestly answered "I don't know" and you are like, "you have to know, you have to know how you feel" and I'm like "I actually don't know how I feel." So a good friend of mine shared with me, he said, "Tim, listen, there are four broad basic categories of feelings." He said "You're either mad, sad, glad or scared." You are either mad, sad, glad, or scared. So you can memorize those and when Elaine asks "How are you feeling?" you can go to that list and answer. That's where I started becoming familiar with my emotional world and to be able to articulate what that is. Another thing that we have experienced that we hear people talk about is emotional capacity. Some people have a larger emotional capacity than others. In our relationship, if we would compare things, you have the emotional capacity of a 55 gallon drum. Whereas I might have the emotional capacity of a 16oz water bottle. That may not be exactly right but for the illustration it's helpful. You might go through the entire day solving problems and engaging people and even at the end of the day you have 25% of your emotional capacity with you. Where as mine might be exhausted by noon. What I've learned is that you can actually increase your emotional capacity. It takes work but the more we engage emotionally the more we are able to grow in our ability to connect emotionally.

Elaine: The next level is transparency. This is where we want to be. This is where we talk about our fears, our hopes, our dreams, our desires.

Transparency is more than what I think or more than what I feel. It's who I am. It's the willingness to be known and to be seen for who I really am. It's coming out of hiding. It's definitely safer in hiding for most people. It's very difficult for people to get into this level of transparency. Tim we've been privileged with getting to watch couples who stay in those lower stages cliché, fact and opinion, come into our office and really begin to open up with one another. It's just a beautiful, beautiful thing to see God work in their lives that way. If you've been listening to our other podcast, in episode 3 we talked about John and how difficult it was

for him to be transparent with his wife. Because of the lies that he believed. There are reasons that we choose to not be transparent and it would do us all well to get to the bottom of those reasons. Some of the time that issue is just about us. It's all within ourselves as to why we are not transparent with people. But often it's because the people we were involved with are not safe people to us. We feel unsafe and we don't want to open up. That's something we need to look at and realized maybe we need to choose other people. But when it comes to a marriage relationship, maybe we just need to communicate with our spouse and let them know that we're not feeling safe.

Tim: Some people don't really know where they are. In my illustration when you said "how did that make you feel?" I honestly didn't know and so it would be good to do sort of a self-assessment and ask yourself "what do I fear the most in life?" "what is it in your life that brings you the greatest joy?" "what are some of your dreams?" and "what motivates you to do what you do?" These are questions of the heart. These are the types of questions that help you grow emotionally and to connect emotionally. If you go deeper into your experience then you will find what God intended for your marriage. It's hard to experience the oneness and the authenticity of a relationship when you're stuck in those lower levels of communication.

Elaine: Now Tim, you're not suggesting that we go to deeper levels every time we talk. Surely not.

Tim; NO!

Elaine: I didn't think you were going there. However we do need to be able to go there when it's necessary. Avoiding transparency just robs us of our relationship with each other. It robs us in our relationship with God because chances are if we're not going to the transparency level with one another, we haven't been to that level with the Lord. That's the way he designed us, to expose ourselves to Him.

Tim: Just to summarize what we've covered so far, we said that God has designed us for human connection. We need to be known and we want to know others. The purpose of communication is to connect. The goal of communication or any conversation is to understand that other person. We talked about some common obstacles that we need to be aware of. We looked at the levels of communication and how these can help us assess where we are in our relationship.

Elaine: We would like to do something fun and roleplay a conversation that depicts moving from cliché all the way up to transparency in a single conversation. Let me stress that this is just for fun. Some of you already are really good at this but others of you might just be becoming

aware of the different levels. Wherever you find yourself maybe this will be helpful. As a disclaimer, the facts in this role play or fictional. We have no idea if our city has an ordinance like the one we're going to refer to. So don't hold us to this. Tim and I are just going to do this for you right now.

Tim: Hey Elaine, how was your day?

Elaine: Great! How about you?

Tim: Had a good day! Busy one for sure. I had five clients, lunch appointment, and a board meeting that went way too long. That's why I'm late.

Elaine: Wow! That is a busy!

Tim: So tell me about your day. What was yours like?

Elaine: Mine was pretty quiet. I worked on some writing this morning. I made a couple of phone calls to get our insurance figured out and you know, the regular chore stuff. I did meet Jane for lunch and she shared with me that her mom will be having a serious surgery next week and asked if we would pray for her. She also asked if we heard about the new ordinance the city's trying to pass that doesn't allow people to skate on the sidewalks. Did you hear about that?

Tim: I did!

Elaine: Well, what do you think about that?

Tim: I don't know. I haven't really thought about it.

Elaine: Oh, I think they should let people skate on the sidewalk. Kids nowadays hardly go outside anymore and skating is at least one thing they can continue to do outside. If the city makes it illegal they won't have a place to skate.

Tim: Hmm, I see your point.

Elaine: I mean don't you think the city should at least build a skatepark if they want to take away skating on the sidewalks?

Tim: Well, that might be a good idea but like I said I haven't really thought about it.



Elaine: I mean, it feels like we are robbing an entire generation of children of their childhood. I feel so sad and angry about this. I also am very afraid that we'll lose them to technology if we keep making outdoor activities so difficult for them.

Tim: Hmm, I can see your kind of worked up. I can see how you feel. Is there anything we can do? Can we help resolve this? Maybe we could attend a city council meeting or something? And share our concerns.

Elaine: Yeah, that's a good idea. I am probably overreacting a little bit but I am troubled by how little children are not going outdoors. I guess that's at the root of my thoughts. Thanks for listening.

Tim: I don't know if you could track with us but we went from cliché, to fact, to emotion, to I'm sorry, to opinion then emotion, then to authenticity. Elaine was doing most of that and I was tracking with her. Begin accessing your conversations. Pay attention of observe where you are the most comfortable in your conversations with your spouse. Consider how you might stretch yourself. If you are comfortable with just giving the facts but you feel a little afraid or anxious about giving your opinion then intentionally do that. Sometimes you might need to just notify your spouse and say you know what " I'm about to give you my opinion on this." Which if you and your spouse have been talking about this episode then he or she would know, oh wow, okay, we're about to make some progress. Be sure that when your spouse ventures into that new area that you are gracious and receptive and you make it a positive experience so that they would be more likely to go into that area again.

Elaine: Thank you guys for joining us today. You've been listening to part 1 of a four-part series on communication in marriage. We hope you'll stay tuned for our next episodes. I think they're going to be really fun. The next one's on skills and tools. Tim and I offer a variety of workshops and especially one in particular on communication so if your church or any organization you work with is interested in hosting a workshop you can find out more information on our website at [www.Rlministries.org](http://www.Rlministries.org). Go on over. Click on the "Work With" us tab and click on "Schedule an Event." All of our events are listed there for our listeners. We'd just love to serve you.

Tim: We want to hear from you. Let us know how we can serve you. If you have any questions or comments or if there's something we can do to improve these podcasts let us know. Goodbye everybody!

Elaine: Bieeee!!