

## Three-Party, Other-Centered COMMUNICATION: Me, You *and* Our Relationship

The eyes of the LORD are everywhere, *keeping watch* on the wicked and the good (Prov 15:3).  
There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death... (Prov 6:25).  
He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the LORD (Prov 18:22).

### **\*\*Kind speech is wise... for love is wisdom**

Love – functioning out of a commitment to the other’s best interest

Love – the *de-centering* of the self

Trust, friendship, honesty, respect lead to (=) **intimacy!**

Proverbs 12:17-19, 25

17 **A truthful witness** gives honest testimony, but a false witness tells lies.

18 **Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.**

19 Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue lasts only a moment...

25 An anxious heart weighs a man down, but **a kind word** cheers him up.

Proverbs 15:1-4

1 A **gentle** answer turns away wrath, but a **harsh** word stirs up anger.

2 The tongue of the wise adorns knowledge, but the mouth of the fool gushes folly.

3 The eyes of the LORD are everywhere, *keeping watch* on the wicked and the good.

4 The soothing tongue is **a tree of life**, but a perverse tongue *crushes* the spirit.

Proverbs 18: **21** The tongue has the power of life and death,  
and those who **love** it will eat its fruit.

**22** He who finds a wife finds what is good  
and receives favor from the LORD.

Proverbs 16:23-27

**23** The heart of the wise *makes his speech judicious*  
*and adds persuasiveness* to his lips.

**24** **Gracious words** are like a honeycomb,  
**sweetness to the soul and health to the body**

**25** There is a way that seems right to a man,  
but its end is the way to death...

**27** A worthless man plots evil,  
and **his speech** is like a scorching fire.

### **\*\*Speak the truth in love** (conduits & the Generator):

**Eph 4:29** Do not let any *unwholesome talk* come out of your mouths, but *only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.* **30** And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. **31** Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. **32** Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

**Speak – shape** your speech toward your spouse – **take THEM into account**

**know** your aim & say what you mean – **value communication**

**remember** your covenant vows – **value** the relationship

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me (Gal 2:20).

And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires (Gal 5:24).

**\*\*Attentive listening is wise...for love is wisdom**

**Proverbs 15:31** The ear that listens to life-giving reproof will dwell among the wise.

Proverbs 18:15 An intelligent heart acquires knowledge, and the **ear** of the wise *seeks* knowledge.

Proverbs 25:11-13

<sup>11</sup> A word *fitly spoken* is like apples of gold in a setting of silver.

<sup>12</sup> Like a gold ring or an ornament of gold is a wise reproof *to a listening ear*.

<sup>13</sup> Like the cold of snow in the time of harvest is *a faithful messenger* to those who send him; he refreshes the soul of his masters.

There's a kind of *listening* with half an ear...

"There is a kind of listening with half an ear that presumes already to know what the other person has to say. It is an impatient, inattentive listening, that despises the other and is only waiting for a chance to speak and thus to get rid of the other person. This is no fulfillment of our obligation, and it is certain that here too our attitude toward our brother only reflects our relationship to God. It is little wonder that we are no longer capable of the greatest service of listening that God has committed to us – that of hearing our brother's confession – if we refuse to give ear to our brother on lesser subjects." – Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*

**Types of Bad Listeners** – this is the part where you elbow one another

**Counselor** – “here, here, let me fix you now...”

**Feeling** – *I can't live in this difficult tension. I need to FIX this / YOU.*

**Interrupter** – “oh, as I was saying, blah, blah, blah...” (Stealing the Bacon)

**Feeling** – *unheard, the need to BE heard, seen valued*

**Arguer** – “yeah, yeah, yeah BUT...”

**Feeling** – *threatened and/or self-righteous*

**Super-Spiritual Diminish-er** – “Oh, yes...you're verrry sad'but God always...”

**Feeling** – *threatened, ill-equipped to handle struggle...*

*Likely Reality beneath this (we may not be “feeling”)*

*Disconnected from God and one's self!*

**Life IS STRUGGLE! If I cannot identify with you in your struggle on its own terms, this is evidence that I'm running from or suppressing my struggles / story / pain / confusion.**

[Example: Romans 8 – very passage where Paul writes “all things work together” he also writes about our “suffering” with King Jesus, that the “whole creation groans,” that “we groan” and he writes, “in our weakness, what don't know what to pray...”

“But the Spirit helps us...”]

**Walking Encyclopedia of Explanations** – “Oh, you've had a tough day, have you. Well, it's probably because: (lists several 'reasons' that have little to do with what YOU are feeling, wanting TO SAY; this list often includes “the regulars” who get blamed for your “bad days”).

**Feeling** – *the need to be important, smart, helpful, that friend that everyone needs, relies upon, the rescuer, above the fray*

These are all really great ways to “give attention” without giving *yourself* in love. These are ways to fill the relationship with YOURSELF. These are all ways to avoid listening.

**So, how do YOU stay *present* to your spouse and the relationship when you are broken, anxious, busy and exhausted? How do YOU get out of the way so that you can be fully present for him / for her?**

**You are a recipient, and now a conduit of God's LOVE in Christ and in the Spirit.**

### **Broken – Loved – Empowered**

**Gal 5:13** You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to **indulge the sinful nature**; rather, **SERVE ONE ANOTHER IN LOVE**. **14**The entire law is summed up in a single command: "*Love your neighbor as yourself.*" **15**If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other. **16**So I say, **live by the Spirit**, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. **17**For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that **you do not do what you want**. **18**But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law. **19**The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; **20**idolatry and witchcraft; *hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions* **21** and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. **22**But **the fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, *patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness*, **23** *gentleness and self-control*. **Against such things there is no law**. **24**Those who belong to Christ Jesus **have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires**. **25**Since we live by the Spirit, **let us keep in step with the Spirit**. **26**Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

In Christ, as LOVED, in the Spirit, "**serve one another in love**" (as conduits):

#### **Applied to Listening:**

**Love, joy, peace** – "I'm joyfully here for you for the sake of OUR WHOLENESS."

**Patience** – "No need to hurry. You are important. I'm listening."

**Kindness** – "I've dropped my chronic negative assumptions to hear you on your own terms. I am for you. What's in your troubled heart? I'm your friend."

**Goodness, faithfulness** – "I'm your trustworthy and reliable friend. You can put weight on me. I'll bear it for your sake. I am here *for you*. Your thoughts, concerns, hopes and fears and sorrows MATTER to me! Later on, after hearing you fully, I will also 'get naked' before you. You don't have to be vulnerable alone, not when I'm here. I only 'get naked' with you." [Faithful to a particular relationship - marriage]

**Gentleness and self-control**– "Go ahead. No interruptions or advice-giving or rationalizations or deflections. I am fully present, but I will empty and resist my self-centered self to listen to you in love (patience, kindness, goodness...)"

**Don't** ask yourself, "Can I do this?" You CAN'T!!!

**DO** ask yourself if the gospel applies to you as a married person. It does!

**DO** ask yourself, "Can the Spirit change me in deep ways?" He can & will.