Has your family gotten away from communicating well? Try some simple techniques to get your family back into better harmony.

Everyone is busy, on the move and fairly distracted these days. However, the healthy closeness of your family can suffer if you don’t take time to listen to each other.

- **Talk openly and often.** Family life can be a chaotic whirlwind, but it’s important to share feelings, concerns, experiences, goals and accomplishments within the group whenever possible. Set aside certain times during the week—such as mealtime—when everyone in the family has the chance to listen and connect through unfettered discussion.

- **Listen well.** Listen carefully to your children’s points of view and ask questions to make sure you understand their concerns. When you truly listen and pay attention, you’ll help a child feel loved and valued. Use active listening techniques such as maintaining good eye contact, leaning forward and nodding.

- **Show appreciation.** Family members should congratulate each other on their successes large or small. Show caring through your words and gestures such as hugs, kind notes and pats on the back.

Let children express their feelings. Don’t minimize their concerns or tell them what to think and feel. Use talking times as teachable moments; demonstrate respectful communication with your children.
Speak kindly to your family!

Regularly extending kindness to those in your family can have a long-term positive effect on how they interact with the world.

- Don’t take your family members for granted. Instead, model politeness by using simple, courteous words such as “please,” “thank you” and “excuse me.”
- Help your children learn kindness by hearing you speak kindly—to them, to your partner and to others outside the home.
- If you’re in a family conflict and become angry, walk away and count to 10 so you can cool off, let go of anger and return with a more appropriate response.
- Don’t hesitate to apologize when you’re wrong. Apologies that are specific and simple show children that you respect their feelings. They’ll learn that it’s okay to make mistakes and admit it.
- Tell others in your family that you believe in them, and that they’re capable of doing the things they dream of doing. This will have an incalculably positive effect on them!

The value of forgiving and forgetting

Grudges hurt you
Studies show that people who are continually unforgiving, angry and negative are usually unhealthy and may die earlier. They often suffer from high blood pressure, depression, headaches, chronic pain, digestive problems, insomnia, a weak immune system and more. Harboring anger and resentment takes a lot of bodily energy.

You can forgive
Try reflecting on relationships in which you’re holding onto resentment and bitterness. Do you hold grudges for a long time? Could the person with whom you’re angry have been going through something difficult personally? Consider the other individual’s side of the disagreement, think with compassion, and take steps toward forgiving.

Set yourself free
“I’m sorry, I was wrong—please forgive me” is one of the most healing things that can be said between two people. Forgiveness helps you rapidly attain improved spiritual and psychological well-being. Purposefully letting go of anger removes the power that an old dispute has over your thoughts and emotions.


Webinar—Join us Wednesday, May 10 to learn about enhancing communication, along with physical and emotional intimacy, through this month’s webinar: Strengthening Committed Partner/ Marital Relationships. Register here.