



# Connecting Couples

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## Thought of the Month News and Notes

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**Dear Friends,**

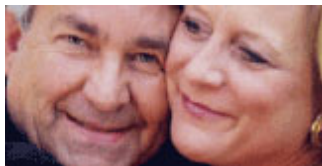
**Today's world has instant communication! Try as we might to grab a moment of solitude, we are bombarded with TV newsflashes, radio alerts, phone calls, email and the whole world of "instant": text messages, "facetime" video, Skype....you name it, we are CONNECTED and unless we make an effort to remove ourselves from this world, we are going to find some stress and some misunderstandings.**

**This Thought is Part II and continues with last month's topic about communication. The focus, once again, is about the difference between men and womens' communication style and the misunderstandings that crop up, well, every day, right? By sharing our personal examples we hope that our honesty helps you to realize that these issues are part of life and it takes a little work and a lot of patience to "get it right."**

**Keep in communication---we WANT to hear from you!**

**Donna and David**

### **JULY: The Big Mistakes: Part II**



**Last month I described the biggest mistake men make in relationships. It has to do with our tendency to confuse our Partner's emotion with criticism. Men tend to conclude that if their Partner is unhappy in anyway it must be his fault. This leads to a nasty cycle of disconnection. (The other part of this cycle is where the woman makes her mistake.) Let me try to describe this by sharing an example from my own experience.**

About a week ago Donna and I were talking about our life together and she randomly mentions that we don't entertain much anymore. Now, what I heard (with some history of similar conversations) was that she was upset that we "have no friends" and it is my fault! (Do you recognize my "male" mistake here?) By the way, a little mirroring would have worked wonders here.....BUT I just shut down in a paralytic mixture of guilt, confusion, shame, and rising anger.

AND so enters the mistake of the month...better known as the woman's contribution to the cycle. Hearing nothing from me but a defensive retort or two about how we do these workshops all the time and I don't really want anymore friends, etc., she concludes that I don't care about her needs and that I am some degree of unreachable on this subject. She experienced my shame response as an unwillingness to understand and connect with her.

So let's be clear about the mistake I am describing. I really believe there are gender differences at play here. Women seek to connect and if there is some degree of disruption, they seek connection with more intense and fiercer energy. Men are different. While we want to connect, we also want "relief" (i.e. respite) from connection. And when there is disruption in the connection, we often seek the safety of solitude. This, of course, often leads to even more upset from our Partner and what we perceive as criticism (e.g. "You never want to work through our problems.") The man then becomes angry. See the cycle? I actually remember my parents (in the few rare moments of emotion I ever witnessed) as my Mother chased my Father around the house trying to get him to talk to her. It was pretty funny, in retrospect.

Here's the thing for women to get: men can feel "bad" very easily. This "bad" is connected to shame and guilt, though those words will likely never be spoken. Donna says, "There are a lot of bugs in the house." I immediately "know" that means I've not fixed the screens or have not taken care of something

and that I am a lousy provider and a poor excuse for a husband. A little exaggeration here but the point is this: I hear criticism, feel shame, and react badly. She now feels like I am a disconnected Partner....out of touch with (and not really caring about) being in relationship.

The corrective for women is this: Be careful not to

mistake your man's shame and guilt reactions as an unwillingness to be connected. Sometimes we men simply don't know what to do to make things better.

Or to put it into abundant terms: **WOMEN** - Learn to know your Partner's vulnerability to bad feelings of shame or guilt. It could move you from criticism to compassion. How great would that be?

Let me know what you think!

David

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS...LOTS OF OPPORTUNITIES COMING UP!**

***Be sure to watch this space or check our web site for future opportunities.***

### **Getting the Love You Want Workshops**

**August 17-19, Frederick, MD**

**September 7-9, Rehoboth Beach, DE**

### **Gender to Gender: What Men and Women Need to Know**

**September 15, Frederick, MD**

#### **QUOTES OF THE MONTH**

"When all other means of communication fail, try words"  
"Communication is the real work of leadership." Nitin Nohria

"Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless." Mother Teresa of Calcutta

"The more elaborate our means of communication, the less we communicate." Joseph Priestly

"Communication is depositing a part of yourself in another person."

"First learn the meaning of what you say, and then speak." Epictetus

"All noise is waste. So cultivate quietness in your speech, in your thoughts, in your emotions. Speak habitually low. Wait for attention and then your low words will be charged with dynamite." Elbert Hubbard

"Good communication does not mean that you have to speak in perfectly formed sentences and paragraphs. It isn't about slickness. Simple and clear go a long way "

Don't about sickness, simple and clear go a long way.  
John Kotter

"Give sorrow words. The grief that does not speak  
whispers the o'er-fraught heart, and bids it break."  
William Shakespeare

"To listen well is as powerful a means of communication  
and influence as to talk well." John Marshall

If you could choose one characteristic that would get  
you through life, choose a sense of humor. Jennifer  
Jones

"Two men in a burning house must not stop to argue."  
African Proverb

"The tongue is the only tool that gets sharper with use."  
Washington Irving

"Don't appear so scholarly, pray. Humanize your talk,  
and speak to be understood." Moliere

"Speech is the mirror of the soul; as man speaks, so is  
he." Publilius Syrus

"In the last analysis, what we are communicating far  
more eloquently than anything we say or do." Stephen R.  
Covey

**We are on this journey with you. Keep in touch!**

**Sincerely,**

**David and Donna Bowman  
Bowman & Associates, PA**

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