

Listening or Tuning out?

How well do you think you and your spouse communicate? Many marriages end because one spouse feels misunderstood or unheard, or that their opinion doesn't matter.

But there can be more to a spouse not listening than meets the eye.

Not listening can be a defense mechanism. Sometimes when a spouse feels unfairly judged or blamed, they tune their partner out, which makes their spouse feel ignored or dismissed.

Spouses should listen to each other even when they don't agree. Each one should be able to speak and share whatever is on their mind, knowing that their thoughts and feelings will be acknowledged.

Sometimes that's all it takes to "fix" a marriage.

Tips for Better Communication

1. Don't interrupt your spouse.

Let your spouse finish what they're saying before you speak.

2. Don't jump to conclusions.

Don't assume you know what your partner wants to say. And don't start figuring out your response until you've heard them out.

3. Restate what you heard for mutual understanding.

Say something like, "What I think I hear you saying is . . ." This feedback technique assures your spouse that you were *actually listening*. It also gives them a chance to clear up any misunderstandings.

4. Observe body language.

Body language conveys 55% of the message and is a pretty good indicator of how your spouse really feels.

So be mindful of your own and your spouse's tone of voice, facial expressions, and other mannerisms such as shrugging of shoulders or tapping of fingers.

Communication is an area of improvement for every couple. But you can have a stronger and *happier* relationship with your spouse today by using these tips for better communication.

Until next time, this is Mike Tucker and I want YOU to be mad about marriage!