

HOW ARE YOUR COMMUNICATION SKILLS?

Does it feel like your kids aren't listening to you or talking to you?

Are you and your spouse or significant other arguing more or too much?

Are you having any conflicts at work due to mixed messages?

Are you having any difficulties with any of your friends due to misunderstandings?

Misunderstandings, mixed messages, arguments, and limited conversations can all be improved by your adoption of two basic formats and three communication techniques. Sound easy? Well, it is. The first format is to use "I" messages. The techniques are Active Listening, Validating Feelings or Thoughts, and Empathizing.

Active Listening: "I heard you say _____. Did I hear it right?"

Validating

Feelings: "I can understand that you feel _____,"

Thoughts: "That makes sense because _____."

Empathizing: "That must make you feel _____."

When you use messages like these above, you give the unspoken message that the other person has value to you.

The second format is to use the "Gift of Love." In 1 Corinthians, chapter 13, verses 4-7, Paul wrote, "Love is kind and patient, never jealous, boastful, proud, or rude. Love isn't selfish or quick tempered. It doesn't keep a record of wrongs that others do. Love rejoices in the truth, but not in evil. Love is always supportive, loyal, hopeful, and trusting. Love never fails!" What does your *Agape* (Christ-like) Love Meter show? On a scale of 1 to 5, how well do you give love?

<u>MY AGAPE (Christ-like) LOVE METER</u>					
(Circle the one that fits you in your gift of <i>agape</i> love to others, especially your family.).					
1=poor, 2=not too good, 3=sometimes, 4=usually, 5=always					
<u>Patient:</u> I am slow to get angry with the ones I love.					
I don't yell or lose my temper.	1	2	3	4	5
<u>Kind:</u> I am thoughtful, generous in my praise,					
always looking for ways to uplift others.	1	2	3	4	5
<u>Not Jealous:</u> I don't pout or pick flaws.	1	2	3	4	5
<u>Not Boastful:</u> I don't hog the conversation or					
exaggerate the facts to make an impression.	1	2	3	4	5
<u>Not Rude:</u> I'm not cruel, crude, or cutting, but am					
polite, courteous, and complimentary.	1	2	3	4	5
<u>Not Selfish:</u> I don't make others fit into my mold					
or insist that my way is always right.	1	2	3	4	5
<u>Not Quick-Tempered:</u> I'm not touchy, cranky,					
defensive, brittle, or supersensitive.	1	2	3	4	5

When you have finished, ask yourself if those with whom you are having those misunderstandings, mixed messages, arguments, and limited conversations would rate you on the *Agape* Love Meter the same. Then, practice improving the ratings and using 'I' messages.