



## Family Nugget 1

# Effective Communication – The First Key

**W**hen conflicts arise, as they often do, be it in the home or on the job, we have two options. The first is No Talk—hoping they will disappear. But problems are like termites. The longer they are left alone, the more they multiply!

The better option is Heart Talk. Communicating from my heart means that I state the problem, I tell how I really feel about it, and I say clearly what I want. However, instead of making things better, Heart Talk sometimes makes matters worse! Why? Because in our hurt or in our anger, we often use the wrong pronoun! We make “You” statements. “You make me so angry! You never help with the shopping!”

So what’s the problem with a “You” statement? It blames you for my feelings, it points my finger at you - making you angry. So we now have two angry people! In short, a “You” statement is a declaration of war!

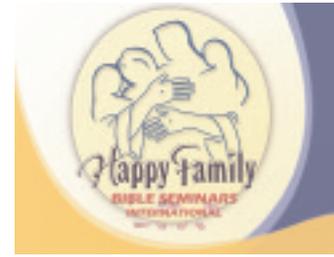
### Different Pronoun

Therefore the first key to effective communication is to use the right pronoun. Instead of the “You” statement, I should use an “I” statement. “I feel very angry! I need help with the shopping!” And why is this a better way to communicate? Because I’m saying how I feel without blaming you for it. I’m pointing my finger at me — without making you angry. And it encourages you to listen to me. The “I” statement is a call for peace.

Just as effective communication is crucial to a healthy marital or professional relationship, it is absolutely necessary for a happy spiritual relationship. Sometimes we get angry with God. Sometimes we even question His existence! Sometimes deep within our souls we have hidden hurts. And experience tells us that “No Talk” brings no healing.

### Heart Talk

So why not try Heart Talk? In quietude, alone with yourself, just open your heart to Him. Tell Him the problem, say how you really feel, and tell Him what you want. The wonderful thing is that even if I use the wrathful “You” statement, blaming Him or even threatening Him, He patiently lis-



## Family Nugget 2

# The Love Triangle

**S**ince marriage was designed for two, the entrance of a third party is a traumatic and sometimes fatal experience. The question is: How does an intruder gain entrance into someone’s marriage? Often he or she starts supplying an element that is missing in the couple’s relationship, filling a void that the spouse is ignoring, supplying blood for a bleeding heart.

So what can spouses do to keep this visitor out? First of all, stop the hemorrhage! Examine our relationship: What are our strengths? What are our weaknesses? Then discuss how each can put in place the missing elements, how we can supply each other’s felt needs, how we can heal the hurt. Discuss it, and then do it!

### Smell the Roses!

Secondly, focus on the strengths of the relationship: identify them, talk about them, affirm them, enhance them. Identify the things you like about your mate—the qualities that attracted you to each other in the first place. These are the roses! Each day talk about one of them. Believe it or not: Affirmation is therapeutic! Why? Because it is a law of life that whatever we nourish will flourish; whatever we magnify will multiply. So express your love, your appreciation and admiration. And do it often. By the way, affirmation is not only effective for spouses, it is powerful in dealing with our children.



As we improve where we are weak and affirm where we are strong, we are building a wall around our marriage and family. We are stationing guards at the gateway of our home. We are locking the intruder out!

While a human third party is a prescription for disaster, a divine third party is a requisite for success! We may call this the God Factor. And why is this “G Factor” so vital? Because there are two forces at work and at war in the universe. And in every family, one is the winner!

### The Army!

Whenever I make a commitment to preserve my marriage—or to do anything else that’s right—the devil gets angry and declares war on me! Of course I am no match for his superhuman power. Therefore I need the aid of a force that is greater

than his. And that's the power of God. That is why He calls Himself the Lord of hosts. *Psalm 46:7*. He has armies of angels at His command!

Through daily prayer and Bible study, spouses can deliberately ask His help. And He responds immediately, becoming our divine Third Party. Then day by day, we three can build a fortress to keep the devil out! The Lord of hosts stations His angels at our doorway to drive the demons away. We two, with God, create a spiritual Love Triangle. And the nearer we get to Him the nearer we draw to each other.

*Dear God, in my family, help me to improve what is weak and affirm what is strong. Teach me to build the Love Triangle to keep evil out and goodness in.*

### Did you know? All of that is in your Bible!

- Improve where we are weak 2 Peter 3:18
- Affirm where we are strong Proverbs 16:24
- Necessity of the "G Factor" Psalm 127:1
- Although invisible, a real war is on! Ephesians 6:12
- With God, victory is certain 1 Corinthians 15:57

### Questions for discussion

1. Do you know of any marriage that has been damaged by the entrance of a third party? Avoiding names, state the results.
2. Give reasons why it is important to stop the hemorrhage—improve the areas of weakness—in your relationship?
3. Identify one of the strengths of your spouse (or other family member), and share it with your group
4. Why is the God Factor vital to a happy family?
5. What specific steps can one take to invite God into one's love relationship, and maintain the Love Triangle?

*Enjoyed this Family Nugget?  
You are cordially invited to attend a  
Community Family Fellowship*

**Coming up!**  
**Family Nugget 3: Wise Parents**

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tens to me - like He did when Job, in discouragement declared, "If I sin, then You mark me....You hunt me like a fierce lion....Why then have You brought me out of the womb?" *Job 10:14-18*

Of course it is better to use "I" statements in our communication with the Divine. As Mary Ann Shorey once said, "I tell Him all my sorrows, I tell Him all my joys, I tell Him all that pleases me, I tell Him what annoys; He tells me what I ought to do, He tells me how to try, And so we talk together, My Lord and I." If you try it, you may like it.

*Dear Lord, please give me the wisdom to avoid "You" statements and use "I" statements. And even when I don't feel like doing so, enable me to communicate with You.*

### Did you know? All of that is in your Bible!

- No talk is not a viable option Ephesians 4:25- 27
- Tell what is in the heart 1 Samuel 9:19
- Using the right type of statement is very important Colossians 4:6
- Example of "I" statement—how I feel and what I want Matthew 26:38
- Communication with God is also vital Matthew 6:6

### Questions for discussion

1. What are the dangers of a No Talk policy?
2. Many people do not like to share feeling. Is it really necessary to do so? Why?
3. What are the differences between "You" statements and "I" statements"? Give illustrations.
4. List the benefits of "I" statements.
5. In practical terms, how can I communicate with God? How often can I do so?

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