

COUPLE COMMUNICATION – THE RULE OF RECIPROCITY

Introduction – Reciprocity means that we should try to repay in kind what another person provides for us. There has never been a human culture that does not adhere to this sense of indebtedness. Some object that this rule does not always work and it is manipulative. Active listening is the best gift we can give our partner.

Matthew 7:12

Galatians 6:1-10

- A. Resolving couple disagreements requires wise active listening skills. There are three questions that you must answer before proceeding to a potential resolution.
 - 1. What does your partner believe on this issue?
 - 2. Why do they hold that belief?
 - 3. Where do we agree?
- B. Obstacles to hearing what our partner believes
 - 1. Overly optimistic about our own listening skills
 - 2. Prejudgment
 - 3. Quickness of reaction and cutting your partner off while they are still speaking
 - 4. Ambushing your partner to argue your case
 - 5. Conversational narcissism
 - 6. Forgetting to summarize your understanding of your partner's beliefs
- C. Explore the various sources of why your partner believes what they do on this issue
 - 1. Influential people
 - 2. Family of origin
 - 3. Life experiences
 - 4. Remember that the goal is to see the issue through your partner's eyes.
 - 5. Validate your partner's perspective without necessarily agreeing with it.

D. Cultivating common ground on the issue

1. Look for what is right not merely wrong about your partner's position.
2. Refrain from discounting the views of your partner
3. Focus on potential areas of agreement
4. What do you both value
5. Common ground is not an end in itself, but is an essential first step before we discuss our differences.

Conclusion – If you show real interest in understanding your partner's position, then they will likely reciprocate. Good listening skills lead to others hearing us.

James 1:19-20

(Text John Walker at [22333](tel:22333); in the field you must text [Johnwalker876](tel:Johnwalker876) with any questions on this topic that you would like Bruce answer at the conclusion of his message.)