

Talking Points

So, How Can We Do it Better? ---- (Part 2) -- By Gary Dahl

MMG's guide to using your words to heal and love her
"A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."
Proverbs 15:1 ESV

Conversations and letters that work – Here's some MMG guidelines on how to write a letter, email or have a conversation that will make things better and maybe even set the stage for her to come closer.

Before you talk or write, ask yourself:

- What's the best way to communicate for this issue? In-person, a letter, an email?
- What exactly do I want to have happen as a result of her reading this?
- Is my "adult" on board? Am I upset, angry, hungry, lonely or tired?
- Do I really want to make things better or just vent?
- Am I willing to acknowledge her side of the issue and care about her feelings?
- Am I open to what she says that (fairly or unfairly) may be hard to hear?
- Am I willing to be humble and be "wrong"?
- Can I withstand any childish or egotistical reply she may give and still have a loving, thoughtful adult response?
- Is she in an emotional state where she can hear this particular message? Is this the right time?
- Will this communication draw you both closer or push you apart?

As Dr. Mike Marino says, "Be clear, kind and concise". Sometimes the best thing you could write or say is something like: "I'm sorry we argued. I wasn't at my best. I know you're having a hard time too. Let's pray about it. Have a good day."

Good writing and talking guidelines:

- *You don't have to solve all the problems in one conversation, letter, or email!*
- Listen more than talk. When you write, write concisely.
- Ask, don't tell. Draw her out. (What do you think about that? How do you feel?).
- Don't defend or make excuses.
- Look for areas of agreement
- You don't have to "win" or be "right". Acknowledge and affirm ("You're right about that", "I agree").
- Be safe for her in your responses, don't take advantage of her vulnerability.
- Listen! Listen! Listen!

Communication Power Tools:

- We know God calls us to love others. If you are "stuck", start by praying something like: "God, I know you want me to love her, but I don't know how. Please show me."
- Use "I" Statements
- Grace and Truth Sandwich
- Active listening - repeat back what she said, then ask "is that right?" Rinse and repeat.

"Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger;"
James 1:19 ESV