

# FAMILY LIFE COMMUNICATION

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## Stewards of Speech

“Let your conversation be always full of grace.” (Col. 4:6) “Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.” (Prov. 12:18) “A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” (Prov. 15:1) “The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life.” (Prov. 15:4) Read about taming the tongue (James 3:1-12)

## Be Patient

Have you ever repeatedly pushed an elevator button thinking it will arrive sooner? A demonstration of impatience will not speed up an elevator. Neither will impatient communication produce swift solutions. People, like elevators, function according to their own speed. Parents sometimes lose their patience with children who do not respond quickly and favorably.

Angrily “pushing the button” will only frustrate, repress or anger a child. The same holds true for Alzheimer patients. Impatient, irritating communication adversely affects everyone regardless of age or condition.

## Don't Yell and Scream

It's bad practice to yell first and apologize later. Screaming produces stress and quickly takes the fun out of life. Angrily yelling often creates a wall of resistance, or panic, or counter-attack, or submissive non-compliance. Control yourself. Calm down. Cool it before you say it.

JOE: “Hey, Moe; how many times did ya yell & scream at the wife & kids in the past 10 years?”

MOE: “Mmmm ... maybe only 3 & 1/2 times.”

JOE: “That's four times too many.”

## Don't Be Insulting

To insult the personhood of someone when things go wrong is bad communication.

Degrading a child's personhood for dropping a jelly jar and spraying the floor with glass and gook is psychologically harmful. To angrily shout: “You stupid idiot! What's wrong with you? Can't you do anything right?” may only cause the child to slink into depression or inwardly boil with aggression. The word “you”, wrongly used, can become an attack word. The



disgruntled mother has a right to express her upset, but in a respectful way using the word “I”. “I'm disappointed with the mess. But, then again, I drop things now and then. I would be grateful if you were more careful in the future.”

## Clear Communication Prevents Disruptive Misunderstandings

To be specific and precise in what we convey will prevent disarray. Don't beat around the bush. Clearly state your wishes, hopes, dreams, ideals, feelings, love, affection, appreciation, disappointments, frustrations, anger - whatever. It's best to reveal what's inside than to silently suppress thoughts and feelings which may harmfully fester within. Opinions should be clearly aired and not left to another's imagination to be misunderstood.

## Communication Skills

- > Remain rational when angry.
- > Show your appreciation of the person with whom you're conversing.
- > Talk openly on any subject.
- > Let your body language always express love and friendship.
- > Be more ready to listen than to speak.
- > Tell the truth. Don't say what you think the other person wants to hear.
- > When disappointed about another's behavior, suggest to talk about the problem.
- > Avoid personal attacks. Stick to the issue.
- > When someone is stressed, offer to help. If refused, leave the person alone for awhile.
- > When wrong, admit it and apologize.
- > Forgive others and yourself. “To err is human; to forgive is divine.” (Alexander Pope)
- > Imitate God's Gospel love in Christ which forgives and forgets & repays evil with good.

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*Kindness in word creates confidence.*

*Kindness in thought creates profoundness.*

*Kindness in deed creates love.*

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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[www.selc.lcms.org](http://www.selc.lcms.org) - Personal Stewardship  
“Marital Stewardship” - “Parental Stewardship”