

Healthy Marriage Tips from A to Z
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Listen

Synchronized Staring - Matt's Thoughts

When the moon hits your eye like a big pizza pie...that's absurdity. When you look into your spouse's eyes and truly listen...that's *amore*.

Here's a question for self-evaluation: Is my beloved's voice mixing with all the other noise in my life? If so, something needs to change.

Healthy marriages consist of two people listening to each other. My best listening is achieved when my eyes are on my prized one. So, I say, if at all possible, look at your spouse in the eyes when he/she is communicating to you. Okay, when you are changing a diaper, your focus needs to be there, but pause or turn off the media and give your full attention to the most important person in your life; the game or show - or gameshow - really isn't important.

Remember when you first looked into each other's eyes and your hearts raced with adrenaline? Maybe your story didn't quite happen that way, but think about other instances when you would have competed for gold in the Olympic Event of Synchronized Staring. Practice that again right now. If your "Romantic" is not with you now, then at your next opportunity look lovingly into his/her eyes and listen. We can't help but smile when we do this. We smile because we know we are being heard. We smile because we know we are loved.

I'm Sorry, Did You Say Something? - Laura's Thoughts

It is a fact that if I'm working at the computer, Matt has learned that he has to say, "Are you in writing mode or are you able to listen for a minute?" Yes, when I write, I go into a zone. (See like right now - I'm typing and I can't hear a thing you're saying.)

Sometimes that's okay - we all have to learn to be selective about when we share something important with our spouse. If he/she is in the middle of balancing the checkbook, that may not be the best time to share a deep, heart-felt need or request. Just as important as listening is being thoughtful about when we'd like to truly be heard.

Do you know what I love about the way Matt listens to me? *He just listens*. He doesn't talk, he doesn't interrupt, he doesn't jump in with ideas of how to fix my situation. Usually, I just need to share and to be heard and cared for. When he's sharing something with me, he also appreciates if I just let him talk. Sometimes I like to try to finish his sentences for him. That's not nice and I'm working on not doing that. He can finish his own sentences quite well without my help.

If you're a good listener, your ears and heart are open - your mouth is not. And yes, like Matt said, it's best to look into your spouse's eyes when he or she shares. You can really hear better that way.

And that's why, at the end of the day after I've taken out my contacts, I have to say to Matt, "Will you hand me my glasses? I can't hear you very well." Either I'm a weirdo or eye contact is just that important in order to be a good listener.

Or maybe it's a little bit of both. ;)

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