Tools to Improve Communication With Your Mate

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By improving your communication skills, you can form a deeper relationship with your mate.

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One of the most common problems facing married and dating couples is communication, or lack thereof. Couples who do not talk to each other, or even know how to do so, are not likely to be happy in the relationship. The key to improving communication with your mate is to evaluate your individual communication skills, identify areas in which you can improve and take steps toward that improvement.

1. Don't Just Talk
   * For many couples. it is almost second nature to ask questions such as "How was your day?" and "How was work?" at the end of the day. While these are good questions, they often keep conversation at a surface level. When discussing these topics, you and your mate may be talking, but you are not necessarily [communicating](http://www.ehow.com/info_7966254_tools-improve-communication-mate.html). Communication occurs when two individuals connect on a deeper emotional level and begin to share their inner thoughts and feelings.

Learn How to Listen

* + You may be one of the many people who takes pride in being a good listener, but, during a conversation or argument with your mate, how much time do you spend thinking about what you are going to say next as opposed to listening to what your mate is telling you? Communication is as much about listening as it is talking. Give your mate your full attention when your mate is talking, and you will be able to better understand how this person is feeling.

Be Honest and Open

* + Being open and honest with your partner is one of the most important tools for fostering good communication. Until you can tell your mate how you really feel about something, the two of you will not be able to communicate openly about it. It can be scary to expose your true feelings, but, once you do, you will find that vulnerability with your partner will deepen your relationship. Not only do you need to be honest and open with your mate, but you also need to create a safe environment where he or she feels comfortable enough to open up to you.

Monitor Nonverbal Signals

* + Studies show that up to 90 percent of human communication is nonverbal. The position of your [body](http://www.ehow.com/info_7966254_tools-improve-communication-mate.html) and the tone of voice can, in some situations, communicate much more to your mate than the words you are using. Movements such as using eye contact, smiling and nodding can indicate to your mate that you are listening, while shifting in your seat, tapping your fingers and an unenthusiastic tone may suggest that you are not interested or invested in the conversation.

Don't Get Defensive

* + Arguments are a normal and even healthy part of any relationship as long as the [parties](http://www.ehow.com/info_7966254_tools-improve-communication-mate.html) involved handle the situation appropriately. Rather than hurling insults at each other or focusing on crafting your argument while your partner is speaking, focus on the issue itself. Listen to your mate and repeat your understanding of the issue before you share your own feelings on the matter. Once the two of you reach an understanding of the issue and how the other feels, you will be able to have a constructive discussion and come to an agreeable solution.

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