

10 Tips for Talking

Communicating effectively takes practice and a great deal of effort. Here are some useful tips for communicating effectively.

1. Realize that **no one "wins" an argument**. If you don't leave a discussion with a possible solution to the problem, then no one wins.
2. Compromise is an essential tool to solving problems through communication. Before bringing up a problem, make sure you have thought of ways that you can help solve it by mutual compromise.
3. Try to be positive when bringing up sensitive issue. Instead of jumping right into a discussion, open by acknowledging that every relationship could be improved and you'd like to take some time and discuss the things that are working and the areas that could use improvement. It helps to **start by talking about positive things** and then moving into the deeper discussion on problem areas.
4. Be a "reflective" listener and **make sure you understand what the other person has said**. "What I hear you saying is..." is a great way to make sure the proper message has been received.
5. **Feel free to use the "time out" card if the discussion gets too intense**. If an argument gets heated and irrational, it is better to postpone the discussion to a time and place where effective communication can happen.
6. Make sure your **body language, facial expressions and vocal tone are in line with your message**. One study showed that 55% of the emotional meaning of what you say is expressed by your facial expression. While **only 7%** of the emotional meaning is in what you SAY.
7. **Be honest, direct and focus on the real issue**. If you enter a

conversation insecure about making your point – you probably won't make it.

8. If you can't come up with a definitive solution, at least try to end the conversation on a positive note like *"I think it's good we've both shared our feelings and we'll continue to talk about it and try to come up with a better solution."*
9. **Don't ever be rude or talk down to the other person** in a discussion. Don't dismiss an idea or thought as absurd, but instead listen to the person's point and then react with the reasons you disagree in a respectful manner.
10. **Stay on track.** If you sit down to talk about a financial problem and suddenly other emotional issues are coming up, realize that you may need to focus on one area at a time in order to create solutions instead of mere bickering.