



“Never let a PROBLEM to be solved become more important than a PERSON to be LOVED.”

—Thomas S. Monson

Well, here you are on the final week of this course! We hope you have learned more about yourself, gained some new skill sets and had some inspiring “ah-ha” moments along the way!

This week’s topic will be learning about some classic communication styles. Discovering your communication style, especially with how you interact with your spouse, will give you a huge advantage simply by being aware.

Then as you work through a few exercises in this workbook, you will see clarity in how and what to improve or tweak to connect more deeply with your spouse and gain insight on their communication style as well.

You may find that your communication style is different in different situations or with different people. But, generally speaking, you should be able to identify your main style.

The “Communication Style Assessment” will help you see more clearly your style specifically in interactions with your spouse. If your spouse takes the assessment or you take it for them as best you can, you will discover a deeper understanding of one another and why you communicate in the way that you do!

This last call contains information from Jennifer's Amazon best-selling book "12 Weeks to Greater Peace, Joy and Love in Your Family." This family relationship self-help book was best-selling in the categories of Christian Living/ Family, Self-Help/Self-Esteem, Christian Living/Self-Help and #3 in Hot New Child Care Releases. For more great support, order your copy on Amazon!

Also, if you are not a member of our "Blissful Marriage – Blissful Life" Facebook group, request to join this closed group for weekly caring challenges, helpful relationship tips, fun date night videos, mini-trainings and fun interaction with like-minded Christian couples.

We applaud you for your diligence and hard work and encourage you to come back to this course when you need a little "boost" in any of the topics here. We wish you the most joyful, blissful marriage ever!

Don't forget to be a Marriage Maker not breaker!

*Andy and Jennifer Smith*

P.S. For questions or feedback on this course, please email [support@bethetrueu.com](mailto:support@bethetrueu.com). Sharing a testimonial of what you liked in this course would help others make the decision to join and gain benefit for their relationship, too. Also if you want more marriage support, email this same address for a 25-minute complimentary assessment call to see how we can best support your marriage!

## **The Four Communication Styles**

Let's review the four communication styles from this week's call. Through understanding the styles, you have power to change yours if needed.

### ***Passive Communication Style***

Individuals using this style avoid expressing their feelings, opinions, and needs. They often have low self-esteem. They may not feel they are important, worthy of recognition, or deserving of others caring for them.

Instead of expressing themselves in hurtful situations, passive communicators tend to repress feelings of offense or anger. Then, when they have reached their top level of tolerance for insensitive behavior, they let it all out with words or actions that are usually exaggerated for the event that triggered their outburst.

They may also "gunny bag" past hurts in a relationship, which means silently hanging on to hurtful situations of the past. At any moment the passive communicator may bring up stories from the past to accuse the supposed perpetrator.

Passive communicators won't speak up for their own rights or needs. They let more aggressive communicators walk all over them and take advantage of their unwillingness to speak up for themselves. They also are inclined to speak softly and apologize often.

A person who persists in this pattern of communicating will feel depressed, hopeless, or that his life is out of control.

If you use this communication style, you may wish to practice saying “no.” Give a brief explanation of why you can’t if necessary, and then don’t feel guilty that you can’t accommodate everyone’s requests.

If it’s challenging to say how you feel or what you need, practice saying out loud what you might say in different circumstances. You might want to write it down first and then role-play with a family member or friend.

Because communication isn’t just verbal, you should practice good body language as well. Keep an upright posture and practice eye contact to help you feel more confident in your communication. If you feel like crying, you might want to wait a while before trying to resolve a problem so you can think with your head and not just lead with your distraught heart.

This style tends to look down or have an averted eye gaze and a closed body language. They may say, “I’m sorry,” “It’s not important,” or “Whatever.” Their tone of voice is soft, hesitant, and other people sometimes ask them to speak up.

### ***Aggressive Communication Style***

Individuals who use this style express their feelings and opinions in a way that violates the rights of others. To get what they want, they may use verbal and/or physical force.

They may also have low self-esteem that stems from unhealed emotional trauma or past abuse. Perhaps they mimic this style of communication because this is mostly the style they have seen in parents or others close to them.

Aggressive communicators will humiliate and dominate others for control. They are verbally loud and overbearing, with piercing eye contact and intimidating posture.

They will blame and criticize others rather than take responsibility for their own problems. They do not listen well and use “you” statements frequently. They also act impulsively and impatiently.

This intense style of communicating produces unhealthy relationships and alienates others. People may develop feelings of fear, mistrust, or hatred toward aggressive communicators. Those with an entitlement mentality may use this style to show that the world owes them everything without a sense of responsibility or earning their own way.

This style of communicator can benefit from using “I” statements to help others understand them without sounding so critical. Saying “I have a different opinion” instead of “What a stupid thing to say,” will be more beneficial and less harsh.

When they are feeling angry or frustrated, aggressive communicators can take some deep breaths, count to ten, or remove themselves from the situation until they calm down. It’s important not to lead with emotions but to use the head’s cognitive abilities in balance with the heart.

This style tends to stare down others and have tense, tight, aggressive or intimidating body language. They may say, “Listen to me,” “Do what I say,” or “Don’t argue with me.” Their tone of voice is harsh, piercing, loud and sharp.

### ***Passive-Aggressive Communication Style***

At first glance, this communication style appears to be passive. Passive-aggressive people will mutter to themselves rather than confront the issue and feel powerless, stuck, or resentful. It is their underlying anger and inability to cope with a problem in a healthy way that defines the aggressive way they communicate.

The suppressed anger is expressed in a subtle or indirect way. For example, if a teenager fails to clean up the kitchen when it is her turn, a parent might say something like, "I'm sure you just forgot to clean up the kitchen. Don't worry. You just run along and get your beauty sleep. I'll do it even though I'm dead tired and need to go to bed."

Maybe a husband didn't realize that his wife wanted him to fix the drippy sink faucet when she said, "That drippy faucet sure is annoying when I'm trying to sleep at night." The next day she treats her husband with unexplained hostility because he failed to realize how important it was to her for the sink to be fixed immediately.

Passive-aggressive communicators will deny there is a problem, appear cooperative while purposely doing things to annoy and disrupt, be sarcastic, and use sabotage to get even.

This pattern of communication may result in alienation from others, continued frustration as real issues are never dealt with and resolved, and feelings of powerlessness.

Individuals with this style can start improving by identifying what person or situation is making them angry. Then they can step back and analyze the root cause of their anger.

Having the courage to be clear and express their feelings and opinions will help them defuse their own anger and begin solving the problem. This isn't always easy, especially if you are a people-pleaser.

Lori Deschene, founder of [TinyBuddha.com](http://TinyBuddha.com), shares some great insights on her website about how to meet your needs by communicating clearly. "Owning your opinion or

directly expressing your needs opens you up to a potential confrontation. But confrontation isn't always a bad thing," she writes. "It doesn't have to imply an argument or an attack. Confrontation can be direct and respectful—and even when it's not couched with words that imply positivity."

Deschene continues, "It's perfectly valid to say, 'When you don't return my calls for days, I sometimes assume that means you don't see me as a priority.' That's a lot clearer than saying, 'I probably shouldn't even say anything, because I know you're really busy and you have a lot on your plate!' While this might seem more positive and understanding, it doesn't communicate your feelings. And communicating your feelings is integral to addressing them."

This style tends to sigh or have raised eyebrows and clenched fists for body language. They may say, "Oh, really," "Is that so?" or "You would say that, wouldn't you?" Their tone of voice is sarcastic, controlled and forceful.

### ***Assertive Communication Style***

People who use this style of communication share their opinions and feelings clearly and advocate for their own wants and needs while respecting the rights of others. They have high self-esteem, feel connected to others, and feel in control of their lives.

Some of the skills used in assertive communication include using "I" statements; listening well; having good eye contact; speaking in a clear, soft, and controlled voice; not allowing others to control them; and standing up for their own rights.

Let's suppose someone with this communication style has been asked by his/her spouse to finish cleaning the dishes and the kitchen counters so he/she can attend a

community meeting. The assertive spouse may say, "I don't have time because I also have an appointment. Can we finish this job together when we both arrive home later?"

This style tends to have good eye contact and open, pleasant body language. They may say, "What do you think about that?" "I recommend this" or "How does that sound to you?" Their tone of voice is steady, calm and comforting.

Learning new communication skills takes time and practice. If you've been afraid to express your opinions and feelings, becoming more assertive may take some effort. If you struggle to control your anger, you may need to learn constructive anger management techniques.

### ***Healthy Affirmations for Being More Assertive***

***I respect others' time, feelings, opinions, and needs.***

***I respect my time, feelings, opinions, and needs.***

***I clearly and honestly communicate with others.***

***Nobody owes me anything that is not agreed upon by both of us.***

***I can only control and change myself, not others.***

***I have many choices in life and make wise decisions.***

***I am confident in my skills, talents, and abilities.***

***I have a healthy self-esteem.***

***My needs can be met without taking away from others' needs.***

***I am 100 percent responsible for my own happiness.***

## Communication styles and their implications

		○	
High	DIRECTNESS OF COMMUNICATION	<p><b>OPENLY AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR</b> I am direct in expressing my needs, wants and opinions and I give no thought to other people's.</p> <p><i>I WIN, YOU LOSE</i></p>	<p><b>ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOUR</b> I clearly express my needs, wants and opinions in a way which is considerate of others.</p> <p><i>I WIN, YOU WIN</i></p>
		<p><b>PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR</b> I indirectly make sure that others are aware of my needs, wants and opinions and that these are more important than theirs.</p> <p><i>I WIN, YOU LOSE</i></p>	<p><b>PASSIVE BEHAVIOUR</b> I do not express my needs, wants and opinions directly. I put others' needs above my own.</p> <p><i>I LOSE, YOU WIN</i></p>
Low			
		Low	High
		<b>THOUGHT GIVEN TO OTHERS</b>	

Grids from: <http://www.fenman.co.uk/traineractive/COM03-How-effective-communicator-are-you.pdf>

## **Communication Style Assessment**

This questionnaire is designed to help you assess your preferred communication style. Thinking about your interactions with your spouse, write a score for each statement to represent which best typifies your behavior where 4 = agree strongly, 3 = agree somewhat, 2 = disagree somewhat, 1 = disagree strongly.

1. I express my opinions in an honest and appropriate manner with my spouse.
2. I can get angry at my spouse and let this show.
3. I find it difficult to say 'no' to my spouse's requests even though I'm overwhelmed by other responsibilities.
4. If I do not agree with a task or request that my spouse has given me, I find a way of dragging my feet on it.
5. I feel comfortable in asking for help from my spouse even if they know more about a topic than me.
6. I feel guilty if my spouse is up late working on a project or cleaning the house and I go to bed.
7. I can be sarcastic to my spouse.
8. I think my way of doing things is better than my spouse's.
9. If my spouse takes advantage of me, I find a way of evening the score.
10. I feel I have a right to say no to my spouse's requests and to negotiate a compromise.
11. Even if my spouse initiates a conversation about a challenge or problem, I often don't speak about what I'm truly thinking or feeling.
12. I like to be in control of a situation with my spouse.
13. I stare my spouse down to get my way.
14. I make good positive eye contact when interacting with my spouse.
15. If I am unsure about what my spouse just said to me or asked me to do, I find it uncomfortable to ask for clarification.

- 16. I talk about my spouse behind his/her back to friends, family or associates.
- 17. When talking about a sensitive topic with my spouse, I find it difficult to look him/her directly in the eye.
- 18. I am a good listener and equally my spouse listens to what I have to say.
- 19. Rather than confronting my spouse about an issue, I would rather give him/her the cold shoulder or drop hints to him/her that I am not happy.
- 20. I am not afraid to be direct with my spouse, even if he/she thinks I am being rude.

### Self-assessment: results ○

To assess your preferred communication style, transfer the scores you have given to each statement to the boxes below. Then total each column downwards.

Q1	Q3	Q4	Q2
Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8
Q10	Q11	Q9	Q12
Q14	Q15	Q16	Q13
Q18	Q17	Q19	Q20
Total	Total	Total	Total
ASSERTIVE	PASSIVE	PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE	AGGRESSIVE

Look at the column where your score is the highest. This is the communication style you use most of the time with your spouse and most likely with others.<sup>1</sup>

This week's exercise "My Communication Plan" will help you become aware of your communication style. You might want to journal one or two contentious moments each day of the week. Pay attention to the time of day, the setting, and the person or persons with whom you had the contentious moment(s).

You may notice your communication style is different with different people and situations, especially in interaction with your spouse. Record your observations following these steps on the next couple of pages or your journal.

1. Identify a moment of contention during the day.
2. Analyze which communication style you used.
3. Write down one or two ways you could have improved communication in this situation.
4. Practice verbally or nonverbally (don't forget smiles or hugs) how you would respond next time in a similar situation.

***Key Phrases to Help Communication and Be a Peacemaker***

\*I'm sorry this happened.

\*What can I change or do better?

\*How can I help?

Share these phrases with others as this golden nugget may help when you or someone you love is struggling to communicate in a calm, appropriate, and assertive manner.



