

Listening: Do You Really Hear What I'm Saying to You?

by Jean MacKenzie

Listen. What do you hear? You may hear the hustle and bustle of people around you. Maybe there is some polite conversation going on around you or perhaps your kids are screaming at each other at the top of their lungs and perhaps you've learned to block out that noise.

If you are by yourself you may hear the steady hum of your computer and if you concentrate really hard you may hear the soft buzz of the lights and the other extraneous noises we tend to block out as we go through our daily routines.

Now, when you block out all the external noises what do you hear? You may be saying to yourself, "Huh, what is this lady getting at?" Or you may be anticipating what I'm going to say next, thinking with great certainty that you know what I'm getting at.

This little voice inside your head is what I'm getting at. I know some people don't like to admit to this little voice but we all have it and when it comes to communicating with another person this can be the biggest distraction.

Have you ever had two people try to talk to you at the same time; each one so excited they couldn't wait for the other to finish? Did you have a hard time keeping the two stories straight? Did you eventually have to tell the two people to calm down and speak one at a time?

If you've never had this happen I'm sure you can imagine how confusing it could be. However, when you allow the little voice inside your head to carry on its monologue while someone is trying to speak to you then you end up in a similar situation and most often it is the person who is talking to you who gets blocked out. Yes, many times people listen to the little voice in their head over their husband, wife, friend, coworker, etc, who is trying to speak to them.

Often people look for ways to improve their communication skills without recognizing that the most important key to communication is to be able to listen effectively. And listening means not just hearing the other persons words but also understanding what that person is saying to you and you can't do that if you are thinking about what to have for supper, the new stereo you'd like to buy, what the person is going to say next, what you're going to say when you get the chance, your next rebuttal, or how you're going to prove the other person wrong.

We all have this tendency to let our minds wander. I'm not suggesting that you can turn off your inner voice completely. However, if you can become more aware of it you can work on really understanding what others are saying to you.

Like so many of the skills that make a good relationship, listening is one that we can ever improve on. If you work on becoming a better listener, your communication skills will improve and so will your relationship with all those around you. So, the next time you are having a conversation with someone really listen to what they're trying to communicate to you. Hear what I'm saying?

About Jean

Jean is a marriage and couples counsellor whose approach in working with couples involves the development of techniques for solving current problems and achieving unending growth in

relationships. Jean strives to assist couples of various backgrounds in learning to solve their own challenges because a couple that knows how to problem solve can keep their love—and their marriage—alive forever.

Jean also offers Catholic counselling to couples wishing to incorporate the Catholic faith into the counselling process, helping couples to develop a relationship pleasing to each other and God. Jean has a Master of Arts in Counselling from the Franciscan University of Steubenville and has trained in marriage and family therapy.

So, if you think that your relationship could use a little help-- or even a lot of help,--give Jean a call today and take that important first step in turning your marriage into a “happily ever after” story.

Where do you start?

Look no further.

1. **Go to www.jeanmackenzie.com and sign up for my free newsletter “Happily Ever After: A Guide to Healthy Relationships,” filled with helpful tips on how to nurture your relationship.** You will also receive the free report, **“10 Tips for Resolving Anger in Your Relationship.”**
2. **Call today for a free, no obligation, 20 minute phone consultation.** We will discuss your problems and together decide how I might be able to help you. I look forward to hearing from you.

Jean sees clients in her office in Fredericton, NB and offers telephone and online counselling. She can be reached at:

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