



IS IT IS, OR IS IT AIN'T, ABOUT COMMUNICATION?

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Hoping better communication will transform your marriage? In his book, *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work*, legendary marriage researcher Dr John Gottman calls that notion “the greatest myth of all.”

Later in the same book, though, he explains how to (that's right) *communicate!* And we all have scars to show that it matters what we say and how we say it. So IS communication the answer? Does it or doesn't it matter?

No, and yes. Communication is not THE answer. THE answer is a heart attitude whereby you have

- An overall positive view of your partner that overrides negative impressions and feelings
- Empathy that moves you to sample your partner's inner experience and make sense of it
- A commitment to respond in a considerate, constructive manner

Without that attitude, communication tools are worthless. But tools can help you build that attitude by heading off knee-jerk reactions, allowing you truly to understand and validate your partner, and phrasing responses that help rather than hurt.

Learn those communication tools, and use them. But remember: It's not the words that will heal your relationship. It's the heart that is sending them.