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Gary Smalley in his book talks about an easy way to remember how to communicate. He condenses the idea into the acronym LUV

L stands for Listen: During this phase of communication, it's very important that you remain in control of your responses. You will be tempted to respond by explaining your own position. Ask yourself: Am I really interested in listening to her or am I just waiting my turn to respond?

Listening sounds like: "I heard you say..."

"If I understood you correctly, you said."

"It sounds like you are saying..."

After you mirror back to them, get some feedback. Ask, "Did I get that right?"

Show an interest in wanting to understand the whole picture, ask, "Is there more you want to tell me?"

Repeat the listening process 2 or 3 times and then move on.

U stands for understanding That's how we show compassion, something everyone wants to experience from his or her partner. Understanding is not agreeing, it is basically saying, "From your perspective, I can see why/how you would see it that way." Remain curious

Understanding sounds like: "I can see what you mean."

"I can understand where you're coming from."

"That makes sense to me because..."

V stands for validate: Validating your partner is a really powerful way of developing intimacy. It requires you to verbally capture the emotion behind what your partner is saying and express it to him or her. Suspend judgment and remain curious.

Validating sounds something like: "That must make you feel..."

"I wonder if you felt...when I..."



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Remember your goal in communication is not to win an argument or get what you want, but to bring unity to your marriage.

One major mistake that many couples make is fire hosing each other with too much information. Give bite size pieces of information. Don't rehash the whole history and all the details.

Use self-control and practice communication skill activities like condensing what you want your partner to hear. Use only 3- 5 medium size sentences at a time. If you have been talking for 1 minute it's time to let your partner respond. Use an egg timer if necessary.