Communicate or Disintegrate

Modern Family, Week Two

Brandon...

If we could only communicate!
Everything we do communicates something.

Your home can become the safest place on earth to communicate.

Ephesians 4:29 NLT
Don’t use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.

Colossians 4:6 MSG
Be gracious in your speech. The goal is to bring out the best in others in a conversation, not put them down, not cut them out.

How we communicate will either lead us toward closeness, or separation. Intimacy or division.

Angie...

While our focus today is on how we can build up and connect to those we love with communication—. We want to first identify two types of communication that cause disruption and disconnection in relationships.

Proverbs 3:3 NASB
Do not let kindness and truth leave you; Bind them around your neck. Write them on the tablet of your heart.

Harsh Communication

Men need to hear: I believe in you, I like you, I am on your side.
Women need to hear: I will do anything for you, I will fight for you, I love you.

But when we speak harshly our husbands and our sons hear: I don’t believe in you, I don’t like you, I am not on your side.

And when we speak harshly to our wives and daughters they hear “You are not loved, I will not fight for you, you are not worthy of my kindness.”

**BRANDON...**

Dishonest Communication

Two ways to be “honest.” The obvious way - don’t keep secrets and be deceptive. But just as important is being honest about our thoughts and feelings.

James gives us some of the best wisdom about communication...

**James 1:19-20 NLT**

Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires.

From the Message...

Lead with your ears, follow up with your tongue, and let anger straggle along in the rear.

**ANGIE...**

1. Change Your Patterns (quick to listen)

A simple (but really, really hard to develop) pattern of communication...patterns are powerful
We usually try and stop bad communication but that doesn’t work - we have to replace a negative pattern with a positive one.

Closing our mouths, tuning into others and listening (rather than tuning out/speaking over) is a pattern interrupter.

**Listening allows us to really hear and then Validate- give permission for others to feel what they are feeling. Join them in their feelings. Match their emotion.**

**STORY: DREW AND THE VIDEO GAMES**

Joining people in their pain/fear/sadness/frustration rather than dismissing their feelings is a pattern interrupter.

**We don’t just listen for the words, but we listen for the emotion and the meaning attached to the emotion.**

What’s really going on?
What’s the underlying emotion?

Listening for deeper meaning attached to the communication is a pattern interrupter. We spend so much time communicating about only what is being said, because we’re not listening close enough to what is not being said.

**2. Create a new language (slow to speak)**
5 levels of communication

- Common conversation (small talk)
- Nightly News (facts) - First two levels of communication not very satisfying. The next 3 is where the real risk and potential satisfaction starts.
- Cautious Disclosure (opinions, concerns)
- High risk/ High reward talks - (feelings) ** Now I know a few of you in here might be tempted to tune out at this point because you think "I'm just not a super emotional, feely type person" To which I want to lovingly call "Bologna". God created us with emotions. His word declares that we are made in His image, Imago De, We have been made in the image of this Jesus who felt sorrow at the death of his friend Lazerus and the pain of his friends Mary and Martha. This Jesus who felt anger when talking about the evil of harming little children. This Jesus who felt fear as he faced the suffering of the cross. You are a person who has been created to experience emotion. STORY: ELLA AND THE PROM DRESS
  - When we don’t meet our people in this place, help give them a language for their emotions they do one of two things (withdraw, turn inward, self soothe, no one is coming for them) or their feelings get bigger and stronger and they pursue the validation they need, often in negative ways (they are crying out for you to see them and they will act out until you join them there.) STORY: Lauren and Brooklyn
- Truth in love talks - (needs) - total vulnerability

**BRANDON...**

Trace your own words back to your own heart. What’s your underlying emotion?

Be honest, real, and loving.

3. Challenge your heart (slow to get angry).

**LONG TERM...**

You need new patterns.
New thoughts.
Better beliefs.
Forgive (let’s start fresh today!)

ANGIE...

Repair - Here’s one thing we know. You are going to get this wrong. Some of us in the car ride home today will mess this up. Remember, patterns are powerful. But here’s hope … the most important part of communication in a family is REPAIR. The ability to confess, ask for forgiveness and try again builds attachment and connection.

Jesus is the ONE who has practiced this perfectly and gives us hope.

Psalm 103:8-14 NLT
[8] The LORD is compassionate and merciful, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. [9] He will not constantly accuse us, nor remain angry forever. [10] He does not punish us for all our sins; he does not deal harshly with us, as we deserve. [11] For his unfailing love toward those who fear him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth. [12] He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west. [13] The LORD is like a father to his children, tender and compassionate to those who fear him. [14] For he knows how weak we are; he remembers we are only dust.

Even if you feel your situation is desperate and you wonder if you’ll ever get it right or if your family/husband/wife/kids will ever seek to hear you, know you and respond to your hearts cry you need to know the Father is meeting you where you are. He listens when you call out, He see’s your pain and He responds with loving kindness and truth. He doesn’t hold our failure and sin against us, but instead, when we confess … He promises to forgive.

I have had moments of despair when feeling unseen and unheard and I’ve cried out to God and HE IS THERE. He scoops me up and reminds me that it’s not my husbands or my kids, my parents or my friends job to SATISFY my longing to be loved … He communicated His love for me loud and clear on a cross.

BRANDON...

Close Out Message