

## COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

by [Timothy Keller](#)

Proverbs 18:21; 25:11; Job 19:2; James 3:8-10; I Peter 3:10; Ephesians 4:25-32

**Think about the guidelines and study the supporting Scripture verses.**

**Rate yourself on each of these items: Excellent (3), Good (2), Fair (1), Poor (0)**

1. Be a ready listener and do not answer until the other person has finished talking.  
(*Prov. 18:13; James 1:19*)
2. Be slow to speak. Think first. Don't be hasty in your words. Speak in such a way that the other person can understand and accept what you say. (*Prov. 15:23,28; 29:20; James 1:19*)
3. Don't go to bed angry! Each day clear the offenses of that day. Speak the truth always, but do it in love. Do not exaggerate. (*Eph. 4:15, 25; Col. 3:8; Matt. 6:34*)
4. Do not use silence to frustrate the other person. Explain why you are hesitant to talk at this time.  
(*Prov. 15:28; 16:21,23; 10:1-9; 18:2; Col. 4:6; Prov. 20:15*)
5. Do not become involved in quarrels. It is possible to disagree without quarrelling.  
(*Prov. 17:14; 20:3; Rom. 13:13; Eph. 4:31*)
6. Do not respond in uncontrolled anger. Use a soft and kind response and tone of voice.  
(*Prov. 14:29; 15:1; 25:15; 29:11; Eph. 4:26, 31*)
7. When you are in the wrong, admit it and ask for forgiveness and ask how you can change.  
(*James 5:16; Prov. 12:15; 16:2; 21:2, 29; 20:6; Matt. 5:23-25; Luke 17:3*)
8. When someone confesses to you, tell him/her you forgive him/her. Be sure it is forgiven and not brought up to the person, to others, or to yourself! (*Prov. 17:9; Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13; I Pet. 4:8*)
9. Avoid nagging. (*Prov. 10:19; 17:9; 16:21, 23; 18:6, 7; 27:15; 21:19*)
10. Do not blame or criticize the other person. Instead, restore . . . encourage . . . edify.  
(*Rom. 14:13; Gal. 6:1; I Thess. 5:11*)
11. If someone verbally attacks, criticizes, or blames you, do not respond in the same manner.  
(*Rom. 12:17, 21; I Pet. 2:23; 3:9*)
12. Try to understand the other person's opinion. Make allowances for differences.  
(*Prov. 18:2, 13, 15; Phil. 3:15, 16*)
13. Be concerned about the interests of others. (*Phil. 2:3; Eph. 4:2; Rom. 12:15*)

**Reflect on the 13 guidelines for communication above and:**

- List the items that you most need to work on changing.
- Write down two specific actions you can take to improve these items.
- Share these with your mate and ask for help in changing. Get other suggestions concerning how you can improve these items. If you do not have a mate, share with a close Christian friend.