

# What Comes out of Your Mouth

A mature-looking lady had an appointment with a marriage counselor and told him flat-out: "I would like to divorce my husband."

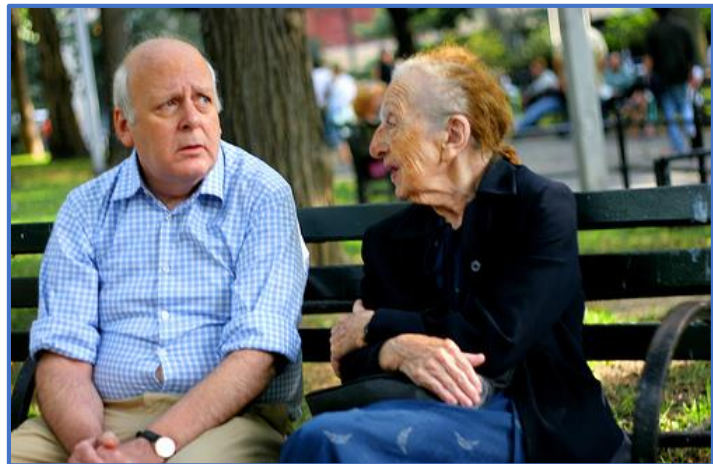
To this, the counselor replied, "Well, do you have any grounds?" She answered, "Why, yes. We have almost an acre."

The puzzled counselor asked her, "You don't understand. What I want to know is, do you and your husband have a grudge?"

The lady answered, "Actually, we don't, but we do have a nice carport."

At this, the counselor shook his head and said, "Ma'am, I'm sorry, but I just don't see any reason why you should divorce your husband."

The lady looked at the counselor and said to him, "It's just that the man can't carry on an intelligent conversation."



Communication, communication, communication – there was a breakdown here in the talking. Thursday, we began a two-part series entitled *10 Golden Rules of Communication*, based on an article written by Dr. Neel Burton, a psychiatrist, philosopher and writer

who lives and teaches in Oxford, England. Yesterday, we examined five rules of good listening. Today, we consider five rules of good talking:

1. **Convey messages in a clear and effective manner.** If you are to say anything at all, then it should be as clear and as concise as possible. If people get the feeling you or your message is confused or that you are just using small talk to fill up time and/or embarrassment, they may switch off. The key here is to make sure that you've actually got something to say before you open your mouth.
2. **Use clear and unambiguous language.** Avoid long, complex or jargon-filled sentences, and keep your message as clear, simple and to the point as possible.
3. **Use nonverbal methods of communication.** Think laterally. Think creatively. Where appropriate, support and enhance your message with nonverbal tools, such as a diagram, prop, PowerPoint presentation or video.

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4. **Use repetition.** If provided with a list, people best remember the first item (primacy effect) and the last (recency effect) on the list. Therefore, if something is particularly important, say it twice, once at the beginning and once at the end.
5. **Check understanding.** After going through a complex or difficult concept, make sure that the concept has been understood before you move on or leave. By getting those in the conversation to grapple with the concept and translate it into their own words, you are not only checking understanding but also reinforcing learning and memorization.

Listening and talking – the elements of good communication. And – as with other endeavors – practice makes perfect.

*Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body* (Proverbs 16:24 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter