

Steps to Cultivating Family Communication and Connection: The Space Between

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The new definition of a relationship is two people and the space between!



WHEN WE PUT APPRECIATIONS AND EMPATHY IN THE SPACE BETWEEN,
CONNECTION AND WONDER HAPPENS.

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Ever feel that your family is always on the go and that there is too little time for communication? Or perhaps the arguing, bickering and putdowns in your home seem overwhelming. Whatever the stage of your family's interactions, I would like to introduce you to the concept of the **Space Between**. As a Safe Conversations® facilitator, I teach a new definition of relationship which is two (or more) people and the space between them. What we put into that space--complaint and negativity or appreciation and understanding--greatly impacts the quality of our relationship with each other. To hear the founders of Safe Conversation®, Dr. Harville Hendrix and Dr. Helen LaKelly-Hunt, explain more about the Space Between, watch this 6 minute video:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=z7pq1KI2KTw

One area of communication that we are usually don't pay enough attention

to is listening. Did you know that research shows that we only remember 25% or less of what another person is saying to us? If we are honest with ourselves, most of the time we listen to respond--that is to give our opinion, share our experience or disagree with what the other person has said. To bring empathy into the space between, we need to begin to listen to understand

Want to improve your family's communication? Start a new tradition in your home. Over a family meal or at a family meeting, say that you would really like to create more appreciation and kindness in the family. Explain the concept of ***the space between*** and how it impacts the way that the family interacts. Print out the list of conversation starters at the link below and cut them into strips.

tinyurl.com/conversation-starters

Select the ones that best fit your family (age of children, etc.) Fold them in half and put them in a jar or a container. Have someone pull out a question to begin. Everyone can answer the same question, or each person can draw out their own. Decide if you put the questions back in the jar or not. Use your creativity and start changing your family's culture. If you have never held a family meeting, refer to this previous blogpost: www.coachmyrna.org/blog/making-family-a-priority

Another activity that works great for families for whom everyone is old enough to read and write begins by gathering everyone, giving them a piece of paper and a pen or pencil. Tell each family member to print their name in the middle of the paper. Then, tell everyone that this is an opportunity to express the things that they appreciate about each other. When everyone is ready, tell them to pass the paper to the right and begin. Each family member writes something that they appreciate about the person whose name is on the paper. Give enough time each round for each person to write--usually a minute is good. Having everyone work in silence

is also a way to support the atmosphere; play some beautiful music in the background.

Keep passing the papers until everyone gets their own paper back and has a chance to read over what has been written. If anyone wants to read theirs aloud or express what they feel after reading it, do so. This is a terrific opportunity to give a voice to that which often goes unspoken.

Both of these activities can be adapted to be used with adult children and even grandchildren. Whether it is one-on-one or at the next family get-together, we have the opportunity to impact the **space between**.

To purchase my book on Amazon, click here:
tinyurl.com/7-Gifts-to-Give-Your-Child

If you would like to know more about what I offer as a coach, please visit my website: www.coachmyrna.org/ Find out more about Safe Conversations www.coachmyrna.org/safe-conversations.html.