

A Look at Love and Respect

Dr. Emerson Eggerichs brings his book *Cracking the Communication Code* by describing the “Crazy Cycle:”

WITHOUT LOVE, SHE REACTS WITHOUT RESPECT
WITHOUT RESPECT, HE REACTS WITHOUT LOVE.

Then he makes this statement, “When a wife feels unloved, she tends to react in ways that feel disrespectful to her husband. When a husband feels disrespected, he tends to react in ways that feel unloving to his wife. And around and around they go – on the Crazy Cycle.”

The scriptural basis for this can be found in Eph. 5 and summed up in verse 33, “...let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.”

Sue and I can look back on our 44+ years of marriage and see how we have been on the crazy cycle way too many times, and we still can get back on for another ride once in a while! Fortunately, over the years we have learned to at least recognize when we do get back on the crazy cycle and try quickly as possible get back on what Dr. Eggerichs calls the “energizing cycle.” It requires one or both of us to humble ourselves and admit “*I was wrong.*” The more we use those three little words, the more we realize just how powerful they are! Those three words tend to defuse the tension that may be between us; those words helped the one who was hurt to begin to open their heart again; they feel like they have been heard and understood; and it makes it easier to forgive the offending spouse who may have hurt us. Of course it is even better if the person also follows up those three words with, “Will you please forgive me?” too!

I see how those three words “I was wrong” can communicate both love and respect to the other person. They shift the focus off of you and tell the other person that I don’t want to be right, but I want to have a relationship with you. Those words also cut off most of the negative relational messages that may have been sent unintentionally by either person by our words and actions.

Recently, Sue and I were not doing well getting along with each other. I had gotten busy working on some things that I wanted to get done and had started paying less attention to Sue. With less talking, touches, hugs and eye contact, she was feeling like she was not important any more. She felt left out and ignored. When she finally said something about it, I got offended and we were on the crazy cycle again! As I was dealing with my own emotions and feelings, I opened my Bible and found a copy of the COUPLES and CHAIRS handout that we copied from the book *Cracking the Communication Code*. (If you want to get a more in-depth understand of how to use these acronyms, Dr. Eggerichs takes two chapters in the book to explain them!) Looking down the list for men to love their wives (COUPLE), I realized that I was not doing a very good job energizing Sue’s need for love. I was wrong! And I needed to start doing more to show my love for her. It didn’t take long for us to get off the crazy cycle and back to love, joy, peace, and rest in our relationship.

For those of you who have already gone through out marriage mentoring lessons, you already have a copy of this, but I want to finish this marriage encouragement by providing the rest of the readers with it too. I would encourage each of you to take these suggestions to heart and begin to apply them to your marriage and start blessing your spouse with love and respect! Trust me, it works!

Fun Date Idea

Go to a book store like Barnes and Nobles, get a travel book on somewhere you would like to go, and look at it together while you share a drink or dessert. Start to dream and talk about what you would like to do when you go there!

For a man to show love – C-O-U-P-L-E

Closeness – need face-to-face time of talking – tell her regularly that you love her, admire and appreciate her.

Openness – don't be withdrawn or preoccupied with other things when she wants to talk – be tender and transparent – share your thoughts and problems with her – respond to her attempts to draw you out or show concern about you – turn to your wife's heart and not the TV or newspaper.

Understanding – live with your wife with understanding **1 Pet. 3:7** – be attentive to her concerns – make her feel understood and that you care – listen and let her talk, don't try to fix everything! – just letting her talk makes her feel that you understand

Peacemaking – seek ways to be at one with your wife – talk things through and resolve issues, don't just drop them – admit your mistakes and ask forgiveness – don't get defensive

Loyalty – you are in covenant with her – show her your devotion to her and God – look for ways to show her your loyalty, don't just think that she knows I love her – make sure she know that she is the only one for you

Esteem – show appreciation for her value as your equal – she should feel treasured as your lover – remember special events like birthday, anniversary, first date, engagement, etc.

YOUR LOVE BLESSES REGARDLESS OF HER RESPECT.

For a woman to show respect – C-H-A-I-R-S

Conquest – stand behind your husband's career and desire to work – recognize how important and man's job is to him – his work energizes him and he will respond to your recognition

Hierarchy – respect and appreciate his responsibility toward protecting and providing for you – respect and encourage his headship in the family – submit to his leadership (get under "sub" his "mission")

Authority – you must submit to his authority over you and the family – allow him to take the leadership in every area and do not try to do it yourself

Insight – turn to your husband for his opinion and guidance – recognize that you are a team and he needs your intuition and you need his insight – be willing to follow his insight and not try to insist on your own way

Relationship – you should be your husband's friend and lover – do things together as his friends and companion – recognize that he desires to be with you and to do things together

Sexuality – recognize your husband's vulnerabilities in the area of sexual pleasure and work to meet his every need for sexual fulfillment – having sex with him is a way for both of you to feel close – it puts a man in touch with his emotions – sometimes be willing to give him the sexual release that he needs even though you may not be "in the mood." - "Quickies!"

YOUR RESPECT BLESSES REGARDLESS OF HIS LOVE.

(taken from *Love and Respect*, Dr. Emerson Eggerichs, Integrity Press, 2004)

Dialogue Question:

Write a letter to each other answering the following question. Then exchange letters and read and discuss your answers together. Allow the conversation to go from there!

How Do I Feel About our level of communication when we are at home together? How might we improve our level of communication in showing love and respect to each other? How does that make me feel?