

25 Guidelines for Good Communication

Let's start with the basics -- good communication is at the heart of effective parenting. Here are 25 guidelines that capture the essence of effective communication.

Be Committed

1. We must be committed to communication.
2. We must be convinced that we are a gift to be given, and that through their self-disclosure others are a gift offered to us.
3. We must be determined to be honest with ourselves.

The Successful Practice of Sharing Oneself (Speaking)

4. In sharing ourselves with others, we must always take full responsibility for our own actions and reactions. As a consequence of this, we will make "I statements," not "Your statements."
5. We must speak only for ourselves. In communicating I should make it clear that I am speaking only *my* truth, and not *the* truth.
6. We must share all our significant feelings with those to whom we are relating.
7. We must be courageous enough to share our personal vulnerability with one another.
8. We should express gratitude to our listeners.

The Successful Practice of Accepting the Sharing of Another (Listening)

9. We should be "present" and "available" to others who offer to share themselves with us.
10. We should accept others wherever they are.
11. We must listen attentively to learn the "inner consistency" of others.
12. We must not indulge in mind games by judging the intentions and motives of others.
13. We should register emphatic and reassuring reactions to others when they are sharing themselves with us.
14. We should clarify the message that is being delivered, trying always to understand accurately the meaning of others.
15. In the role of listener we should offer only suggestions and never directions.
16. As listeners we should avoid all blocks to communication.
17. We should explicitly thank those who have shared themselves with us.

General Practices that Promote Good Interpersonal Communication

18. Good communication requires that the communicators spend special or quality time together.
19. Touching is an important form of communication.
20. To become more effective communicators we must "stretch" beyond our "comfort zones."
21. We must be ready to apologize when an apology is appropriate and helpful.
22. We must avoid a buildup of tension.
23. At times of crisis in communication we will need to use special approaches.
24. Whether speaking or listening, the motive of the good communicator must always be love.
25. We should pray for the enlightenment and the courage to communicate well.