

Address The Mess | Part 2 | Pastor Steve Wells | 02.14.2021
Replay message at: <http://www.northpointeFL.org/messages>

Communication is important within every relationship. This week, let's Go Deeper together focusing on "8 Steps to Better Family Communication" By Ana G. (<http://www.froddo.com/8-steps-to-better-family-communication>). How often are you rushed through your day and time together, forgetting to stop and really communicate and connect with those around you? Ana G says "Fortunately, there are several steps you can take to help improve the quantity and quality of the communication between the members of your family." Read each of these steps and reflect. Do you do them (one, some, all, none)? How can you start (if you do not already) or improve on what you currently do?

Schedule Family Time

It can be easy to create a life in which family members do not spend much – or any – quality time together, especially when you and your spouse may be working long hours at your jobs and the kids are busy with school and their extracurricular activities. However, it is incredibly important to schedule family time. Raise the significance of family time to the level that it is considered just as important as showing up to work or going to a doctor's appointment. If necessary, remove already planned activities to make room for ones that involve the entire family. Gather feedback and come to a consensus when deciding which activities should be moved to make space for family time. **Note you may experience initial resistance however, as long as you are diligent in setting time aside for this purpose, your family should start to look forward to these moments. It also helps to make sure that these activities are important to your children and spouse, but also that they're something you really enjoy as well.

Establish Family Routines

These can be as simple as reading a book before bedtime or an activity that involves more planning such as setting aside a night every week or month to check out a movie or engage in another fun activity. These routines also help create a sense of stability in the lives of children. These routines also create more opportunities for them to interact with other family members. However, make sure to let this happen as organically as possible. Try out a few things and see what sticks.

Eat Meals Together

Eating meals as a family is a great way to increase quality family time. It helps to have this on a regular day or series of days such as Sunday evenings. Creating this ritual prompts children and other family members to start looking forward to them, but it eventually helps them to learn to expect these positive experiences.

Allow for One-on-One Time

Set aside one-on-one time between you and other members of your family. Perhaps you can take a young one to a place that is important to them, such as an ice cream parlor or neighborhood park. Once there, make sure to ask more open-ended questions that cannot be answered as curtly as children tend to do, especially when they get older. Anything that gets them thinking and talking more thoroughly is a good thing.

Be An Active Listener

Probably the most important thing you can do is to ensure that you are focused 100 percent on what your loved one is communicating. Turn off or ignore all electronic devices. Miscommunication often occurs when the person being talked to is distracted by those things. Also make sure that you are much more focused on listening than on talking or on constantly thinking of what to say when there is a break in the conversation. Once the other person is finished talking, consider paraphrasing what was said and repeat it back to ensure that you understood it accurately. It also helps to have your child repeat back what you said to make sure that you were understood as you had intended.

Attack the Problem Not Each Other

If there are issues amongst family members, make sure that the focus is always on the problem itself, not on either or both of the people involved in the situation. Show unconditional love for the person while communicating concern over what that individual did and clearly explaining why you were bothered by what had occurred. If necessary, take a few minutes before speaking to your child, it is important not to explode at your young one or react in a manner that tends to cut off the lines of communication. Allow your child to fully explain the reasoning behind what occurred, take the information in and then explain how you viewed the situation.

Show Kindness and Appreciation

One way to help foster positive emotions amongst family members is to regularly support each other (watching a play, sport, or talking about their love of a sport). It also helps to encourage your children when they are experiencing some of the more challenging times in their young lives.

Stay Connected Through Technology

Although it is important to cut off from technology while communicating with loved ones, you can also use technology to keep in touch during times when you may not have as many in-person interactions. Using technology also helps keep family members in touch with each other when the time comes for the children to go to college or those who live far away..

Maintain Good Family Relationships

Although improving the communication lines in your family does take some time and devotion, the outcome is easily worth anything that may have to be sacrificed to make that happen. Doing so not only helps strengthen the bonds between parents and their children, but it also helps parents get closer to one another as well as the children with each other.