

# MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT GROUP

## Lesson 5 - Communication in Conflict

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*“My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.” James 1:19*

**Main Idea:** What is the Goal of communication? *Mutual understanding.*

If you want to be heard in your marriage, consider your timing and tone. There are 4 negative communication patterns we can find ourselves in:

- **Withdraw** – unwillingness to get in or stay in important discussions
- **Escalate** – negative response where the ante is continually upped
- **Negatively Interpret** – believe the motive of another to be more negative than is really true
- **Invalidate** – subtle/indirect putdowns of the thoughts, feelings, or character of another

This acronym spells WENI, so remember “don’t be a WENI” when communicating.

1. Which 1 or 2 of these negative communication patterns do you tend to use with your spouse? Can you share an example?
2. Does this pattern present itself outside your marriage (work, family, friends, etc.)? Why or why not?
3. How does your communication style affect your ability to resolve conflict with your spouse?
4. Have you considered how you can honor the Lord in your communication? What would that look like in your marriage?

# THROUGH THE WEEK

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Read the Scripture below for each day and answer the following questions. Every passage may not clearly give an answer to each question but think through these questions and see how God leads you. You may want to use a journal for this daily time in God's word.

1. What do I learn about God?
2. What do I learn about myself?
3. What do I learn about loving my spouse/others?

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
James 1:19-26	Proverbs 15:-4, 18	Ephesians 4:25-32	James 3:2-12	1 Peter 3:9-11

### *Challenge for the Week:*

As you identify your negative communication pattern(s), try to implement the following exit strategies with your spouse this week.



**Withdraw** – Stay in the conversation or if you can't, then articulate why.

**Escalate** – Call a time out for both to back away and then revisit after cool-off time.

**Negatively Interpret** – Believe the best and, when in doubt, ask for clarification.

**Invalidate** – Remember the goal of communication is to understand. Put downs or jabs do not help you achieve your goal

### *Additional Resources:*



Article – [www.marriagetoday.com/the-six-levels-of-communication-in-marriage/](http://www.marriagetoday.com/the-six-levels-of-communication-in-marriage/)

Article – Speaking Redemptively by Paul David Tripp (search online for this)

Book – Question a Day for You & Me: Daily Reflections for Couples (Amazon)