

U. LISTEN

NO!

What you have to say is NOT important enough to interrupt your wife.

My dear friends, you should be quick to listen and slow to speak or to get angry.

James 1.19 pjn paraphrase

Rate yourself.

How hard is this for you?

- I am working pretty hard on this already
- I used to be better and could work harder at this
- It's 6-8 on a 10 point scale of difficulty
- You sound too much like my wife. Did she talk to you already?



A SKETCH OF KINDNESS

I was an analytical chemist. My job required me to quickly, logically, and efficiently discover answers. That's a tremendous asset for a chemist, but can be an awesome liability for a Christian husband. When my wife was ready to sell the kids to the gypsies or put the dog in the food processor, the "answer man" was on the spot with a smorgasbord of solutions to her problem!

I had just what she needed. With one exception—sensitivity.

She needed an ear, not a mouth. Probably no area in our marriage has been so difficult for me as that of learning simply to listen to my wife. The more my wife resisted my sage counsel, the more vocal I became, until my earnest desires to help deteriorated into a crushing harshness.

"Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them." Col 3.19

Frank Sciacca

We've all heard our wives say, "I never said that! What makes you think I'd say a thing like that?"

And then, have you heard yourself trying to convince her that those were the exact words which came out of her mouth? Huh? STOP IT! Don't argue with her trying to convince her about what you heard. You already know now, what she meant to say. LISTEN, or you're a fool. Let her change her mind. You and I have changed our minds. We have let words come out of our mouths that we didn't mean to say. LET IT GO!

Many, many arguments have one item in common. Two people disagree on what was said or not said. Rather than listening to what they now mean, they are wrangling about what was previously said. Robert Fisher said, "No behavior on our part is more self-centered than the demand to speak and the refusal to listen."

STOP ARGUING! LISTEN TO THE WAY YOU JUST SPOKE. Would you talk to anyone else besides your wife like that about the same topic in that tone of voice? WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU? Would you ever interrupt your boss the way you interrupt your wife with your job on the line? [confession time, go ask my wife]. Your marriage is o the line!



Another golden nugget of kindness.

- ◇ Interrupting is basically a self-serving and egotistical act. It blatantly states that what you and I have to say is more important than what she has to say.

Robert Fisher

NO! What you have to say is NOT important enough to interrupt your spouse. Interrupting before hearing a person out is the one essential ingredient in an argument. NO! she will not automatically be convinced of your argument even if she has to stop talking and you shout at her across the room with that vitriolic tone of voice.

Listening with your eyes buys you the right to speak with your mouth a little later. You must hear what your mate MEANS, so you must listen even if you are positive you know. Look at her eyes.

Be a good listener. It takes a lot of effort. Stifle the desire to comment on every sentence. Pause for a breath. Sometimes kindness is keeping your mouth closed. Silence is prized by many people. Is there a friend who doesn't seek you out anymore? Perhaps you dominate more conversations than you realize. Commenting on everyone else's statements may be viewed as "one upance." You may seem too eager to meet or top another's story. Please don't correct other's in the middle of their sentences UNLESS IT IS IMPORTANT.



One sentence nuggets of golden kindness.

- ◇ We all have friends who won't let us get a word in edgewise—don't be one.
- ◇ Let it go. If your pastor said what your wife just said, would you correct Him?

Hey! You always hog the conversation. YOU NEVER ASK ME ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT WHAT I THINK! Poor listeners rarely ask question. They're probably afraid they might lose the floor. They don't value others' opinions or input.



One sentence nuggets of golden kindness.

- ◇ A wife is a person who says so much about everything that she has to be right part of the time!
- ◇ There is no greater loan than a sympathetic ear. *Frank Tiger*
- ◇ "It is better to listen to the rebuke of a wise man." *Ecc 7.5*
- ◇ "The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer,
but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things." *Proverbs 15.28*

Your friend is anyone who tells you what you need to know. He may say it sweetly. He may holler at you with veins popping out of his neck. He may be the meanest man in the neighborhood. It may come from your boss or littlest kid. But he/she cares enough to tell you tat you're wrong. Strangers will let you be your own stupid self. Friends won't.

STOP!

Decision Time

Don't go to the next chapter until you have marked at least one "Homework Assignment."

- I will listen until she has explained herself.
- I will not interrupt when she is angry.
- I will tell her that I will not interrupt except to ask questions for clarification.
- I will look at her when she speaks.
- When I'm confused, I will ask questions which are not designed to make her sound stupid.
- I will watch the tone of my voice.

A verse to write out and tape to your bathroom mirror, dash, or desk.

The first to plead his case *seems* right,
until another comes and examines him.

Proverbs 18.14

Listen to counsel and accept discipline that you may be wise the rest of your days.

Proverbs 19.20

We must hear what our wives MEAN.

**I remember hearing my dad say to me,
"It's not what I said, it's what I meant that's important."**