

15 Good Communication Rules

- 1. Watch what you say** – No name calling, snide remarks, put downs or negative faces
- 2. Don't interrupt or be distracted** – Let the other person finish before you speak
- 3. No cross-complaining** – When the other person complains, don't answer with a complaint
- 4. No raised voices** – No yelling or becoming vocally aggressive
- 5. No physical violence** – This is a firm guideline
- 6. No bringing up the past** – Do not use “Always”, “Never”, “Should” or “If only once...” do not bring up the past during a fight
- 7. Don't play psychologist** - Don't try to tell the other person what they are thinking or why they did something. Don't make assumptions.
- 8. No emotional blackmail** – “If you really loved me you would...” No using love as a weapon.
- 9. Don't make speeches** – State your gripe and then let other person answer. Respond to the other person's point before you bring up another point.

10. Negotiate

- a. State your problem** – State your problem with the situation and how it makes you feel
- b. Suggest alternatives** – Together, find options and look for all possible solutions, silly ones
- c. Look at the positive and negative consequences of each** – See what the effect of each solution would be
- d. Reach a solution** – Instead of trying to ‘win’, look for an answer that helps make your relationship stronger

11. Own your own problems, feelings and behaviors – Use “I” messages, rather than “you”

12. Time out is okay – from 30 seconds to 1 hour. The person who calls the time out must say how long it is for and come back once the time is up.

13. Be accepting – Understand that you are different people, that is what attracted you to each other. You are both different in how you see things and how you react to things.

14. Be willing to listen – Sometimes just listening to the other person helps the other person get their feelings out, no need for arguing.

15. Paraphrase / reflect – When one person makes a point, repeat back to them what you heard them say (not your view on what they said). “I'm hearing you say that...” Do this without adding your opinion or your point at the end. Wait until the other person says, “Yes, that is what I was saying” before moving on.

How I want my partner to let me know I have broken a rule is:

About the author ~ Kristine is a Registered Psychologist who runs a private practice in Southwest Edmonton. She specializes in the treatment of perinatal mood disorders. www.i-listen.ca