

Take Time for Talk Time

*Scintillate, scintillate, globule vivific,
Fain would I fathom thy nature specific.
Loftily poised in ether capacious,
Strongly resembling a gem carbonaceous.*

You've had the experience before, right? You're in a conversation with someone, doing your best to track with what they're saying, but to no avail. No matter how hard you try, the words coming out of their mouth make no sense whatsoever. You walk away thinking "I have no idea what they're talking about."

It's one thing when that person is an acquaintance, or perhaps even a perfect stranger. But when it's someone you're close to – your spouse, for example – it can be a frustrating experience. As the stress and pressures of life mount, couples often find themselves in situations where their communication has digressed to the point that they seem to be speaking different languages – if they talk at all.

But good, solid communication is the key to any relationship, all the more so in a marriage. The option to simply shrug your shoulders and walk away with an attitude of "whatever" is not on the table. You *have* to figure out how to communicate – clearly, with both compassion and understanding. It's either that, or face the consequences of a slow, marital drift.

One of the best ways to jumpstart the communication with your spouse is to find an activity you both enjoy, and then do it together. It's a strategy based upon a simple, but powerful premise:

When we do fun things together, we have fun things to talk about.

All too often, couples get bogged down in their communication because they only talk about the heavy, intense, difficult issues they're facing. Every conversation becomes something both of them dread. It's no wonder they develop a different language. If nothing else, it's a protection mechanism.

But when you add some fun to the mix, it helps reestablish the common ground you once enjoyed, early in your relationship. It gives you a foundation of communication that's both relaxed and enjoyable – one that helps pave the way for topics that are more demanding and complex.

And the best part is this: When you go back to the basics, the language tends to shift. Instead of gobbledygook that makes you say shake your head and say "huh?," the words become clear and recognizable. Instead of vague, confusing sentences, you get something even a child could understand:

*Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are.
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky.*

For Personal Reflection and Discussion with Others

1. What challenges do you face in your communication with your spouse?

2. How would your spouse describe your ability to communicate?

3. Read James 1:19. What can you learn about the communication process from that verse?

4. How has the communication with your spouse evolved throughout your marriage?

5. What would you change about your spouse's communication style if you could? Why?

6. What was the last 'fun thing' you did together? How did that impact your talk time?

7. How could you incorporate more times like that into your schedule? What would need to change in order to do so?
