

Relationship Journal*

Step 1 – S/he said: Write down *exactly* what the other person said. Be brief:

Step 2 – I said: Write down *exactly* what you said next. Be brief:


Step 3 – Good Vs. Bad Communication: Was your response an example of good or bad communication? Why? Use the EAR Checklist or the Bad Communication Checklist to analyze what you wrote down in Step 2.

Step 4 – Consequences: Did your response in Step 2 make the problem better or worse? Why?

Step 5 – Revised Version: Revise what you wrote down in Step 2. Use the “Five Secrets of Effective Communication.” If your revised response is still ineffective, try again.

EAR Checklist*

Instructions. Review what you wrote down in Step 2. Was your statement an example of Good Communication or Bad Communication?

	Good Communication	✓	Bad Communication	✓
Empathy	1. You acknowledge the other person's feelings.		1. You ignore the other person's feelings.	
Assertiveness	2. You express your feelings openly and directly.		2. You fail to express your feelings openly.	
Respect	3. Your attitude is respectful and caring.		3. Your attitude is not respectful or caring.	

The Bad Communication Checklist*

Instructions. Review what you wrote down in Step 2 of the Relationship Journal. How many of the following communication errors can you spot?

Communication Error	(✓)	Communication Error	(✓)
1. Truth – You insist you're "right" and the other person is "wrong."		10. Diversion – You change the subject or list past grievances.	
2. Blame – You imply the problem is the other person's fault.		11. Self-Blame – You act as if you're awful and terrible.	
3. Defensiveness – You argue and refuse to admit any imperfection.		12. Hopelessness – You claim you've tried everything and nothing works.	
4. Martyrdom – You imply that you're an innocent victim.		13. Demandingness – You complain when people aren't as you expect.	
5. Put-Down – You imply that the other person is a loser.		14. Denial – You imply that you don't feel angry, sad or upset when you do.	
6. Labeling – You call the other person "a jerk," "a loser," or worse.		15. Helping – Instead of listening, you give advice or "help."	
7. Sarcasm – Your tone of voice is belittling or patronizing.		16. Problem Solving – You try to solve the problem and ignore feelings.	
8. Counterattack – You respond to criticism with criticism.		17. Mind-Reading – You expect others to know how you feel without telling them.	
9. Scapegoating – You imply the other person is defective or has a problem.		18. Passive-Aggression – You say nothing, pout or slam doors.	