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# Family Communication Pattern and Power Theory

Patricia Dyess  
patriciadyess01@gmail.com

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Family Communication Pattern and Power Theory

By

Patricia R. Dyess

Project submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the  
Bachelor of Integrated Studies Degree

Continuing Education and Academic Outreach  
Murray State University  
December 1, 2017

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Abstract

This paper is a review of the Family Communication Patterns Theory (FCPT) and Family Communication Power Theory and the research conducted from the marital, family, and interpersonal communication perspective of the two theories. The review of literature determined the negative and positive effects of events that can, in turn, have a negative or positive reaction about the family communication pattern and power theory.

Keywords: Family Communication, Family Communication Pattern, Family Communication Patterns Theory, Communication, Communication Conformity, Communication

### Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to show my gratitude and thankfulness to God. I love my family because time is precious and cannot be gotten back. All we have are memories. I would like to thank my family. This has been a significant challenge and sacrifice for us. The uncooked dinners, the pushing things aside, sleepless days and nights, the crying; it was worth it. I want to say thank you to Mrs. Melynda Conner, for taking on this challenge of being my senior project advisor and the many words of encouragement when I wanted to give up. Thanks to Mary-Elaine Horn for the initial push to get into the BIS program, and my VA advisors Devin and Matt for listening to me and for making sure I had what was needed to accomplish the goal of finishing school. TO GOD BE THE GLORY!

### Introduction

Communication is a very important and useful aspect to society and those who are a part of said society. Try to imagine what the world without the ability to communicate! Without communication there would be little to no advancement in many areas, such as the arts or culture. Communication is simply the means to express and relay information, but how communication can be used to do this differs and takes many forms. From actual verbal communication to sign language, this all allows individuals and communities to come together and share ideas, emotions, and sentiments. The power and importance of family communication and power theory in a family setting is something that should not be undermined, which is what this paper will explore in attempting to prove this.

### Literature Review

The National Communication Association states communication is the process through which people use messages to generate meanings within and across contexts (NCA, nd). McCormack (2013) defines interpersonal communication as a dynamic form of communication between two or more people through which the messages exchanged significantly influence their thoughts, emotions, behaviors, and relationships. It is compelling because it is continuously in motion and changing over time. Interpersonal communication derives from spontaneity in thoughts, moods, and emotions of the moment. Secondly, interpersonal communication is described as transactional. In other words, it is not one-sided. Lastly, interpersonal communication involves pairs. Interpersonal communication is used to bridge the gap of awkwardness when people first come into contact.

Interpersonal communication is styled as having an impact because it promotes change. The mental, emotional, behavioral, and relational impact of interpersonal communication

reinforces the communication choices made and determines the personal, interpersonal, and relationship outcomes that follow. McCormack (2013) also describes interpersonal communication as information transmitted directly through spoken or written words but communicated primarily through nonverbal innuendos. Words can be conveyed through expression or vocally. Interpersonal communication can be intentional or unintentional.

Intentional or unintentional communication debates about being misunderstood when communicating due to Watzlawick et al. (1967) expressions of deliberate or accidental interpersonal communication as "one cannot be able not to communicate." Behavior is nonverbal communication; whether it is the shrug of the shoulders, the primping of the lips, or the crossing of the arms or legs. All of this is nonverbal communication. Interpersonal communication is non-reversible. When people communicate with a person it not only affects initial contact, it can also change the later conversation. Initial connection in an interpersonal encounter is very pertinent in beginning stages of a relationship. It is essential to think before communicating because once it is out there, it is out there (McCormack, 2013).

### **Family Communication Pattern Theory**

Family communication pattern (FCP) assumes that people's beliefs about family interrelationship vary in the extent to which communication is perceived as open and as abiding by the specialized structure within the family. According to Keating et al. (2002a), FCP framework focuses on the ways individuals recognize their communication with other family members. Scholars Fitzpatrick and Richie (1994) researched the pattern in a theoretical approach and described the FCP as for how others see the family structure and an interpretation of what families do and interaction as a family unit.

FCP framework introduces that the family communication functions within the family in two ways: conversations orientation and conformity orientation. Conversation orientation describes open communication within the family. When a family is high in conversation orientation members talk about broader topics, are more open to feelings, and opinion (Fitzpatrick and Ritchie 1994). Families who are high in conversation orientation discuss some issues and feel comfortable sharing information. Families who are low in conversation orientation may perceive a wide range of topics as challenging to discuss. In a low conversation orientation, the family has fewer topical conversations of subjects and feels uncomfortable sharing private information (Koerner and Fitzpatrick, 2006).

Conformity orientation refers to the magnitude to which communication follows obedience to the family's hierarchy. The FCP framework assumes that families vary in the extent to which that commutative behavior stresses oneness of beliefs and attitudes (Koerner and Fitzpatrick, 2006). Fitzpatrick and Ritchie (1994) found conformity orientation deals with how much stress is placed on obedience to parental authority and on avoiding conflict. Koerner (2006) explains when family communication is high in conformity, members tend to avoid conflict and stresses harmony and connection within the family. When family communication is characterized as low conformity, members individualize themselves from the family and are more willing to express their disagreement with the viewpoints of other family members.

### **Family Communication Power Theory**

Magee (2009) and Laswell (2009) group power into three categories designated, distributive, or integrative. Designated power comes from a position held. Siefkes (2010) describes distributive power as a focus on dominated power or to be forced into a lower position. Dunbar and Abra (2010) describe integrative power as the "both/and power." In integrative

power, the power is used to benefit both parties and those involved achieve something or are helped in the relationship. Hocker and Wilmot (2017) state power people choose to be concerned about who has the power, who ought to have power, how power was achieved, how people misuse power, how justified they feel in trying to gain more power for themselves. Power is used to make a difference as well as to live our lives to get the things that we want. We also use power to protect ourselves. Many people have different views of power (Pierro, Cicero, and Raven, 2008) view power as instinctive; some positive and some negative aspects. Some believe power is a result of political skill (Torelli and Shavitt, 2010).

Correct use of power can solve problems, make better relationships, and balance power during interaction, and conflict management. Waltzwich, Beavin and Jackson (1967) state just as one cannot communicate you cannot not use power. The only option is how it is used by self or others in relationships. From the interpersonal relationship perspective, a relational theory of power deals with social status rather than quality of an individual. Power is not an individual's ownership; it is defined by the relationship created by the power and the way it is distributed which is known as a product of the communication relationship (Guinote and Vescio, 2010). Per Pratto et al. (2010), power can be taken away when the situation changes. Power depends on the relationship and the contextual significance of the relationship.

Interpersonal power is the ability to influence anyone in any way. It is about control and being in control of what is needed by someone in the relationship. In addition to influential power, interpersonal power is also resisting the influence of the other person (Hocker & Wilmot, 2017.) Individual power is defined as value of the resources in the relationship. Power depends on having something that the individual needs. Bases of power as described by Raven and French (2006) are examples such as reward, coercive, legitimate, referent, and expert power.

Regardless of the various labels, everyone has something that may be used to balance or gain power in a relationship.

### **FCP Couples and Marital Setting Interpersonal**

Maslow (1970) felt interpersonal communication, and human needs were closely related and suggested that people seek to satisfy an echelon of needs in daily lives. When base level needs are met, then there is pursuit of higher level needs. At the base level of human needs are physical needs such as air, food, water, sleep, and shelter. Once these needs are met the concern with safety needs such as a degree of solidity and establishing protection from violence are addressed. After this need are social needs developing friendly and sentimental bonding relationships. According to Fitzpatrick (2004) relationships became a major way to explore inner works of human communication. Maslow describes esteem needs which focus on the desire to be respected and admired by others. Finally, in the hierarchy of needs is self-actualization needs which involves the ability to perform best at work, in the family setting, and personal life (1970).

According to Clark and Delia (1979), interpersonal communication not only helps us to meet fundamental needs, but also self-presentation goals, instrumental goals, and relationship goals. Self-presentation goals are desires to present one's self in a particular likeness so that others view one's self in a certain way. Instrumental goals are described as things people want to achieve or tasks people want to accomplish through interpersonal encounter. Relationship goals can be met by building, maintaining, or terminating bonds with others (Clark R. A. & Delia, 1979).

### **Difference in Communication in Couples or Marital Setting**

Interpersonal communication was previously developed, but the entity of the marriage portion had not peaked interest yet. The research began with interpersonal and family communication which differentiated from research generated into marital literature by communication researchers. According to Veoff, Kulka, and Douvan (1981) out of the many various reasons people seek professional help are relationship problems, one reason couples seek professional help is poor communication. Geiss and O'Leary (1981) say marital therapists rate broken communication as the most frequent and damaging problem for couples.

According to Koerner and Jacobson (1994), the systematic approach to research in marriage through psychology was trying to help couples who were experiencing marital distress. In 1995, Fincham (1995) the door opened, and a more in-depth study in the field of study of personal, intimate, and close relationship emerged. All views of the area of marital communication research done by social psychologist Brehm, Miller, Pearlman, and Campbell (2002) and Hinde (1997) in the study of communication in marriage has evolved from microscopic origin across many disciplines.

Fincham (1995) explains the importance of communication for a healthy marriage and how discussion leads to questions concerning what each spouse brought to the relationship that predicts communication within marriage. Sanders, Helford, and Behrens (1999) point out poor communication is an intergenerational and parental and offspring divorce is a product of poor communication.

According to Walton (2016), there are three types of communication in marriage: verbal, nonverbal and visual. Oral communication can be an expression through speech, through words, or tone of relationship satisfaction than verbal communication. For example, if a couple is told

to act as if they are happy, those observers can distinguish satisfied from unhappy couples through nonverbal communication. Studying the interaction of couples the smiles, laughs, warmth, stands out, but the anger, coldness, distress of couple is evident (Bircher, Wiess, and Vincent, 1975). The behavior of distressed couple may be that of less humor, smiling, and laughter than a happy couple according to Gottman and Krokoff, 1989. The distressed couple may display a higher level of fear, anger, sadness, withdrawal, looking away, leaving the room, body postures that are stiff, turning away from partner (Wess and Heyman, 1997).

Walton (2016) gives a few positive nonverbal ways to communicate as expressions of affection by caressing, rubbing on the back or hand, eye to eye contact during verbal communication. Facial expressions such as a smile are also mentioned as nonverbal communication. Lastly, offering to help with chores and buying gifts on non-special occasions are other forms of positive nonverbal ways to communicate.

### **Challenges Faced**

Cohan and Bradbury (1997) positive and negative partner communications can have a more significant impact than moderately adverse life events on communication behavior. Cohan and Bradbury also proposed stressful events may influence the discussion in three ways. Communication may decrease the effects of stressful events, but poor communication may effect in a more significant magnitude. Second, they propose conversation may lead to personal growth when stressful events occur. Thirdly, they propose stressful events predicts communication and this communication in turns anticipates of satisfaction in marriage. Some communication may affect how quickly individuals interconnect in difficult conversation the likely reaction, and the actual outcome of the conversation (Koerner, 2002a).

### **FCP Adult-Child Setting**

Researchers concluded that awkward conversations in the family are associated with unique obstacles in the form of existing family communication styles and potential short and long-term consequences. A choice has to be made whether it is more important to interact in a specific conversation that may cause an adverse outcome or have an adverse effect (Russell, 2013). Russell describes in his research high conformity parents expecting children to follow parental decisions and hoping that the children will adopt beliefs of their own. Low conformity parents value personal growth of children over traditional obedience to parental authority. Families that are high conformity orientation avoid conflict, the research showed they considered a wide range of topics difficult. Families that are low in conformity have fewer issues as trying to discuss (Russell, 2013).

Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2002a) describe the family communication patterns as a relationship, a representation of family knowledge in a theoretical background. Conversation orientation in a family setting references the degree to which families create a climate in which all family members are encouraged to participate and unrestrained interaction about a wide array of topics. Families high in conversation orientation share details of family members daily thoughts and emotions and openly. They discuss controversial topic. Conformity orientation is when family communication stresses a climate of uniformity of attitudes, values, and beliefs (Koerner and Fitzpatrick.) In families with high conformity orientation parents developed rules for their children and parents punish if rules are not followed. Children cannot divert from the family's beliefs, values, and norms. The communication behavior does not only arise from the communication behavior between parent-child but, all family members. Even though research focused on the parent's socialization with children and the concept of family communication

patterns Fitzpatrick & Caughlin (2002) noticed that the family is where communication is learned as well as the comprehension of personal relationships. Koerner & Fitzpatrick (2002a) model describe how relationship-specific discussion develops because relationship is based on repeated experience in the same type of relations, whether it is through family relationships, friends, or family members.

According to Koerner & Rueter (2008), complexities of the family structure, of parenting, adoptive children adjustment, and family communication. The literature explains when parent-child communication to be open, the expectations are consistent, and consequences are followed through; the interaction is described to be positive. Parent-child interaction makes a major difference in an adoptive child's adjustment and impacts family communication. The poorer adjustment is associated with anger, hostility, and conflicting interactions. Reiss (1981) suggested a shared reality concept. This concept is a guide to help members of families relate to problems in the world and make proper decisions.

### **Family Types and Differences in Communication**

FCP proposes that depending on whether family is high or low in conversation orientation and orientation conformity a family can be classified as one of the four types: consensual, pluralistic, protective, or laissez faire. Consensual families are high in both conversation and conformity orientation. The combination of open communication and preference for the traditional family hierarchy, members of these families tend to engage in discussions about a various amount of topics in which children are encouraged to voice their opinion. However, parents expect their children to follow parental Authority and hope that they will have similar values as they grow (Fitzpatrick M. A., 1994; Ritchie, 1990). Individuals are likely to engage in challenging conversations, however, some topics Maybe more difficult than

others. Though they want the family values to be discussed, they do not want their parental values to be compromised, and freedom is viewed as disrespectful.

Pluralistic families are high in conversation and low in conformity. There is more freedom in communication within this type of family than in the other family types discussed. In these kinds of families, other parents might not agree with their children's decision-making, but they respect their children's independence (Koerner, 2006; Fitzpatrick M. A., 1994) within these families the conversation is described as being open about many various difficult topics.

Protective families are low in conversation and high and conformity. These types of families advocate attention to parental authority and alliance of members at the expense of open and honest communication. Parents of these families do not tend to rationalize their decisions, and members are expected to maintain peace within the family by avoiding conflict (Koerner and Fitzpatrick, 2006). These families seek to avoid conflict and are not encouraged to speak openly. Individuals may view more topics as complicated and are less likely to engage in general conversations.

Laissez-faire families are low in both conversation and conformity (Koerner and Fitzpatrick, 2006). In these families, parents and children have little interaction with one another (Fitzpatrick and Ritchie, 1994). Because of the lack of openness in the family, if individuals believe that they have a difficult topic to discuss they are more than likely, not to engage in the conversation. According to Keating (2013), some family conversations that occur may be especially tricky. The consequential reaction of a family member might impact the family as a unit and result in either favorable or conflictive family responses. (Russell, 2013) Some communication may affect how quickly individuals interconnect in difficult conversation; the likely reaction, and the actual outcome of the conversation (Koerner, 2002a).

Researchers describe difficult conversation as having been "uncertain emotionally-charged" discussions (Browning, Meyer, Truog, & Solomon, 2007). The review indicates there is a relationship between communication patterns within the family and various psychological, social and behavioral outcomes that may inform understanding of difficult conversations (Koerner, 2002a). Russell (2013) examined specific types of severe family discussions. There has been little evidence available on how family members use the process and outcomes of awkward conversation. The inquiry of this investigation linked by two goals gaining additional insight into nature behind difficult family conversations as experienced by children of the family and examining the impact of family communication dynamics, how these discussions are perceived and how they unfold.

#### Analysis

Based on what I found I think that it depends on the family structure whether a communication pattern develops early in the stages of a relationship. I think it depends on the situations in the family whether the communication pattern is based on past reactions, whether the concern of the reaction from members will stop the individuals from choosing to communicate. Depending on the situation the individual will choose to engage in family communication or not because of past negative or positive consequences.

The literature showed parent-child interaction plays a major role in the child adjustment and communication process (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002). The literature suggests how the complexity of the family interaction and communication pattern has association. Family communication pattern theory is based on the fundamental insight coming together is vital to the family successfully functioning. According to Keating, et al. (2013) it is likely that family conversation was relative to whether the family could initiate a family conversation. The study

showed the possibility of those who were in the consensual and protective family setting would be more likely to initiate a difficult conversation compared to those in a pluralistic and laissez-faire family setting. The study reflected the consequences of reactions ranging from anger, awkward tension, no consequences; not talking, to family division. The reason behind certain responses were protection of self or relational reasons which includes protection of family. The negative responses were based on avoidance or no response. Sometimes there were changes invoked in families. Other times there were not. Other reasons for responses or conversation results because something was needed, it was the right thing to do, wanting to be honest, health, and just wanting to be accepted.

The pattern in a family can sustain a family or break a family apart as it continues through the years. From personal experience as a parent raising my children from the ages of 4 and 6, my parental communication was strict, and protective from the beginning. I was setting a foundation for them. As my sons grew, a foundation was established. In the teenage years the family communication had to change because my sons were at a different level in their lives. I wanted the pluralistic setting but it was hard to take me out of the protective setting. My adolescent years were in a one-parent home and we did not question her authority. I would discuss with my children things that happened at school, and we would set goals in order to have a better family communication relationship. Now they are at the ages of 20 and 23, the communication relationship is still a work in progress. Sometimes I think we are at the laissez-faire and sometimes I think we are at the pluralistic level. I think we can only advise them as parents. They either listen as we communicate or not. They will make their own decisions.

Baxter (2013) in this literary review of perceived and ideal FCP in family. Out of the 120 parent college-age children teams there were great amount of interaction of perceived and ideal

FCP. The parent child findings in this literature was compared to the study of Fitzpatrick and Richie showing that parents were different in conforming in the family. In the conformity parents scored higher. Baxter states the difference was the “unmet ideals for conformity orientation but not for conversation orientation.” Parents desired greater conversation orientation than the children (p.146). This statement aligns with what I expressed in the earlier statement about my children and the communication as they became adults.

The study addresses the areas contributed of study of the communication patterns within families from the Family Communication Patterns (FCP) approach as discussed with Koerner & Fitzpatrick (2002). It discusses the link between perceived and idealized FCP. Then it discusses differences in perceived and idealized FCP. Then it identifies discrepancies between parents and their children. This factor is rarely examined instead either collecting family data from single family member- basically children or using standardized score averages and composite scoring.

In this literary review Baxter (2013), it assesses the ideal and perceived family communication pattern. It discusses the interaction of families. The link of cognitive expectations about FCP and perceived FCP behaviors and the relationship looks at what is regarded as ideal FCP what is valued as essential like enjoyable reading. It looks at what parents expect for their families and how they behave toward children. They did a study on college students and the FCP. The study showed that it correlated with dimensions of environment. They also compared ideal communication to perceived FCP behavior. It studies the concept of what research was done on satisfaction with the family FCP research.

According to Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2002) this review discusses the two orientations in the Family Communication Theory which are conversation and conformity. Then it discusses the four different family types: consensual, pluralistic, protective, and laissez-faire. In the

consensual setting, families' communication echoes tension between exploring ideas through open communicative exchanges and a pressure to agree in support of the existing family hierarchy. Pluralistic family communication is open and uncontrolled emphasizes on independent ideas and nurturing communication competence in children. In protective families, communication in these type families function to maintain obedience and implements family standards; tiny value is placed on the discussion of ideas or the development of communication skills. In laissez-faire families, family members do not often get involved with each other in conversation, and they place little value on communication or the conservation of a family unit. Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2002) key researches of the Family Communication Theory (FCP) consensual families are high in both conversation a conformity orientations. In pluralistic families, they are high in conversation and low in conformity. Protective families are low in conversation and high in conformity. Lastly, laissez-faire is low in both conversation and conformity. In these families, there is little interaction between each other.

This review assesses the differences in conformities of conversations and how it can depend on so many factors besides ethnicity, timing, race, conformity or financial. All families have differences that may pertain to heritage or family history and how they dealt with issues in the family. This article is pertinent because it discusses the different types of communication conformities, how they affect the families' conversations, and how families may handle difficult conversations.

According to Broderick (1981) poor communication is the relationship problem most frequently identified by couples. Giess & O'Leary (1981) say marital therapists rate dysfunctional communication as the most frequent and damaging problem. It is divided into three sections. An overview of historical information on martial communication research. In the second section

themes are highlighted and major findings discussed. The third section discusses direction of research that is needed to provide a more complete understanding of marital communication.

This review explains the family position in the lives of people and in social institution. Ancestors belong to and identified with their families long before they formed groups and institutions such as communities, societies, or states. It is primarily within families where children are socialized. One theory of family communication is the Family Communication Patterns Theory (FCP). It applies to the widest range of communication behaviors within families. The FCP is considered to be basic and have a universal influence by culture, but not origination with culture. According to Schodt (2008), FCP is studied and investigated in a wide range of behaviors and family types and cultures.

This essay describes the history of FCP, future developments of the theory, and variables and outcomes associated with the FCP. The Study of effects of FCP on information processing behavioral and psycho social outcomes and how it has a strong effect on parent- child interactions, music videos, aggression, self-disclosure (Schodt et al., 2008). This essay will be effective because it goes in greater detail of FCP.

### Recommendations

Based on what I found I recommend these steps in order to improve communication pattern and power in a family or marriage setting: Begin by utilizing the six-step problem-solving process (Six step, 2017) Identify the problem, determine the root cause of problem by listening to each other; Brainstorming to find alternative solutions; select and implement solution, and lastly forgive and move forward.

Gottman's (1989) approach to family communication in family therapy is first communicate accurately, then communicate open and honest, make sure the intent vs. the impact

match up. In other words think what is the actual purpose behind what is about to be said as well as the impact of what is being communicated. One way to help identify the problems in family or marriage is to hold a face to face meeting. When identifying the problem, recognize the symptoms, but identify the root. (Second Step, 2017) Address the problem without shame or blame concerns that need to be addressed. An agenda may come in handy to stay on track and to make sure everything gets addressed. Be respectful of someone else's thoughts, views, and /or opinions. Try to make the meeting as positive as possible. No one should feel intimidated. If things become frustrated take a relaxation break or agree to disagree I suggest teambuilding games or workshops to build cohesiveness in a family is a possible solution to help listen to each other. It is very important to listen to each other to avoid misunderstandings.

When brainstorming, you must identify a clear goal, and think of solutions respectfully. Making sure everyone involved knows the goal so everyone has the opportunity to come up with ideas. Explore the consequences of what could happen if the solutions are followed through with. To ensure everyone's time is respected, do what needs to be done, say what needs to be said, and come up with the best solution and stick to it.

If help is needed and an agreement cannot be reached, allow new ideas to be the focal point of the brainstorm focusing on that idea, allow more time, or allow a separate time to come together on the issue in case the issue needs to be researched. If this does not work it may be time to see a professional, as a mediator to help. Listening is vital to the problem-solving in a communication relationship. Poor listening habits can be displayed without realizing it.

According to Engleberg and Wynn (2013), there are a few ways poor listening habits can be improved. Pseudo-listening is a way to pretend to listen, but the mind is somewhere else. An example of pseudo listening is when a person maybe talking from the kitchen or a bedroom in

the house to a child. They answer yes, but when you face to face connect. The child was on the gaming system and does not remember anything that was said to them. Selective listening is avoiding listening or looking for fault in what is being said. I have had a few encounters with this, I could not get the sentence out before I was tongue lashed by “that is not what you said” or “that is not what I was told.”

Superficial listening is watching how the person looks or speaks rather than what is being said. An example of this happened this week, the person entered the library with a gown, pajama pants and a coat. They were talking to another member from the church who was asking where they had been and encouraging them to come to church. They noticed me and tried to hug me. I gave them a quick hug but expressed I was not trying to get more sick because I was overcoming something myself. After my comment it was said the reason they did not notice you was because you lost weight. Defensive listening consists of interpreting critical remarks as personal attacks. Disruptive listening is explained as someone who interrupts someone as the person is speaking (p.153). There are different types of listening according to the Hurier Model: listening to hear, listening to understand, listening to remember, listening to respond, listening to eradicate, and listening to interpret. Our listening attitude can have an effect on how we communicate whether in a group, family, or couple setting.

Hocker & Wilmot (2017) describe forgiveness as a practice. Forgiveness is a result of our expression of remorse. Forgiveness is a process that may be influenced and changed through family communication patterns. by communication verbally or nonverbal. Fincham (1995) capacity to seek and give forgiveness is one of the most important factors contributing to a long satisfying marriage. The process of forgiveness, if accepted may improve compromised relationships. It does not always work that way, but another angle of forgiveness is forgiving

one's self in a communication setting. Hocker & Wilmot (2017) discussed, though it is difficult to offer forgiveness after being hurt, it can even be more difficult to receive it when you are the offender (p.304). Accepting forgiveness is an exercise in selflessness. Empathizing with the other person brings individuals closer to improving communication. In accordance with the Holy Bible, Colossians 3: 13 states "Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."

Wilmot states when we are working on self we must reconcile two images of ourselves: the person we think we are and the person who caused the harm (p.303). Taking this perspective on requires self-reflection and work on our identity. Matthew 6: 14-15 states, "For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins" (Holy Bible). This is very important because of the hidden issues, the emotions of anger and bitterness may manifest in our relationships. The person may begin to take things out on those closest to them. When negative communication has been displayed, it cannot magically disappear, but it is possible to be repaired through time and healing.

### Conclusion

Every day we engage in communication of all types and varieties. These various types and varieties of communication are what allow us, as a society and culture, to exchange ideas and express ourselves. These types and varieties of communication range from subtle bodily posture to more elaborate gestures, allowing individuals to bridge the gap between their identities. Communication is a vital part of life as it allows us to create bonds and form relationships, from siblings and parents to friends and spouses and everything in between.

Communication, especially interpersonal communication, plays a role in the world we

live in. It is how we speak, share, and grow together. It is how leaders obtain the power and authority to lead and guide nations, it is how a husband and wife strengthen their relationship with one another, it is how siblings and parents learn to love and speak with one another, it is how we can understand the effects of musical lyrics, artistic imagery, and even movies and films. On a more personal and spiritual level, it may even be how we understand and embrace our personal or religious beliefs and faith.

Whether it be in person or through another means, like e-mail, video chat and conferences, or in intimate situations, communication is the key to advancing any relationship. Teachers and social workers utilize and make use of the various types and varieties of communication if they want to establish common ground or an understanding with their students or peers. Communication allows us, in our individual lives or as a part of society as a whole, to relate to those around us to create bonds that have substantial meaning.

Communication is key in handling various situations, be they positive or negative, like a shared experience or even conflict. How one is able to communicate with those around them, be they a significant other, a child, a co-worker, or a fellow peer, determines whether or not the relationship is healthily successful and capable of growth. Communication is practically mandatory in life, and avoiding it will produce little success in regards to wholesomeness and depth.

Communication even goes beyond speaking, it also learning to acknowledge key signs and empathizing with others. It is the ability to understand another and knowing when and how to address them, be it with words or actions. Being able to realize and pick up on social cues is a sign of emotional and communicative intelligence, something that has allowed mankind as a whole to advance to its position in the world.

There will always be disagreements and conflict in life, which only stresses the importance of communication, as it holds the power to not only mediate these disagreements and conflicts, they also grant the communicator the potential to embrace one another and expand any relationships in their life. Therefore, learning the appropriate response to such things is critical to sustaining these various relationships, if we are to maintain a healthy and fulfilling social life. Be it within our own lives or as part of the larger world around us.

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