

ONE IS A TALKER, THE OTHER IS NOT

<https://fiercemarriage.com/one-is-a-talker-the-other-is-not>

[00:00:00]

Selena: If you're married, no doubt one of us is more of a talker than the other. Am I right?

Ryan: What's that? *[both laughs]*

Selena: Just say yes, and that's it.

Ryan: And some are listeners and some aren't. *[both laughs]* Yeah, there's going to be some asymmetry when it comes to communication skill, communication propensity, communication desire. So today we're actually gonna be going through six tips. Again, tips. There's that word. Six what?

Selena: I think they're tips. They're helpful.

Ryan: Hacks.

Selena: Six hacks. Six ways that-

Ryan: Insights.

Selena: ...you can communicate better with a spouse who may be on the opposite side of the spectrum in terms of communication. Maybe they're very quiet, they're a person of few words, and you are a person of many, many, many words. How do you actually communicate in a way that is helpful to each other? So we'll do that on the other side.

[00:00:51] <music>

Ryan: I happen to think it's a thing of beauty when you meet a couple and you've got this kind of quiet... I'm just thinking like the Burly mountain man. Just quiet just, says what he means, he means what he says.

Selena: I wish I could be not that, but quieter, because I think I talk too much.

Ryan: For a second I thought you were gonna say, "I always wish I could have married a Burly mountain man." *[laughs]*

Selena: No. No. You're my Burly mountain man.

Ryan: But still it hurt as if you said it even though you didn't say it.

Selena: I didn't say it. *[laughs]*

Selena: I know but I'm insecure in these ways. It's on me. *[both chuckles]* And you get the wife who is kind of like, you know, she'd kind of just knows him and just knows that he's quiet in those ways. And she can kind of see past the gruff facade. And she articulates all the things that they both think, right? That's a thing of beauty.

I think in many ways, we are that grizzly mountain couple. You are that grizzly mountain couple, Fierce listener. So let's get into that.

But first, if you don't know who we are, welcome. My name is Ryan. This is my lovely wife, Selena. And we are the Fredericks. We are the voices, faces, founders, creators of Fierce Marriage, Fierce Parenting. We do this ministry specifically to point you to Jesus and to commission you for the gospel. This amazing work that He has about on planet earth, we want to bring you into that if you're not already there. Come on in. The water's fine. *[Selena chuckles]* It's a great time.

So if you want to be part of what God is doing through this specific ministry, Fierce Marriage, you can do that. You go to fiercemarriage.com/partner. This whole thing happens because of two things. We're able to sell books that we've written, we poured our hearts and souls into, and now we've let those little book children out into the world, *[Selena laughs]* but also our lovely patrons. So if you decide to join us, thank you. If you are a patron, thank you, thank you, thank you. What? Book children.

Selena: Book children. It's true. *[Ryan laughs]*

Ryan: It's so painful.

Selena: I think two of our children were born when I was writing books. But they are also books on their own. Like actual... I was actually pregnant while we were writing these book babies *[chuckles]* simultaneously.

Ryan: If you want that whole story, at least for our third child, check out seethroughmarriage.com because that's the whole prologue to the book. *[both laughs]* It's like we did it again. We got pregnant and Selena had to write while pregnant which is really hard. Pregnancy brain.

Selena: Deadlines. It's all by-

- Ryan:** I know firsthand how hard is pregnancy brain.
- Selena:** ...the grace of God that books were written at that time. Anyways, if you are the one that talks more, you might tend to steamroll over the spouse that doesn't talk so much.
- Ryan:** So this episode is actually based on an article that was written by our good friend Zena. Zena actually was our editor-in-chief for a while. She was the one taking in all the submissions. She would write a number of posts for Fierce Marriage, Fierce Parenting, and she would edit those and make them awesome. She'd take them from awesome to awesomer. She would never use that word as an editor. *[both chuckles]*
- But her and her husband Andrew actually... So he's in the army and he got deployed or at least stationed I'll say, not deployed, but stationed in South Korea. So he worked on airplanes or helicopters. Anyway, so Zena if you're watching this, we miss you. Come back to the States. It's beautiful over here. But we pray for you and your endeavors. *[both chuckles]*
- Anyway, this article was from Zena. If you knew Zena, you would know the tone with which she writes this article. If you want to check it out, it's called [six tips for couples who are on opposite sides of the communication spectrum](#). The irony of the length of that title. *[both laughs]*
- Selena:** Let's just say Andrew would have put it in probably three words. So they are the epitome of on opposite sides of the spectrum. He's a man of few words. But his words are valuable. I mean-
- Ryan:** That's what I love about these guys-
- Selena:** ...he's well thought through.
- Ryan:** You know that the well is deep. It may not be, you know... The still waters run clear and deep as they say. And that's on that end of the spectrum. Then you get the other folks and it's all about volume. *[both laughs]* Not just volume of loud but how many words.
- Selena:** How many—the number of words.
- Ryan:** Throw it at the wall and see what sticks as opposed to... It's a shotgun versus a sniper.
- Selena:** Right.

- Ryan:** I got analogy for days. *[chuckles]*
- Selena:** Which can cause a lot of friction in a marriage [00:05:00] if you're constantly feeling like you're getting steamrolled because your words don't seem to matter because they're so few. She talks about, you know, how she felt like he didn't always lead even though he probably was leading and she was just not-
- Ryan:** Well, she was steamroll. And this sometimes happens in many... You know, you have a husband who's kind of... he's waiting for his moment to lead. And then he tries to step up and lead and the wife is just, for whatever reason, didn't receive the signals correctly, and will just steamroll or invalidate or somehow undermine unwittingly when he's trying to take a risk with maybe leading in some way, because his words are so few.
- So let's read Philippians 2. This is verses three and four. It says, "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility..." Okay, this is gonna be hard to hear. *[chuckles]* "...but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others."
- So the question here is, in our communication, how can I count you or if you're watching, listening, how can you count your spouse as more significant than yourself? Why don't you just answer it on the fly, Selena? We'll get into the six tips here in a minute, but I love asking Selena these questions on the fly.
- Selena:** Well, my very biggest mistakes in communication are thinking about how I'm going to respond and not actually listening to what he said. I'll grab on to one thing, and then I'll be like, "Okay, how can I fight this back?" And then he stops talking and I bring it back, and he's like, "That was so like five minutes ago, right?" Like, I'm just, I'm trying to fight really well. *[laughs]* Actually, the irony of it is I don't fight well at all. So I think I just try to prepare in anticipation.
- Ryan:** This is kind of ironic *[chuckles]* because the question was,-
- Selena:** See.
- Ryan:** ...Selena, how can I count you as more significant than myself when my communication-
- Selena:** I thought he was asking how I can count you-
- Ryan:** Oh, okay. Someone needs to learn how to listen. *[both chuckles]*
- Selena:** So how can you count me more significant?

- Ryan:** Yeah. Like, how can I show you that I count you as more significant?
- Selena:** You can listen to me... with your eyebrows, with your tone, with your questions,-
- Ryan:** Yes. *[Selena laughs]*
- Selena:** ...without having a distracting phone in front of you when I'm talking, *[both laughs]* without interrupting. Oh, that's a harsh one.
- Ryan:** That was good.
- Selena:** But how about-
- Ryan:** I'm affirming you when you're talking.
- Selena:** How about me?
- Ryan:** I'd say the same. I think we know this. You like to interrupt. I think it's because I do... I'm not a clam. I do talk, but I will think probably longer than Selena thinks I should think about or at least, you know, in a conversation, as a cadence to the conversation and I won't-
- Selena:** It feels like he's done talking and I just start talking. *[laughs]*
- Ryan:** In my head it's like in high gear and I'm processing and I'm trying to come out with it. And I'll be like, "M..." and then she'll just, "Brrrrrr." Just go right on top. And I'm like, "Okay, well."
- Selena:** You guys think he interrupts me on the podcast. Let me tell you about real life here. *[chuckles]* I'm the one-
- Ryan:** I groan.
- Selena:** I'm the one that interrupts him all the time.
- Ryan:** You know that's a source *[inaudible]* *[both chuckles]*
- Selena:** Anyways-
- Ryan:** We've talked about this.

- Selena:** We have. Let's talk about the first way since we're talking about things. Let's talk about the first way that you can love one another in your communication that Zena gives us here. She says that your spouse doesn't have to care about everything you care about.
- Ryan:** What? What?
- Selena:** That was a fascinating truth to me, because I think we kind of exist in our minds of well, he obviously cares about the things that I care about. So I'm going to ask him about the things.
- Ryan:** Well, we live as if that's the case and as if we have a reason to be mad at them if they don't.
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** And that's the thing, right? You can't just superimpose our likes and desires onto one another and then now hold them to the moral "oughts" that come along with it.
- Selena:** We can but it's very problematic. Speaking from experience. *[chuckles]*
- Ryan:** So Selena used to be... and you still enjoy horses and you keep up on the whole equestrian scene but you used to be much more involved in it. And you'd come home and you'd share these stories of these different riders and these people. And to some extent, I was bought in... What's his name? The flexible-
- Selena:** Oh, Rich Fellers.
- Ryan:** Rich Fellers. I'm a big fan, Rich if you're watching this. Look him up, folks. Rich Fellers, flexible. Amazing horse. Amazing beast. *[Selena laughs]* Beautiful beasts. *[chuckles]* I know this because I've listened to my wife. But at some point, I just stopped caring. *[both laughs]* I got one in me. I got one horse in me. After that, just in one ear out the other.
- And you know, you did pretty good. You'd never get mad at me. But Selena shares this example of how she's trying to select tile for the house.
- Selena:** House projects are like the worst to make.
- Ryan:** "You know, do you care if I do it like this way or that way?" It was the herringbone pattern or basket weave, whatever the pattern is. And Andrews just like, "Sure. Okay." And she's like, "What do you mean?" And so she was started getting kind of offended. And I think she's realized that it's okay that,

you know, God... What did she say? It says "...he made Andrew and I different on purpose and that [00:10:00] purposeful difference is good." It says, "I can acknowledge the fact that God didn't make two have me." Like I didn't marry myself. And there's a beautiful complementarity to the gift... that He's given you.

Like, we don't often think of marriage in those terms. Like you are gifted, husband, wife, you're gifted in a way that is meant to complement your spouse, that is unique to how God is working in and through you. And that might have something to do with how you communicate, it might have something to do with your different preferences, your different cares, and your different kind of ways of thinking. And I think when we think in those terms, then this communication gap starts to close.

Selena: It's good. It's good.

Ryan: All right. Number two tip for if you can't talk good in your marriage. *[both chuckles]*

Selena: To each other.

Ryan: Number two: plan for specific times of communication.

Selena: Yes! I think when dad's walking through the door, after work, kids are all excited, you're cooking dinner, whatever is happening, probably not the best time to bring up something that you've been stewing about all day. Not stewing. That's a bad word. But maybe-

Ryan: Marinating?

Selena: Yeah. There's just not a good chance that that's going to go over well or that, you know, you're going to hear what I need you to hear so that we can talk about the 800-pound gorilla in the room, right? *[chuckles]* So find the right times to actually talk to each other. Find those rhythms.

Her and I talked a while back. And I think there's... I don't know. I don't want to assume that she got this from our conversation. But setting up kind of those rhythms, those daily rhythms, weekly rhythms, those habits of checking in and kind of cleaning house and addressing some of the issues you might be facing in your marriage, those struggles so that they're not just piling up in the corner of your marriage, and all of a sudden, this beast has appeared and you're like, "Didn't we deal with that? Well, what's happening?" So build those specific times into your schedule, plan it. It's wisdom, friends. It's wisdom.

- Ryan:** That's good. Okay. Number three: let them know ahead of time, what you would like to talk about. So this, I think, is... You can do this for many things. Right? I think it's especially important for weighty conversations. And those might be weighty conversations, because, you know, you're making plans for, you know, some event in life.
- Selena:** Right. Right?
- Ryan:** Whether it's, you know, you're moving or job search or ministry decision, something. But also, if you've got like maybe a confession to make, it'd be really easy for a husband who is not prone to communicate to just, again, look inward in those moments, in those moments of shame, when he would rather... Like he doesn't want to hurt his wife. You know, gentle giant sort of picture comes to mind. So by talking, you know still in your guts like we need to talk about this.
- Selena:** The pre-talk. The pre-talk.
- Ryan:** And husbands, if this is you... and I'm playing into the stereotypes a little bit. I know that there are variations of this. Generally, husbands aren't the talkers as much as their wives. So if that's you, here's my challenge, husband. Lead your bride in how you communicate with her.
- And how you become a clear communicator is one of the ways that you can serve your wife and love her well is by saying, "I may not be gifted in this, but I can still choose to learn and grow in this." And I'm going to not just learn and grow in this, but I'm gonna lead in this.
- Selena:** Good. It's good.
- Ryan:** So come out of your shell a little bit with your wife, she loves you more than anyone else, and say, "Hey, we need to talk. Let's talk tomorrow night..." I'd guarantee your wife's gonna love this, by the way. *[both chuckles]*
- Selena:** I love it. *[laughs]*
- Ryan:** "I want to talk to you tomorrow night. I'm gonna talk to you tomorrow night after the kids go to bed and-
- Selena:** "About this."
- Ryan:** "About this."

Selena: So we can be praying about it, you can be thinking about it throughout the day. I think the conversations just generally go better. You have more fruit after the conversation.

Ryan: And not just the confession side and not just, you know, family business side in terms of what you're doing big decision-wise. Say, "Hey, I know you want to talk about horses tomorrow night." *[both laughs]* I didn't even... the stuff just to get off your chest. "Tomorrow night, me and you. Horses till we go to sleep. *[Selena laughs]* Just equestrian."

Selena: I would not. If you asked me to talk about books, I think now I would be like, "Oh, yes, let's talk about books."

Ryan: I mean, would that make you feel good as a wife if I said, "You know, tomorrow night, I just want to talk to you about all your books"?

Selena: To share with me every book- *[laughs]*

Ryan: To share with me about... mmh. *[laughs]*

Selena: I always laugh because I will be like, "He's not. This is not real."

Ryan: I'd give them in bits and pieces. But if I got the sense that you were kind of like pent up, I might take it to that level.

Selena: Proud to be pent up for you, babe.

Ryan: Yeah, absolutely. *[Selena laughs]* You get one a year. One a year.

Selena: You need to grow, my love. Number four: listen and ask good questions. I mean, this is generally speaking. I mean, that's just a good one. She talks about stopped going through her to-do list and rebuttal. [00:15:00] If I can stop and actually hear what he's saying and not just think about how I'm going to respond.

I mean, James 1:19, "Let us be quick to listen and slow to speak." Part of listening is asking good questions, leaving room for response, asking them to elaborate, and repeating back. "Okay, this is what I'm hearing, this is what you're actually saying." And in a tone that is not "well, this is what I think you're saying." You know, has to be humble, has to be loving, coming from a genuine place. Be a good listener. Learn what it means to be a good listener. Find some tools to help you in that.

Ryan: I think a really important thing in this is being charitable in how you're interpreting and then confirming back, like you said, the meaning. There is an art and a skill to knowing how to ask good questions. So don't just expect that you will know the right questions on the spot. Spend some time thinking through, what are the questions I can ask my wife?" Or what can you ask your husband?

That will get below the first layer. That will get below the second or third layer. That will get more to like, "What is the heart orientation here?" We play a game with our girls. It's not our own game. It's a very popular game. It's just basically 20 questions, but I don't limit them 20 questions.

I'll start with an animal. I'll say, "I'm thinking of an animal. Go!" And they will ask questions. Our five-year-old just like, "Is it a turtle? *[both laughs]* Is it a dolphin? Is it an eagle?" She's all at the base level of questions like at the very end of it. And so I'm trying to teach them there's an art to asking the right questions. So don't ask those questions. Instead, ask questions that narrow it down. "Does it have feathers?" Yes or no?

Selena: Does it swim in the water?

Ryan: Does it live in the desert? Like these types of questions categorically will get you below the surface. So the point here is that that's a skill that they're learning. And just in the same way, we can learn how to ask those same types of incisive questions of our spouse without just always picking the lowest hanging fruit. Because you know what? Eventually, that fruit is going to run out and you're gonna go hungry. You gotta learn how to go a little higher, ask harder questions, find more difficult fruit.

Selena: Right, right. Number five. Speaking of 20, she says make a habit of counting to 20. She says it might be a subcategory of listening, but it's been helpful for her. And I think it would probably be helpful for someone like me who does like to jump in the gaps and does like to not leave room for response. Because I think we'll be surprised at how much deeper the conversation goes if I allow you some time to think and respond.

Ryan: And the caveat here is that if you've got kids screaming in the background, it may not work. But if you want-

Selena: Again, take your time.

Ryan: Many of our conversations lately, because we do have a very loud, strong-willed two-and-a-half-year-old, and she is... And when I say loud, I mean loud.

- Selena:** Like the neighbors hear her. She's so loud.
- Ryan:** I was out in front of the property and she was up solid like 50 yards away just bloody murder, just screaming because the dog was nipping at her.
- Selena:** Chasing her because she's riding a little bike or scooter and the dog is a herding dog and follows her and she doesn't like it.
- Ryan:** So a lot of our conversations lately have been in bed. Just laying there, looking up at the ceiling, just talking.
- Selena:** Because she's asleep. *[laughs]*
- Ryan:** She's finally asleep. She's powered down for the day, which would be comforting except for she's charging up for the next day.
- Selena:** We love her.
- Ryan:** I love her with all my heart. I don't love how loud she is. I found that to be really helpful to think through. How can I embrace the silence and let the silence like deal with that?
- Selena:** That's easier for you, I think. Because I'm not. I get uncomfortable in silence. So counting to 20 feels like an eternity. *[chuckles]* I'm like, "Can we count to like five or ten?"
- Ryan:** You should be uncomfortable.
- Selena:** I should be. I am.
- Ryan:** I am calculating. All right. Number six, last but not least, look to Jesus. I think this is one of those areas of our marriage that we tend to kind of think, "I got this. It's talking. How many words do we say every day? Like I can surely just throw some words their way *[both laughs]* and they'll figure it out." No, we need to look to Christ even this area. Jesus was the supreme communicator. Not only that, just to blow your minds a little bit here. *[both laughs]* Jesus is saying John is the word, right? He's the word. He is the way that God has chosen to fulfill His revelation to His people.
- It's a manner of communication. And I think that's probably just... I don't want to, you know, reduce him to that. But the fact that he's referred to as the Word and the Word was God Himself and the revelation that He's given us was with words and it's communicated orally in early cultures. This communication thing is something that God has on lock. You gotta figure it out.

So let's go to Him, let's look to Him, not just to give us the tips and tricks, but to change our hearts, to stir our affections for one another, to stir our affections [00:20:00] for getting at the truth, for being an agent of sanctification for our spouse. That's a gift. Communication is a gift. I think that's it for today.

Selena: Well, we wanted to ask you some questions. Well, we have a question for you. We are working hard on some new books about communication because that is-

Ryan: Labor pains. *[laughs]*

Selena: ...quite the topic. Just with a lot of feedback, we've been seeing this need for couples to work on their communication. So we're trying to put together some books for you guys. We want to hear from you. Because we can think of all the things that wouldn't be helpful, but we probably still miss some things. So we'd really like to hear from you, guys, about what you would want us to talk about when it comes to communication in marriage, and communication with your spouse, around whatever topic.

Ryan: Communication-wise. That topic within the super topic of communication. So how do they do that? If you're still watching on YouTube, you can leave a comment. If you do leave a comment, then you will for sure be seen because we don't get a lot of those at the smallest part of our platform. Leave a comment we'd love it. And we will tabulate those.

If you are listening to this, you can text in to this number 971-333-1120. And we're just going to keep storing those up. Anything that you think in terms of communication examples, communication struggles, communication topics, but we want to serve you well. And so getting your feedback is going to be critical to that end.

And as we mentioned, in this episode, we're talking about going to Jesus with our need to find truth through communication and to be truth tellers, truth seekers through communication. Well, Jesus is truth itself. He is the very definition of truth. Truth is conformed to Christ because He's ultimate truth.

So we would not be having this conversation. In fact, our marriage would not exist. I don't think I'd even be alive. I almost died many years ago. You can look up that story somewhere else on our website. The point is, Jesus is all.

And we want to invite you. If you don't know who Jesus is, if you're hearing us talk about scripture, you're thinking, "Yeah, I heard about the Bible. I've read

Genesis 1, I know kind of creation and all that kind of stuff," we're here to tell you, there's more to the story. That's just the beginning. There's more of the story.

And the more is this, that you are a sinner. You're probably a worst sinner than you realize. But God's grace is far better than you could ever imagine. And He's invited you into relationship with Him. So if you want to know what that means and take some steps down that path, we want to invite you into becoming a Christian, into following Jesus. The water is great. The water's fine. We'd love it here, we want to have you in the fold of Christ. Go to this website: thenewsisgood.com. It's just information.

There's a tool for you to find a church there. Thenewsisgood.com. And we hope that that website blesses you. If you are a believer, feel free to share that with somebody. That exists just to tell people about Jesus. And so I pray you take us up on that. Selena, you want to pray us out?

Selena: Sure.

Ryan: Thank you.

Selena: God, thank You that You are the Word, you're the way the truth, the life and you are the word. May we always look to you in how we communicate. God may we communicate first and foremost with you. And may our communication with you flow out into how we communicate with each other, to our family, and to those around us, Lord.

I pray that anyone struggling with communicating with your spouse, that you would give them wisdom and hope and clarity. Guide them through your own word, God, and scripture, ask for other believers who you have put on their path to help them on their journey of learning to love one another through how they talk to one another. In Your name, amen.

Ryan: Amen. All right, thank you so much for stopping by, for watching this episode, listening to this episode. It's been a joy. This episode of Fierce Marriage is—

Selena: In the can.

Ryan: We'll see you again in about seven days. Until next time—

Selena: Stay fierce.

PODCAST NOTES

- **Referenced scripture**
 - Philippians 2:3-4

- **Recommended resource**
 - thenewsisgood.com

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