

## 5 WAYS TO AVOID MISCOMMUNICATION IN MARRIAGE

<https://fiercemarriage.com/5-ways-to-avoid-miscommunication-in-marriage>

[00:00:00]

**Ryan:** Selena, I feel like we're on a bit of a communication kick. We've been talking about it in our own personal lives quite a bit-

**Selena:** Talking about it. Talking about it.

**Ryan:** We're currently working on some books to help you listener with your communication skills. And it's been an eye-opening experience for us. And even though we've been married - what? We're going on 19 years. 19 years in September. Even though we've been married that long, we still struggle and we still find ourselves in communication ruts. We find ourselves just in general unhealthiness unless we work at it.

So, today, we're talking about five ways to avoid miscommunication. So it's one way to communicate effectively. Part of that is avoiding bad communication in the first place. So we're gonna talk about that today. So we'll see you on the other side.

[00:00:51] <music>

**Ryan:** I've never miscommunicated once in my life. *[Selena chuckles]*

**Selena:** And there we have it. *[both laughs]* No.

**Ryan:** Have I? *[laughs]*

**Selena:** Yes. Yes. Yes.

**Ryan:** I know I have. I'm kidding. We've all struggled with communicating well. I think it's hard to communicate with someone even who has been your best friend for a long, long time, because I will say something or he will say something and I'm just like, "I do not understand the words that are coming out your mouth. I don't know what you're trying to say. I did not understand," even though he's like, "I don't know how to say it any clearer." Right? We always get to those points of just head-butting-

**Ryan:** Or you read my mind, but not-

**Selena:** I'm really good at it.

**Ryan:** ...but not well.

**Selena:** I anticipate really well. *[chuckles]*

**Ryan:** There it is. I'm thinking of in Frozen when she's like, "We finish each other's..." and you're like, "Sandwich." *[both laughs]* And I'm like, "That's not at all what I was gonna say." And you're like, "Well, what was it?" So that leads to some misunderstandings.

**Selena:** It does. And I think if you want to get a few tools today on how to clearly communicate, how to be on the same page, how to avoid those miscommunication pitfalls, this episode is for you.

**Ryan:** All right. Well, welcome to the show. Before we do that, I'm Ryan, this is my lovely wife Selena, and we are the Fierce Fredericks. *[Selena laughs]* Don't coin that.

**Ryan:** Didn't mean to say that. *[laughs]*

**Selena:** Don't coin that.

**Ryan:** Somehow we couldn't get away from that word.

**Selena:** Here we are.

**Ryan:** Here we are. We spend our lives encouraging you in the things of God, especially in the area of marriage. And the hope is that our efforts will bear real-life benefit to you and your family into the generations. Not just for a feel-good feeling here now, but for the next 20, 30, 40, on to 100 years. Our prayer is that these efforts bear fruit in your life.

If you want to be part of that, leave a rating, comment, review, all that kind of stuff on the podcast, on the YouTube channel. That means a ton. Ask us questions on the YouTube channel. We'll answer those if we can.

If you want to partner in a deeper way, you can go to [fiercemarriage.com/partner](http://fiercemarriage.com/partner). There's free books, there's some rings. We have our own line of silicone rings, which I happen to think they're the very best on the market. Inside there's a typography in there that keeps them from sweating because the other ones will just make your hand all moist and gross. *[chuckles]* Just the word "moist" is a gross word.

**Selena:** Anyway.

**Ryan:** Anyway, those benefits are there for you. If you want to be part of the online community, [fiercemarriage.com/partner](https://fiercemarriage.com/partner). We'd love to see you there, get to know you there. So yeah.

What are we talking about today? We're talking about building stuff. You said, "If you've ever built anything..." *[Selena chuckles]*

**Selena:** It was an example.

**Ryan:** It was an example.

**Selena:** Yeah. I mean, if you've ever built anything... Okay, think of the first project you ever tried to build, I guess. Maybe that's a... Or if you ever have tried something new, remember the last time you tried something new. The example was to build something.

I'm not good at building anything. I can swing a hammer occasionally. But it takes time to understand what you're building, how to use the tools that you've been given, and how to use them well, right? You're learning how to be resilient. To not just smash your finger once with a hammer and walk away, but say, "Okay, I'm gonna come back because I know that the bigger purpose here is that I'm trying to build XYZ, whatever it is, right?"

**Ryan:** Yeah,

**Selena:** So we're gonna go through five ways to avoid miscommunication with your spouse. The key here, though, is that you have to go through these during kind of what we call a peacetime of communication. So when you aren't in a heated tension, fight, argument, whatever. It's in those moments when things are calm, there's clarity around this. So...

**Ryan:** It's almost like if you're trying to get into a fitness routine, but you've caught a cold. That's not the best time to start running two miles a day and going to the gym every day. Wait until you're in a healthy spot and then start the new training, the new regime, if you will, of whatever this is. In this case, learning how to avoid miscommunication.

So we're gonna jump right into it. Number one, how to avoid miscommunication with your spouse. Number one is avoid... No, excuse me. Identify. *[both laughs]*

**Selena:** Avoid, you said?

**Ryan:** I said that.

**Selena:** That's funny.

**Ryan:** Sorry, I don't where I go that.

**Selena:** Just avoid it; don't talk about it.

**Ryan:** Just avoid it. There it is.

**Selena:** Don't open your mouth, it'll be fine. [00:05:00] *[laughs]*

**Ryan:** Identify-

**Selena:** Sorry. That was very funny.

**Ryan:** I can't read. I'm having a migraine. So that's probably part of...

**Selena:** That was cute.

**Ryan:** Identify what you both fight about the most. So like daily frustrations, tension points.

**Selena:** I think one of the first ways I try to think about, okay, why do we keep fighting about... What is it that we keep fighting about actually? We might be butting heads or being frustrated with each other. But okay, Lord, praying, help me see what is going on between us.

Go through mental checklist of your day. Are there things that have been kind of added to your plate, some things that you are trying to figure out together, or you haven't spent actually any time together, and so any sort of communication just feels like frustrating to each other? So go through mental checklist. First, start with prayer, go through mental checklist.

Maybe think about, again, the context of why, man, we... I mean, what's an example. We keep arguing about... who takes the garbage out, right? Why doesn't he just do it? Why do I...?

**Ryan:** I do take it out.

**Selena:** He does.

**Ryan:** We don't really argue about that, though, to be honest. I feel like this is something you have to do together. Because it'd be really easy for me to say,

"well, we always argue because she thinks this," when in reality, you're not thinking that.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** Or you're arguing because you think I'm stressed out about something and it's actually completely different, even though it looks almost like-

**Selena:** Right. What I'm saying is that there's probably some rhythms and habits that you can identify in your rhythm, in your days that there's some tension points around how you guys are interacting.

So I would say, gosh, it feels like we always fight about this or we're always angry about this or something. So each of you take some time to maybe analyze a few tension points in your day and then listen to each other. Like take time to listen to one another. James 1:19, quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to become angry. So taking that time to hear one another out is important.

And part of that hearing—here is number two—and kind of what you're jumping into is to discuss your hopes or expectations for the situation. So statements like "I feel loved when you do this..." or "I would really like things to be this way, and here's why" or "I'm also open to them not mean this way. Like let's talk.

What are your hopes? What are your expectations? Because clearly, miscommunication comes when we are missing each other, we're missing some sort of expectation, or he has one hope, he has one way of wanting something and I have another way and somehow we keep missing each other. So why is that? Why do we keep coming to this point?

And examining I think those hopes and expectations. Are they rooted in the Lord? Are they rooted in things that God desires for us or are they just selfish and we just want it that way because we want it that way? Right?

**Ryan:** Yeah. Yeah. And what are your hopes as an individual, what are also your hopes as a couple through your communication is really helpful, too. We'll get through some more points that'll make more sense as we move on. Let's go to number three.

How to avoid miscommunication. Ask for clarity. Again, some of this is very, very obvious, except for when you don't do it. *[Selena chuckles]* Because you can know in your head when you're sharp in the morning or whenever that you can say, "Okay, I need..."

Or when you're at your job, if you don't understand something at your job, do you just assume that you know what they mean, or do you go back for clarification? More often than not, you're gonna go back for clarification. And the higher the stakes, the more important the clarity becomes.

So if you are in a constant rut of miscommunication and you're not taking the time to ask for clarity, I guess just don't be surprised when the rut continues and the rut gets harder and deeper and lasts longer. So the way you ask for clarity is you ask questions of one another to confirm.

**Selena:** I've been surprised at how quickly we fight or get through a miscommunication rut just by asking questions. I think it's gotten us out of things faster. We don't get into a deep argument. We don't get as heated. We're just saying, "Okay, is this what you're saying?" or "Is that what you're saying?"

I mean, tone is really important—how you ask the question. Not just like, *[shouting]* "Is this what you're saying?" You know, not policing, but humbly and graciously asking, "I'm trying to clarify because I want to understand. I'm not trying to combat you. I just really want to understand."

Another way of doing this is defining your meaning. Are we sharing the same meaning of, "Okay, this is what we both desire, this is what we're hoping for." But what does that look like to you?

**Ryan:** Assumptions are the enemy in this area, especially if it's a pattern. So if you are constantly getting side - what's the word? You're getting kind of derailed by wrong assumptions, the very quickest way to get through that is just to say, "What I hear you saying is this. Do you actually mean what I hear you saying? And maybe let's try another way of saying that so I can understand where your heart is at."

If you want get very practical, even like looking at the source in a dictionary and say, [00:10:00] "Okay, here's what I think this word might mean." Words have meaning. I get that. We're not saying every word means whatever you want it to mean. But the point is you want to make sure your meaning the thing that you're feeling, the thing you're trying to communicate.

**Selena:** Right. Because we've had a lot of miscommunication when I say a word and he's like, "Well, this is what this word means. Is that what you're saying?" And I'm like, "No, that's actually not what I'm saying." *[Ryan chuckles]*

So, again, getting that clarification, getting the shared meaning, being wise. Ask questions. Seek out the answers. Foolishness will just assume that you know what each other's talking about.

Again, even though we're close, and we feel like we're on the same page about a lot of things, we still have trouble communicating the same ideas and sharing the same meaning. So be filled with humility, be filled with grace

Again, these are peacetime sort of strategies or things to work on, skills to build in order to have them be your default when those wartime are the miscommunication comes, right? Our default should be to ask questions, to get clarity, to define our expectations, to take a step back first and pray and understand what is actually happening in a situation, not just assume that "We're on the same page. He's trying to fight me because he wants to win. And I'm trying to stand up for truth," whatever, right? Whatever the argument is, we really need to take a step back and examine what is actually happening here.

**Ryan:** Good. The fourth one, remember the one another statements in Scripture. The "one another's". There's a lot of these. Let's read some of these, right? This one comes from John 13:34. "Love one another." That's also in John 15:12, 17. "Forgive one another as Christ has forgiven you-

**Selena:** I want to-

**Ryan:** ...Ephesians 4:32 and Colossians 3:13. I wanted to get those in before you jumped in.

**Selena:** Go ahead.

**Ryan:** What's the next one? What were you to say?

**Selena:** I feel like this just really describes kind of the attitude of the heart when you are communicating with one another. To love one another in how you're communicating, when you're communicating, what you're communicating. Forgiving each other. "Hey, I didn't mean to get so heated about when I was talking about this. In the past, I felt attacked or I felt insecure about this. And so that's been my response. So I'm sorry," or "please forgive me."

The third one: do not provoke an envy one another.

**Ryan:** Galatians 5. "Confess your sins to one another." That's James 5:16. There's an ongoing pattern of humility in communication. And I think that's a huge takeaway is having this posture of clearly understanding I don't know

everything that's going on in your head. I don't know right answers to everything all the time.

So my posture toward you, because I want the same thing that you want, I want to be closer to you not further, so I'm going to say humbly, "I'm going to confess my sins to you." That takes humility to do that. "I'm going to listen to what you have to say, even though I don't understand it all the time. I'm going to trust the best."

There's another one. 1 Corinthians 13, "Love hopes all things." That means you're actually expecting the best from one another. You're not looking for ways to win or to take caricatures of what your spouse is saying to your own gain. Instead, you're saying, "I think what you're saying is this."

**Selena:** Right. And it's hard to do because we're insecure, we're broken. We hear a word and then we feel something and then we just react, instead of hearing the word, words, or whatever you're saying you're communicating, asking questions, pausing, getting clarification, trying to understand the true path. Because by that time, typically, your emotions are probably a little bit calmer—you might be able to think more rationally. So again, humility, be patient with one another.

**Ryan:** "Do not lie to one another. That's another "one another" statement. Be kind. Like you said, comfort one another. That's a really good one. 1 Corinthians 4:18-

**Selena:** 1 Thessalonians?

**Ryan:** 1 Thessalonians, yeah. Comfort one another. Think of the communication as a way by which you could be an agent of your spouse's comfort, and how by choosing to press harder into stronger understanding, not a misunderstanding or miscommunication, that's a way to bring comfort to your relationship in a very tangible way.

The fifth way to avoid miscommunication is count it all joy. Now, what do you mean by that?

**Selena:** Well, James 1... You know, it's like, does this qualify as trials of many kinds? So in James 1 he says, "The testing of your faith: Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, 3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."



So if we consider this a bit of a trial, we consider the miscommunication, the pitfalls, the frustrations, we keep coming back to those, we keep butting our heads against it, yeah, maybe it's a little bit of a trial for us to be sanctified in. So we can count this as joy.

Okay, here you are watching the video, clearly you're seeking out tools to talk [00:15:00] more connectedly with each other, to be on the same page, to understand one another, and to not communicate out of laziness, but to communicate out of holiness and the fruit that God is producing in you and the Holy Spirit is at work in you.

So that's why I think we can count it all joy as believers. That the trials we face, any sort of sanctification or frustration, we can endure it without grumbling. We don't have to be lazy in our communication to one another.

We can give thanks in all circumstances, first and foremost, because we are saved by the grace of God. Our souls are saved. This is not a matter of salvation, but this is a way of loving our spouse, and ultimately glorifying God in how we love our spouse.

And we can just practice obedience to the Lord. Again, this is not a legalistic thing, but it's because I know the depths of my sin, or at least I think I know part of it, God knows the depths of it, and still, yet still He died. Still He came, still He came, He lived, He died, He rose again, knowing that we while we were sinners, right?

So what does that communicate to us? What does that communicate about who our Father is, how He instructs us to love one another? Why does He...? Because He is a loving Father. He is the greatest communicator of all things.

**Ryan:** Well, to that note, I mean, you said He knows to the nth degree all of the things that we've done and yet still He loved us and He understands all. God understands all.

So often, again, going back to that posture of humility, is saying to one another, "I don't actually understand everything." You know, maybe in every relationship there's a dynamic where somebody is kind of more or less right more of the time with arguments. *[Selena chuckles]* That tends to be at least... It's rarely perfectly equal across the board.

So to avoid miscommunication, it takes practice, it takes the time to learn exactly what you don't know. And here's the whole underlying premise. It's a skill that you can learn.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** You don't have to be a victim of poor communication throughout your relationship even if you've tried to the nth degree. You can still grow. You can still learn. I think the key is knowing what the route forward is.

**Selena:** I love that. I love that. I think you just got to be resilient. We got to keep coming back to the table. We got to keep practicing. We got to keep trying. Our covenant is a safe place, it's a good place to do that.

So we are just going to run through these really quickly one more time. Five ways to avoid miscommunication with your spouse.

First, identify those tension points or those common places where you tend to miss communicate, where you tend to have frustrations.

Then discuss kind of your hopes and expectations in those situations. "Yes, it goes sideways, but this is how I'd really like it to go. How would you like it to go?"

Third, ask for clarity. Just like end it there. Ask, "Okay, am I hearing this correctly?"

Number four, remember the "one another" statements. The Bible gives us themes, gives us instruction. We have Christ as our model for loving one another, forgiving one another, confessing our sins. Do not lie. Come for one another.

And then count it all joy, as James 1 said, when you face trials of many kinds, because you know that you're being grown in your faith and there's steadfastness that's being developed. The fruit of spirit is growing and multiplying. And we can give thanks in all circumstances. And we also do not have to complain or grumble through it.

**Ryan:** And thankfully, we have a God who has created communication, who is the master communicator. And the primary way that He's chosen to communicate to us to avoid misunderstanding is that He's given us His Word, His Holy Word, He's given us just His degree. He tells us how to be saved.

But not only that, through His Spirit, He illumines the hearts of men and then illumines the hearts of women so that they might not just hear the words of God, but understand them and behold them, to behold God as God, and to respond and kind.

And so if you're hearing us talk, and you've never heard about the fullness of who God is and what He's done, we're here to tell you that Jesus is real. Like Selena said, He lived a perfect life, He died the death that we should have died. But He didn't stay dead; He rose again. And He rose again and He now reigns as king. And His reign as king is forever, and it is yet to be consummated with His second return when we, His bride, His church, will become His once and for all.

So if you want to be part of the family of God, we want to invite you into that. We've set up a website specifically for you or anyone you know who you just want a really quick way to summarize what the Scripture says about the gospel, what it is, what does is good news. Go to [thenewsisgood.com](http://thenewsisgood.com).

That's just a really quick one-page website for you and it gives you ways to move forward from there, whether it sends you to a church community, which we highly, highly... [00:20:00] I mean, God highly recommends. It's not just recommended. It's something you need to be doing. But also, you know how to get prayer and things like that. The [newsisgood.com](http://thenewsisgood.com). We want to invite you into that because God is too good to leave to ourselves. We want to share everything that Christ is with you.

With that, let's pray. Lord, we thank you for this gift that it is to communicate to these men and these women about marriage, and that you've given us your word as our light unto our feet and the guide for the various storms of life, and as the anchor for our very lives.

Jesus, you have enlivened our hearts to hear Your word and respond to it. Lord, I pray for the husband struggling to communicate with constant miscommunication, misunderstanding. I pray that you give them clarity as they lead their wife in this area.

I pray for wives who feel like they might be at the very end of themselves trying to be understood. I pray that you've given them patience and joy in this trial, because it is producing in them perseverance and a greater faith.

Lord, we just pray that couples would be not just fixed attempt temporarily, but there would be an eternal correction and heart softening that is led by you and it might lead to ongoing transformation in their lives and the lives of their children. All by Your grace and all for your glory. In Jesus' name. Amen.

**Selena:** Amen.

**Ryan:** All right, as a quick preview announcement, if you're watching this, listening to this, still, we mentioned it earlier, but we are working on some new books.

And I'm actually really excited. I'm always excited about what we're working on.

**Selena:** Always.

**Ryan:** But I think these are gonna be really helpful. And they're based on some of the most potent, consistent feedback we get from those who participate in our online marriage cohorts and in our online gospel-centered marriage, which is our marriage learning ecosystem.

So anyway, keep an eye out for those. We want to pre... give you not a preview but just a heads up that those are coming and that we can't wait to share those with you, hopefully in the next couple of months. So with that said, this episode of Fierce Marriage is—

**Selena:** In the can.

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

**Selena:** Stay fierce.

### PODCAST NOTES

- **Referenced scripture**
  - James 1:19
  - John 13:34
  - John 15:12, 17
  - Ephesians 4:32
  - Colossians 3:13
  - Galatians 5:26
  - James 5:16
  - 1 Corinthians 13
  - 1 Thessalonians 4:18
  
- **Recommended resource**
  - [thenewsisgood.com](https://thenewsisgood.com)

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