

COMMUNICATION SIGNALS VS. NOISE IN MARRIAGE

<https://fiercemarriage.com/communication-signals-vs-noise-in-marriage>

[00:00:00]

Ryan: Alright, friends! We have a unique episode for you today. What is that, Selena?

Selena: It is not an episode.

Ryan: Oh.

Selena: Is that right? It's not an episode.

Ryan: We are going to be sharing... Yes. What is it? It's a session. [Selena laughs]

Selena: We're gonna be sharing a session from our communication masterclass that we are gonna be releasing very shortly.

Ryan: Because when we first wrote and began to sell our communication books, we realized, you know, these books speak directly to the heart of communication between a husband and a wife. Those books, by the way, are called How a Husband Speaks, How a Wife Speaks. You can pick those up by going to fiercemarriage.com/speaks.

We realized that those books do a good job, I think, as the authors getting at the heart of why and how husbands and wives communicate to each other in marriage. But there are some practicalities of communication that I think are also very valuable.

Now, given the breadth of books that have been written on that topic, we decided to forego those for the books in light, in favor of-

Selena: Well, and I think sharing those types of things are just so much better over a video, like, medium.

Ryan: So we just got done recording a six-session communication masterclass where we cover, what does the Bible say about communication, what are the practicalities around conflict, around communication styles? And actually today the session we're gonna share with you is titled Signals Versus Noise. [Selena laughs] In other words, getting through to the purpose of communication.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: In other words, what are the rights and responsibilities of someone who is sending a signal, the communicator? What are the rights and responsibilities of someone who's receiving those signals as the listener or the receiver of the communication?

Selena: Right. And how do we sift through what is noise and what is actually, like you're saying, the actual signal? Because I think a lot of times our conflict originates around our inability to sort through the noise, or we pick up something that you weren't putting down. Right? [laughs]

Ryan: Right. You're picking up the noise as opposed to the signal.

Selena: Right?

Ryan: That's very good. Anyway, we're gonna share this whole session with you. We pray that it blesses you. And if you haven't yet, check out fiercemarriage.com/speaks because the entire masterclass is available with those books. So we pray that it blesses you and we'll see you on the other side.

[00:02:11] <Music>

Ryan: Every communication exchange has transmitters and receivers, and there are responsibilities, and there are rights that come along with being a transmitter, and there are responsibilities and rights that come along with being a receiver. Now, how you deal with those responsibilities and rights will determine the success or the failure or the development of the communication culture in your home.

Now, what do we mean by this? For faithful, right... when I say faithful, I mean fidelity. For communication that actually communicates something, we each need to wield our rights and responsibilities carefully.

For example, I remember one time being on a subway in New York City, and as you're going about your journey, people come and go off the train and you kind of make assumptions about people based on how they're dressed, based on where they're getting on, where they're getting off.

So, for example, if you're riding the subway through New York, you're going by Madison Avenue, you notice a young professional gets on the subway, and this young guy is wearing his nice glasses, he looks smart, he's got a suit and tie that's hippping with it, [Selena laughs] he's got a briefcase, or he is got some sort of... you know, clearly he's got the latest iPhone, whatever, you're gonna make some assumptions. Okay?

He's obviously some sort of creative professional or he works in advertising or whatnot. Because Madison Avenue happens to be where most of the advertising agencies are. You're gonna make all these assumptions based on the signal that you receive. Well, it's not really signal, it's noise because you're receiving what I'm calling here non-revelatory communication.

In other words, he's not revealing it to you, you are observing it about him. Now, so long as I'm only observing things externally, I'm assuming. It's not until he reveals himself to me by communicating that I actually learn anything definitive, that I actually learn something about him that's true.

In marriage, many times we do this. We think we can read each other because we know each other so well. Well, in some ways you can read each other. But until we reveal ourselves, we're basing it on non-revelatory communication. We have to learn how to sift through, identify the signal versus the noise.

And as husbands, you may be sending signals and noise that you're not aware of, and your wife could be receiving or rejecting or interpreting or misinterpreting those signals and noise with faithfulness. That's why we need to understand our rights and our responsibilities as signal senders and signal receivers, as noise senders, as noise receivers.

Noise involves everything that we can perceive without words. Whereas signal is that which is sent in order to make the subject known to the receiver.

Selena: And it's interesting because I think the noise is where we tend to get lost in our communication with one another.

Ryan: Right.

Selena: We tend to miss each other because again, you may not be putting down something, but I'm picking up something, right? [laughs]

Ryan: Right.

Selena: Or maybe you are, and I'm not picking it up.

Ryan: Or I'm saying something and all you're hearing is the tone and not the signal that I'm trying to send, which is the intent of the words I'm actually articulating. There's a thousand things that can go wrong in this process. So there's a lot of noise.

So we need to understand to be faithful senders of a signal and know what noise is contributing to the signal we're trying to send so you can get through it. And then we also need to be faithful receivers of the signal to understand and listen charitably, knowing that there's a lot of noise at play, and be wise and discerning and sifting through that noise to get to the signal.

That helps us understand kind of the playing field and what we're dealing with. But we need to get into the characteristics of Godly communication. But before we do that, we must establish our why. In other words, why do we communicate? Why has God communicated to us? And I think by looking at why God has communicated with us, we can begin to understand how we can then and why we communicate to each other.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: So why did God communicate with us?

Selena: God didn't have to reveal Himself in the way that He did, through His words, through, you know, the Bible. He didn't have to.

Ryan: He didn't have to reveal Himself at all.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: He could have stayed God and just left creation to be what creation would rather become.

Selena: Which many people believe that He did. In some ways, this is not Christians, but [laughs]

Ryan: Well, I think if He weren't sustaining-

Selena: It's one of the world views.

Ryan: ...intervening grace of God, this planet would no longer exist.

Selena: Absolutely. He holds everything together by His word.

Ryan: So in some sense, there's no being without God's involvement because He holds it all together. But in terms of revealing Himself, God didn't have to reveal Himself the way He did — yet He did. Why did He do that? So imagine that. God didn't have to reveal Himself. He did choose to reveal Himself.

Selena: In which way?

Ryan: Why on earth would the God of all creation reveal Himself the way He did? With words, through scripture, through His incarnate Son, through His fingerprints all over creation, He has revealed Himself to us. Now, the question is, why?

Selena: So that we might know Him.

Ryan: To be known.

Selena: To be known.

Ryan: Friends, we know God because He has made Himself known. We don't work from down here and rationalize ourselves up into an understanding of God. Our knowledge of God is all-

Selena: From Him.

Ryan: From Him. It's all coming down to us as revealed to Him. So God has revealed Himself to us. He's chosen the means by which He revealed Himself — through His revealed word, through His Christophany throughout scripture, through all the means by which He's revealed Himself. He's chosen to do that. Now, why? Selena said it — to be known. He wanted us to know Him. He wanted us to know Him.

The second reason God revealed Himself to us, well, remember back in Genesis 3, [Selena chuckles] when the fall kind of shattered everything?

Selena: Completely shattered everything.

Ryan: God Revealed Himself to us so that we might be reconciled with Him. So we wouldn't know how to be saved if God didn't show us how to be saved. So in a way-

Selena: We wouldn't be saved if God did not save us.

Ryan: Yes. We would have no chance of being saved if God hadn't shown us His decree, if He hadn't shown us what is right, what is good, what is true, versus what is evil and what is wicked. So, in a way, communication is intrinsic to God's character. Because He's the revealed God. He's a God who's been revealed. That is part of who He is. He's revealed Himself to us. He's not a hidden God, He's a known God. And His revelation is nothing without His effective communication.

So in those ways, godly communication... We call it Godly because it's reflective of God's character. God is effective in communicating what He wants to convey. He doesn't try and fail. He communicates clearly. So in this way, we seek to imitate God in our communication, particularly in marriage. Because remember God reveal Himself to be known. Communication is the means by which souls know souls. I cannot know you until you tell me who you are.

Selena: Right. I can know things about you, I can assume things about you, but I don't actually know you until we begin communicating. And like we said from the beginning, godly communication, which I would also say Christian communication, there's distinguishers. There's things that differentiate us from unbelievers. And those are things that we should begin practicing, first and foremost, in our marriage, not with outsiders, I believe. I think this needs to start right with us. Because we are responsible to God, first and foremost, for this relationship.

So as we seek to imitate God in our communication, as we seek to understand who He is first, and then who we are, and then who we are—I look to God of who He is and then that shows me rightly who I am, then I can rightly see who we are—it creates in me, I think, a desire to want to communicate more like God. I don't wanna treat you badly. I don't think wives wanna treat their husbands terrible. They don't wanna be disrespectful. Maybe they feel like they want to when the husband acts in a disrespectful way, but still, we are called as Christians to communicate in a way that reflects God's character, reflects His glory.

So what are our reasons? What are our reasons? Why should I want to do this? Why should I-

Ryan: We need to be skilled at sending signals, sifting through the noise, and receiving signals and sifting through the noise.

Selena: Right. And how do we build skill?

Ryan: We build skill by looking at God's word, which we'll do next. But the reasons for doing that well at their root are, one, to reflect God's character. God is more glorified by a marriage that effectively communicates than He is by a marriage that is terrible at communication.

Selena: Right. And bringing God glory, friends, should be one of our biggest desires as Christians.

Ryan: So we wanna reflect God's character. We wanna bring Him glory through how we communicate. Secondly, we wanna be known and we want to know more effectively in marriage. I want to be known by my wife. Now, there are some who, and there was a time in our marriage where I didn't want to be known because I was ashamed or I was afraid to be known.

Selena: Yeah. Sin would cause us to not wanna be known, to hide.

Ryan: But God calls us out of that. He calls us out of the darkness into the light, out from behind the tree out into His presence to deal with, to be known so that we might be made more righteous. So we communicate effectively to be known and to know more in marriage.

And then finally, we wanna communicate effectively simply for this reason: to walk in obedience. We wanna walk according to what God's word has said, a) because that's what obedience is, and b) surprise, it's how we flourish. It's how we flourish.

So the big question is this, as we learn the reasons for learning to sift through signal and noise, what has God said about communication? What has He actually said about it? We'll cover that in the next session.

[00:12:00] <music>

Selena: Well, we hope that session got you a little bit more excited about what's to come in the masterclass signals versus noise. Hopefully it's bringing some understanding to the purpose behind communication, why it's important, why it's good and right to take the time to understand it, and to go through, you know, how the Bible talks about how we should sift through these things. So we hope it blesses you.

Ryan: And if you haven't yet, check out fiercemarriage.com/speak to pick up those communication books. We pray that those also bless you in addition to what you just received through this session example. Anyway-

Selena: If you want more, go get the rest of that class.

Ryan: Check those out.

So with that said, this episode of Fierce Marriage is—

Selena: In the can.

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

Selena: Stay fierce.

PODCAST NOTES

- **Recommended resource**
 - thenewsisgood.com
 - [How a Husband Speaks](#), Ryan Frederick
 - [How a Wife Speaks](#), Selena Frederick

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