

GET TALKING! A TOUGH CONVERSATIONS GUIDE FOR COUPLES

We wrote our book, THE FIVE CORE CONVERSATIONS FOR COUPLES, with the hope that by reading about what the two of us have experienced as professionals and lived through as partners, other couples would work to have those difficult conversations that many avoid. From money to parenting to sex and beyond, we all can experience difficulty in communicating with our partners. Taken right from our book, here are some guideposts to help navigate the tough conversations along with a few kick-starters to get you talking.

Timing is key - Pick a time that you are less likely to be interrupted and when is your partner more available and likely to be attentive. What time of day? During a meal? Maybe while walking the dog?

It's not what you say, it's how you say it - Your tone and how you choose your words are often as important as what you are trying to communicate. Avoid accusatory, blaming language and try not to sound argumentative or aggressive.

Empathy - Let your partner know they are heard. Show some understanding and compassion for a different point of view. Use "I" statements" instead of blaming "you" statements. "I am having a hard time understanding what you mean" as opposed to "you are not making any sense."

And remember, you are on the same team!

SOME CONVERSATION KICK-STARTERS

1. What aspect of your relationship needs more attention?
2. Do you know when the best time of day is best to have hard conversations?
3. Do you know what triggers your partner to defend or shutdown conversations?
4. When was the last time you got angry with your partner? What did you do about it?
5. When was the last time you and your partner had a conflict over a purchase? What was it about? How could it have been avoided?
6. Do you and your partner find it difficult maintaining consistency in setting rules for your children? If one of you says "no" does the other support the decision?
7. Do you and your partner talk about your sexual relationship? What you like

8. Do you and your partner have differing sexual desires or sex drives? Have you been able to reconcile those differences?
9. Do you or your partner have trouble apologizing?
10. Do you feel appreciated in your relationship? Do you express your appreciation for your partner? How so?

Julie and David Bulitt, a licensed clinical social worker and divorce lawyer, have been married for more than 35 years. Their award winning book, THE 5 CORE CONVERSATIONS FOR COUPLES, is available in paperback, audio and e-book on line at all major booksellers and can also be purchased from your local independent bookstore. Read more about Julie and David <https://thebulitts.com/>