

SOS Détresse

Love needs a language of its own

Communication has a pivotal role in personal relationships, and particularly in a couple.

Why is communication so important in a couple?

Following the changes in our society in the last few decades, our freedom to live our relationships individualistically has grown dramatically. Ideas concerning the male and female roles have changed, no fixed external norms are left. We have to redesign them every day in a different way: it is only through dialogue, where partners have the same rights that a couple can develop. Nonetheless, the couple often needs to learn how to communicate in an overt and authentic fashion, first of all, to achieve a real dialogue. Naturally the style of communication and discussion does not change in the blink of an eye. It takes time and patience.

A lot of people think true love means to understand one another without words and that your partner guesses your every need. This is too simplistic a vision. Such expectations often lead to delusion and misunderstanding.

How could it be otherwise? Every person has their own experience, personal ideas and expectations concerning the relationship. Our experience has led us to create and internalize, so to speak, a “geographical map of our relationships”. We have this map on our mind when we try to find ourselves in the relational world of our partner. It is through this map that we “read” the behaviour of our partner, thinking we understand them and still getting it very often wrong. We may be guided by our expectations and interpret what we perceive without realising that our point of view does not correspond to that of others. The map of our partner may look quite different from our own.

A living relationship needs living communication

Relationships change constantly. We have to adapt all the time, as we move to a new phase of life, change our jobs, move house or welcome a newborn baby in the family. Every person also evolves on a personal level. To avoid falling apart instead of getting closer and maturing together, it is important to communicate in an honest and open manner, learning to know our partner well. It is easier to cross life together if we know the geographical map of our partner and we try to see to the world through their eyes as well.

What are the benefits of good communication?

By virtue of a living and continuous exchange, we become more sensitive to the reactions and reflections of our partner. Authentic communication, where we uncover our wounds and scars as well, engenders intimacy, solidarity and trust. By showing us just how we are, we feel secure in our relationship.

Positive communication creates a more favourable atmosphere to a good conflict resolution. It is easier to express what we do not like. Anger does not need to pile up for years if we can communicate openly. When divergences and problems appear, we are able to find adequate solutions together and can take decisions upon which to act. Solutions can even arise spontaneously, without having to look for them desperately.

If we understand our partner well, we can more easily reach an agreement in case in conflicts. Even hard events such as the death of a child, the loss of a job and other severe crises can be accepted if we have learnt to open up. The couple does not need to suffer in vain because of such events. At the contrary, cohesion in the couple may be reinforced if the hardship is overcome in communion.

Listening to one another also enlarges our perspectives. We learn to know ourselves better, as if we went on a discovery tour of our own selves. To be able to express in words what touches us makes us more conscious of our inner world and we become more responsible for our actions towards ourselves and others.