

# What Stops Us From Communicating in Relationships

On Episode 18 of the Decoding Couples Podcast, we went over your answers on what stops you from bringing up topics or communication in general with a partner(s). Then we took it one step further and put those answers in categories, because oftentimes those blockers to communication can tell us more about what is or isn't going on in a relationship.

## What it looks like:

- Defensiveness
- Tit for Tat (they bring up a hurt, you bring up a hurt in response)
- Being interrupted
- Criticism
- Being told what you felt was wrong or that you didn't feel it
- Invalidating Experiences
- Unwilling to see another POV (point of view)
- Focus too much on wanting to be right
- All or nothing statements - "you never do this , I always do this"

**What this does to the relationship:** When these behaviors are present, it communicates there's no point in communicating. It shuts down dialogue and your partner(s).

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## What it looks like:

- Raising my voice
- Hostile / rude tone
- Threatening divorce
- Slamming doors
- Passive aggressive comments
- Bringing up past fights
- Hyper focusing on tone & word choice \*\*\*this usually means emotional safety hasn't been present in the relationship for an significant amount of time\*\*\*

**What this does to the relationship:** When these behaviors are present, it erodes and/or takes away emotional safety.

## What it looks like:

Eye rolling

Mimicking / Mocking

Name calling

Sarcasm

Vulnerability is scary and at times proven unsafe

Hurtful statements are made about you as a person

“You're’ too sensitive, your’e emotional, stop being a pussy, stop being bitchy...”

**What this does to the relationship:** This behavior is incredibly damaging and considered contempt.

When contempt is repeated it becomes unhealthy & abusive.

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## What it looks like:

- Reactivity
- When they miss the point /feel like they aren't hearing you/listening
- Having to repeat yourself
- Fear of judgment
- Walking away/turning away
- Lack of vulnerability in return
- Partner changing the topic
- Partner shutting down
- Conflict avoidant
- Trauma from previous conflict
- They consider any talk as criticism or attacks

**What this means for the relationship:** When these behaviors are present it often means one or multiple partners are dysregulated (meaning their bodies and brains are having reactions that they feel out of control of or overwhelmed by).

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What it looks like:

- A partner plays the victim when you express a feeling
- When you share a hurt they respond with “it’s all my fault im horrible” over & over without circling back to your feelings / hurt
- Responses like: “It’s always me, I’ll never be good enough”  
“I’m the asshole/bad guy”

What this means for the relationship: When this type of response is present in a relationship one person is engaging in the victim role. Sometimes this is a manipulation tactic. Other times it is a sign of very low self worth, self-confidence and a sign that a person needs to do some healing on previous attachment wounds so they can learn to have emotional space for another person's experiences and uncomfortable feelings.