

“Good communication involves being a “faithful translator” of what we hear. Imagine you speak a foreign language and are interpreting for someone to a group of English speakers. Sometimes the direct translation would give a completely wrong message to the audience. What a good translator does is listen, not only to the words, but, to the message behind the words. So often in our own couple communication we latch on to the words said instead of the true meaning.

It is not uncommon to hear couples arguing “But you said.....” “That’s not what I meant and you know it!” “Well that’s what you said and that’s what I believe”. When this happens it is obvious than someone has not even tried to be a faithful translator. Becoming a faithful translator requires well developed listening skills and a lot of goodwill. Skills can be taught but goodwill must be developed in the heart. Developing and maintaining goodwill is part of what people mean when they say the marriage must be worked at. “

DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING GOODWILL

Developing a reserve of goodwill is like building an emotional bank account. Some actions make deposits in the account and others withdraw from it

Appreciation, affection, kindness, thoughtfulness and good listening all build up the emotional bank account while criticism, blaming, put downs and thoughtlessness all withdraw from it. If the bank account is healthy and full the relationship can withstand quite a lot. On the other hand, if the bank account has been depleted by years of thoughtlessness and criticism it has a greatly reduced ability to withstand the many assaults on it from outside the relationship over which partners themselves have little or no control.

A nice, easy reading little book which looks at this topic is “The little book of Insights into Couple Relationships” by Elizabeth Tuettemann. It is published by Major Mitchel Productions in Jolimont WA.



Catholic Marriage Education Services

Email: marriage.ed@perthcatholic.org.au
Phone: (08) 9325 1859 **Fax:** (08) 9221 5421
Postal: GPO Box P1217, Perth, WA, 6844