

Effective Communication Program

Daily Couple's Heart Workout



The great family therapist Virginia Satir developed a technique for partners and families to maintain an easy flow about the big and little things going on in their lives. I have adapted it some, and regularly use it with the couples I work with. She called it the Daily Temperature Reading. I call it **Daily Couple's Heart Workout**.

This is simple and works very well. At the beginning it might feel a bit artificial until you find your own natural style for it. Couples routinely report it is invaluable for staying close—even if they let it slide for a day or two when they get busy. It teaches partners how to listen non-defensively and to talk as a way that gives information rather than stir a reaction. Here are the basics:

Rules of engagement:

- a) Set aside time to connect. A minimum of 15 minutes with no distractions —no electronic gadgets close by, no TV playing, no music blaring in the background, children gone (to school, in bed, or charged with no interrupting if older).
- b) Find a comfortable place that's not a bed, so you don't fall asleep. :) It can be the couch or a comfortable pleasing corner you both enjoy. It could be somewhere in nature, or in your backyard. It should be pleasing and soothing.
- c) Sit close together, where you can see your partners facial expression and eyes, and hold hands. This simple touching creates an atmosphere of acceptance for both.
- d) Commit to listening to each other fully, focusing your attention. Don't judge and don't interrupt. If you feel an urge to jump in, bite your tongue, write it down or save it for when it's your turn. It is important to listen to the person speaking with openness and compassion, it is their time to express themselves, give them that time and space without interruption.
- e) Take turns sharing and listening. Instead of talking for a long time, be clear but concise in your sharing.
- f) Thank the Speaker - When person B is done. Person A will say something to acknowledge what's been said. Something like "That's great! Those are some great realizations and big wins!", "Thank you for sharing!"