



No Such Thing as Too Much Communication!

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Being a parent is one of the greatest privileges in my life. Personally, I believe the purpose of children is to help their parents learn more about themselves. At least that's the case with me. Everyday, I learn so much from my kids—especially in the way we communicate with each other. Of my three children, my middle child Ahsaan is the funniest. By the time Ahsaan was three years old, he had already said the darnedest things. Many of them were based on misunderstandings due to his young age.

HONEYMOON

In a hallway of our home, Ahsaan stared at a framed picture on the wall of my wife and me on our honeymoon. Aloria and I were kissing at one end of a Carnival cruise ship as the sun set on the Mexican Riviera. Ahsaan asked, *Dad, are you and Mommy at the beach?* I said, *No Son, we're on a cruise ship on our honeymoon.* Puzzled he said, *Honeymoon - Dad, what's that?* I replied, *You see, Son,*

when you finish pre-school, you're gonna go on to elementary school. Ahsaan said, *Yeah Dad, elementary school!* Then I said, *Next you're gonna go to middle school and high school.* He said, *Yeah Dad, high school!* Then I said, *Son, after high school, you're gonna go to college, then graduate school!* Ahsaan said, *Yeah Dad, graduate schoooooo!* And I said, *Yeah Son, during graduate school you'll meet and date a beautiful young lady. And then the two of you will become engaged.* He said, *Yeah Dad, engaged!* And lastly, I said, *Then after your engagement - you two will marry.* Ahsaan paused, and then said with pure excitement, *Yeah Dad, - Mary had a little lamb!* Boy, that made me laugh so hard - I never got to explain what a honeymoon was.

GOING FISHING

One Saturday morning, Ahsaan and I were watching *Stanley*, a favorite cartoon of

*"You will have many opportunities in life to keep your mouth shut. You should take advantage of every one of them."
—Thomas Alva Edison*

his on The Disney Channel. One of the characters was fishing on the show and Ahsaan said to me, *Ooh Dad, I want to go fishing. Will you take me fishing?* I replied, *Sure Son, I'll take you fishing!* He asked, *When Dad, when?* I said,

When you get a little older. He said, *Okay Dad, then let's go tomorrow!*

DINOSAURS

My wife Aloria and my son Ahsaan were reading animal books together. One book was about dinosaurs, and my wife began explaining the history of this kind of animal. She told Ahsaan that they lived millions of years ago, but were now *extinct*. Ahsaan looked at his mom and said, *Yeah mommy, they smell like stinky boo boo.*

PICK UP THAT FLYER

Coming in the front door of our home, I noticed that a one-sheet advertisement had been slid under the

door. My hands were full of grocery bags, so I asked Ahsaan to pick up the flyer for me. I looked back behind me and saw him looking all around the doorway. I said, *Ahsaan, pick up that flyer right there!* Confused he looked to his right, then over to his left, and then under his legs. He said, *Dad, where is it?* I said, *Ahsaan, pick up that flyer - right there next to your foot.* He said pointing his finger downward, **This?** I said, *Yes, that!* He said to me, *Dad, this is not a flyer - this is a piece of paper. It can't fly.* Well, what could I say - Ahsaan was only going by what he knew. That's my son.

CHRISTMAS

Each year on Christmas day, my wife's side of our family usually gathers to exchange hundreds of gifts and enjoy a big feast. On Ahsaan's third Christmas he was truly excited! He led our circle of family and friends in prayer as we blessed the food. After we finished the prayer, he made a special request that we sing "Happy Birthday" for Jesus. And so we did. When we were finished, Ahsaan shouted out,

Happy birthday Jesus! Now blow out the candles!

In order to influence others in a positive way, we have to know how to communicate effectively. In business, poor communication can lead to disaster and financial ruin. In international affairs, it can lead to war. In personal relationships, poor communication can lead to partners becoming strangers and eventually drifting apart.

In order for a personal or professional relationship to be fulfilling, we must understand the other party's needs. There are different strokes for different folks.

This is certainly true for my wife Aloria and me. For example, when it comes to conversations, Aloria mostly enjoys them just for the sake of us talking to one another. I usually engage in the conversation as a means to an end.

No question about it, understanding

the needs of those we desire to have a personal or professional relationship with is one of the most important keys in communicating effectively. I've learned that the more I love my wife, the more she supports me in my endeavors. My philosophy is this: The more I water her flowers, the more beautiful they continue to grow - and she helps me to do my thing.

Another important factor in communicating effectively goes back to something I mentioned earlier from that old proverb - we are given one mouth and two ears. This is so we can listen twice as much as we talk. You can't listen and talk at the same time. Keep your mouth closed and your ears open. Listen with your mind as well as your ears. If you're busy thinking about what you're going to say next, you're not listening. Keep your mind focused on what the other person is saying, then - when it's your turn - think five times before you speak. Lastly, listen with your heart. Watch for the nonverbal clues that tell you what the other person is really saying. ★



About the Author

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