

TIPS FOR COUPLES TO IMPROVE SOCIAL INTERACTION

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1. Say what **to do** rather than what **not to do**, e.g. “put your clothes in the hamper” instead of “don’t throw your dirty clothes on the floor.”
2. Use a 1 inch voice- (best harmonics for intelligibility on TV and radio), a non-verbal signal rather than verbal nagging to monitor volume up or down.
3. Use a matter of fact tone of voice. Be instructional, not judgmental; these social “instincts” and skills need to be learned explicitly. It is not “bad behavior”.
4. You will get more information from “I messages” than asking wh questions that carry demand, e.g. “I’d like to hear about the meeting” rather than “what did you do at work today?”
5. Put a list of things “to do” on the fridge. For crossing off rather than verbally listing tasks over and over. Eliminates nagging.
6. A computer written list of tasks before leaving for work, a trip, and/or tasks before bed can be laminated and posted as a non-verbal reminder. It’s most effective if the person makes the list.
7. When your spouse makes a social faux pas or uses the wrong tone of voice, ask him/her to “edit” what was said. Don’t wait until later to talk about it. The critical learning time will have passed, e.g. “I want you or need you to edit that, it sounded angry, mean, or rude.”
8. If a turn speaking goes on too long, gently interrupt and say, “Can you say one more thing and then let me have a turn.” This will help to establish reciprocity.