

The 5 Ways Not to Talk to Your Partner

It's too easy to sabotage your best interests. Follow these rules and you won't.

Post published by Melissa Orlov on Apr 04, 2014 in [May I Have Your Attention](#)

Want to have your partner really hear you? Do you simply need to be heard? Is what you have to say so important that attention must be paid? If so, here are five approaches that simply **won't** work:

1. **Making too long a case.**

Since what you have to say is really important, you may be tempted to state your position in great detail. Don't! It's easier to understand a concise statement of a problem (at least at first) than a long-winded position.

2. **Keeping it up when your partner doesn't respond.**

You've stated your case and your partner has politely listened. You finish up and you get...no real response. You hoped for engagement, but what's going on in your partner's head instead is unclear—or worse, you fear it's negative. Resist the temptation to repeat your case: If you want engagement, instead ask follow-up questions like, “Do you agree?” or “What do you think about that?”

3. **Talking about private issues in front of others.**

You may feel overwhelmed with emotion, frustration, even anger. You may feel that you *must* communicate your idea or need—but if you air your private concerns in front of others, your partner is much more likely to shut down, become resentful, or be mortified rather than listen.

4. **Ignoring a plea to talk later.**

You've stated your case (perhaps more than once) and your partner has tried to listen...but it's the end of a long day, or for whatever reason, it simply isn't a good time. He (or she) says, “Let's talk about this on the weekend when we have more time.” But you are so convinced that you must get your point across now that you

put your “needs” above your partner’s and keep going. So now, instead of needing to talk about one problem, you need to address two: The original problem, and the additional issue you've created by ignoring your partner’s request. Even as you continue talking, your partner is feeling more and more negative about the treatment you're giving them. The more negative he or she is, the less likely he or she is to focus on—and respond to—your original problem.

5. Waking up later and starting again.

You’re so upset about the issue you face that you can’t sleep well. Your partner is having the same problem. Rather than let it go so you can wrap your arms around each other and both approach the question refreshed tomorrow, you bring the problem topic up again...sometime around 2am—and you can imagine how well that will go.

Sometimes we want something so much, or feel something so intensely that we can get in the way of our own best interests. But no matter how strongly you want to communicate something, your partner will best hear and respond to you if you are simultaneously showing that you are still conscious of his or her needs.