

Are You Putting Up Roadblocks to Effective Communication? Part 2

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*(This article is part 2 of a series of two articles on "**Roadblocks to Effective Communication.**" If you are reading this article and haven't read [Part 1](#), I would recommend going back and reading it first.)*

Again, it's helpful to look through the following list and find out if you are "guilty" of any of these behaviours.

Roadblocks to Effective Communication Part 2:

9. **Denial:** Denying there is a problem so you don't have to talk about it. The issue may not be a problem for you, but if it is for the other person it is helpful for the relationship to talk about it.

10. **Hopelessness:** Using statements like "What's the point, it won't work anyway." Perpetuates self-pity/victim mentality, or could be a guilt trip. Creates more negativity and a sense of helplessness for both people.

11. **Nagging:** Extra long statements. Trying to make sure your point is heard by going on and on about the problem, giving lots of examples, etc. instead of being brief and to the point.

12. **Sarcasm:** Negative humour that subtly -- or not so subtly -- puts the person down or expresses your dissatisfaction instead of an honest and real complaint.

13. **Speaking for others:** One person thinking they know what's best for others and making decisions for them. A form of co-dependence.

14. **Speaking in absolutes:** Using "you always" and "you never" instead of making a complaint about a specific incident is sure to invoke defensiveness! No one "always" or "never" does anything--there are exceptions to every rule. Absolutes leave no space for the other person.

15. **Stonewalling*:** The person pulls themselves out of the interaction while remaining in the room, no longer giving the cue that they are listening (i.e. avoiding eye contact, crossing arms, turning away, etc.)

**Stonewalling is the fourth of what John Gottman calls the 4 Horsemen (along with criticism, contempt, and defensiveness, outlined in Part 1.)*

When these behaviours are regular and are not recognized by the offender and apologized for after they happen, they become predictors of divorce/relationships ending.

*Soberingly, Gottman and his researchers **can predict the likelihood of divorce with 97% accuracy**, based on their observations of these 4 behaviours and physiological arousal (stress response) during interactions between couples in their "love lab."*

If you're interested in changing some of the above behaviours in yourself, I outlined some ways to start to shift these behaviours in Part 1.

Additional ideas on how to increase your self-awareness around these behaviors are:

- Look at your family-of-origin and which behaviours were modeled by your parental figures. Often we either imitate what was modeled--or do the complete opposite.
- When you've identified which behaviour(s) is/are your biggest challenges, try catching yourself before you go into one of them, or while you're in it, and observe your physical sensations with mindfulness. This may give you enough breathing room that you actually have the choice to do something differently.

Again, if you find that you are struggling with changing some of these behaviours on your own, consulting a counselling professional can be very helpful.