



# THE INSTITUTE FOR HEALTHY FAMILIES OF NORTH TEXAS

*"helping achieve small miracles!"*

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## **Valentine Moments: For Every Day and All Year Long!**

By Sandra W. Froese, Ed.D, LPC-S, © 2011

That famous “philosopher”, Forrest Gump remarked in the movie about “his life story” that *“Life is like a box of chocolates—you never know what you are going to get.”* Although we don’t always know what life will hand us, we have the opportunity to “take what we get” and make something wonderful from it. With that philosophy in mind, we can move the romantic relationships we have with a loved one from “good to great!”

When you give love and affection away, chances are it will be reciprocated to you a hundred times more. If you can remember two ideas, your relationship will be stronger and more loving. So this **Valentine’s Day**, resolve to practice some communication skills that will improve your relationship all year long.

**Number One:** *Avoid making communication mistakes and actions that show disrespect, disloyalty and distrust.*

- a. Avoid being controlling and invading your loved one’s privacy. Respect boundaries. Your loved one is an individual in his or her own right, and you don’t have to know everything or run that person’s life.
- b. Watch your mouth and don’t speak to your loved one with contempt, sarcasm and hurtful language—no matter how justified you feel in doing so.
- c. Avoid escalating an argument that goes nowhere. Listen attentively to what your loved one is saying before you reply. A soft answer is more effective than raising your voice and yelling.
- d. Avoid “stonewalling” and being impatient or aloof toward your loved one. Walking away or retreating will add to the frustration.

**Number Two:** *Give your loved one generous attention and listen respectfully to his or her concerns.*

- a. Be kind, loving, patient and respectful toward your loved one. Your voice and actions need to convey that you genuinely care and put your loved one’s needs ahead of yours. A relationship is not 50-50. It is more like each partner giving 110 percent.
- b. Show appreciation for your loved one by being helpful with household chores, shopping for groceries, watching the children, or keeping up with the finances.
- c. Be a romantic! Surprise your loved one with a small gift, cook a favorite meal, give a massage, or make arrangements for an evening out.
- d. Listen to each other’s successes and disappointments at work, school or home. Be supportive of your loved one’s decisions. And, don’t try “solving” your loved one’s problems — just listening and letting him or her come up with solutions is the best help you can give.

One couple I know arranges to have “couch time” every day for at least ten minutes after work to listen to each other’s day. By “taking care of business” each day, their relationship will continue to grow, flourish and mature over time. The goal of the *Institute for Healthy Families of North Texas* is to help couples and families have healthy and satisfying relationships by facilitating communication skills.

*For an appointment with Dr. Sandra W. Froese, LPC-S, Institute for Healthy Family of North Texas LLC, call our office at 972-569-8843 and leave a message with your name and phone number. Or, e-mail [swfroese@sbcglobal.net](mailto:swfroese@sbcglobal.net) with information about your problems and she will reply within 24 hours. For more information about our counseling services and fees, go to our website at [www.texasicounselors.com](http://www.texasicounselors.com). A 30-minute consultation is offered at no charge so that you can determine if Dr. Froese is the right counselor for your needs and so she can determine if she can be of assistance. Our rates are affordable.*