

# TERRA NOVA

## Great Communication in 15 Minutes a Day

By Jeff Williams

*"It (love) always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres."*  
~1 Corinthians 13:7 (NIV)

Equity in relationships is built by *skillful* sharing of honest thoughts and feelings. Notice the accent on skill. This is because skill is imperative to keep things positive and safe. Sharing free-for-alls rarely go well, especially when emotions run high and the participants are flustered. The good news is that about anything can be shared with anyone, when it is done *skillfully* and in love. The bad news is that most of us have room for improvement in the area of skill.

The hallmark of enduring relationships is perseverance. But, just because a relationship remains intact doesn't mean that it is pleasurable. That takes work, and skillful efforts raise the probability of an enduring relationship being pleasurable. Achieving this is not that difficult.

I can't name one couple that hasn't benefited from regular use of the tool called "*The Daily Temperature Reading*" combined with the skill of active listening. Partners that share the following five areas of information on a daily basis invariably report more pleasure and fewer misunderstandings in their relationship. All it takes is 10-15 minutes a day. Soon it is a habit, like any other self-care habit, that protects the health and pleasure of your relationship. Here are the five areas of the *Daily Temperature Reading*:

- **Appreciations**  
These can be anything you appreciate about your spouse or that they did. Share as many as you can. Realize that you build credit in their love bank with these.
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- **New Information**  
Share things that you learned while away from your spouse. Misunderstandings are prevented when we share essential information in a timely fashion.
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- **Puzzles**  
These are internal or external mysteries. "I'm puzzled about why I've been so tired lately" or "I'm puzzled about why you didn't stop at the store on the way home like you promised." Puzzles don't need to be answered, but could be if answering doesn't derail continuation of the exercise. Puzzles prompt us to confide things we are unsure about. Remember, confiding honest thoughts and feelings builds closeness.
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- **Complaint with Request for Change**  
Say what you don't like and what you would like instead. Irritating things happen in any relationship. This is a way to bring those things up in an assertive way so that they don't fester. "I don't like when you turn on the hallway light and leave the bedroom door open in the morning when you get up before I do, and I would like it if you could remember to turn off the light and close the door." This is a good time to tell your partner what you heard them say in order to clarify their complaint. "I heard you say it bothers you if I leave the light on and door open when you're still sleeping?" Note: Heavier complaints should be

said in other tools, not this one. The DTR is for everyday conversations, not highly emotional or complicated exchanges.

- **Wishes, Hopes and Dreams**

Sharing hopes for the future is a great way to tie a bow on your time of sharing. This helps you to look forward to a positive future together. When we know what our spouse wants, we can help to make it happen. "I want to go on a date, just you and me, to have some fun and undistracted time together."

The content shared by any couple is obviously different, but the process is similar. Feel free to share as many or few items as come to mind in each area.