
COMMUNICATION

The Communication Reset

A 7-day guide to rebuilding how you and your partner talk, listen, and respond to each other.

Boundary Agreement Resource Library

Dr. Hines Inc. | boundaryagreement.com

This guide is a coaching resource, not therapy or counseling.

The Problem

Most couples don't have a communication problem. They have a **pattern** problem. You have fallen into habits: who brings things up, who shuts down, who gets loud, who goes quiet. These patterns feel permanent. They are not.

This 7-day reset is designed to interrupt those patterns. Each day has one focus and one exercise. Do them in order. Do them together.

Day 1: The Check-In

Set a 15-minute timer. Sit facing each other. One person talks for 5 minutes about how they're feeling. Not about the relationship. About themselves. The other person listens without responding. Then switch. Last 5 minutes: 'Is there anything you need from me today?'

How did it feel to be listened to without interruption?

What was hard about staying quiet while your partner talked?

Day 2: The Appreciation Audit

Each person writes down 5 specific things they appreciate about their partner. Not generic ('you're great'). Specific ('I noticed you handled the kids' bedtime alone Tuesday so I could rest'). Read them to each other out loud.

Five specific appreciations I have for my partner:

Which one surprised my partner the most?

Day 3: The Request

Each person makes one clear, specific request. Not a complaint disguised as a request. A real ask. 'I would like us to eat dinner together at the table three nights a week' is a request. 'I wish you would pay more attention to me' is a complaint.

My one specific request:

My partner's one specific request:

Can I commit to this? What would need to change?

Day 4: The Trigger Map

Each person identifies their top 3 communication triggers. What makes you shut down? What makes you defensive? What makes you raise your voice? Write them down and share them. This is vulnerability, not weakness.

My top 3 triggers:

My partner's top 3 triggers:

What pattern do I see between our triggers?

Day 5: The Do-Over

Think about a recent conversation that went badly. Take turns replaying it. This time, use the skills from Days 1-4: listen without interrupting, appreciate the other person's perspective, make a request instead of a complaint, and acknowledge triggers.

What conversation are we redoing?

What went wrong the first time?

What went better this time?

Day 6: The Weekly Meeting

Establish a recurring 30-minute weekly meeting. Same day, same time. Agenda: (1) What went well this week (2) One thing I need (3) One thing I appreciate. This is not optional. Put it on the calendar.

Our weekly meeting will be:

Day and time:

What could get in the way? How will we protect this time?

Day 7: The Commitment

Write a 2-3 sentence commitment to each other about communication going forward. This is not a legal contract. It is a promise. Sign it. Put it where you'll both see it.

My commitment:

My partner's commitment:

Where will we post this?

PRO TIP: If you miss a day, don't restart. Pick up where you left off. Perfection is not the goal. Showing up is.