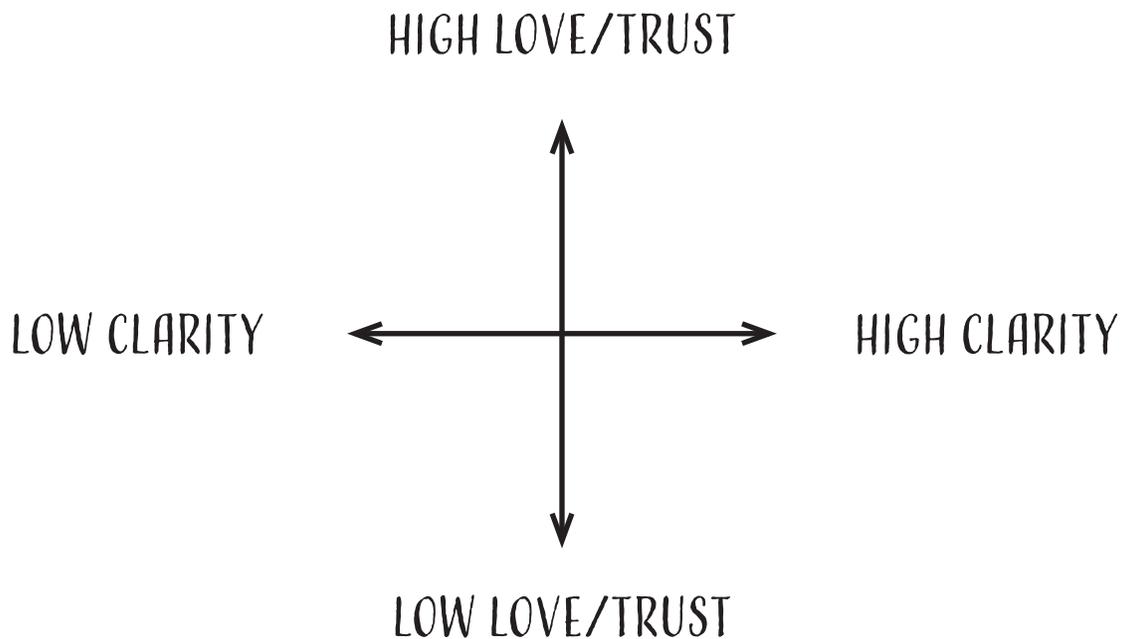




# The Gift of Communication



HIGH LOVE/LOW CLARITY

*"Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body."* Ephesians 4:25 (NIV)

LOW LOVE/LOW CLARITY

*"Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear."* Ephesians 4:29 (ESV)

## LOW LOVE/HIGH CLARITY

*"If I speak with the eloquence of human beings and of angels (and it's super clear) but have no love, I become no more than blaring brass or crashing cymbal."* 1 Corinthians 13:1 (PHILLIPS)

## HIGH LOVE/HIGH CLARITY

*"...speak the truth in love...."* Ephesians 4:15 (NLT)

## TROUBLESHOOTING OUR COMMUNICATION

If we are communicating but there is very little response/change, think about **clarity**:

- Think it through first...am I being as clear as I can be, am I "speaking the truth in love"?
- Ask your partner to summarize what they think you are trying to communicate. If it seems off, revisit **your communication** rather than blaming them.
- If you seem to be having clarity issues, instead of just repeating the same message louder and louder, try saying this: "I really do want to communicate better...how could I say that differently? Do you have a question for me that might help?"
- Keep understanding as the ultimate goal and keep refining (not just repeating) your communication until your spouse is understanding.

If we are communicating but there seems to be a lot of emotion or defensiveness involved, think about **love/trust**:

- Think about the love/trust tank in your relationship right now. To determine how low it might be, ask some good questions:
  - I think I have said something that is upsetting you. I'm sorry about that. Can you please help me understand?
  - I'm sorry that I'm not really getting it right now...I truly want to. Can you help me understand what is going on?
  - More directly, you could ask, "Are you feeling unloved/not safe right now? What have I done to contribute to that?"

# FOUR TOOLS FOR BETTER COMMUNICATION

**1. Keep your eye on the goal - growth in your relationship.**

**2. Be honest with yourself first.**

*"...First, take the log out of your own eye; then you can see how to take the speck out of your friend's eye." Matthew 7: 5 (CEV)*

**3. If the communication is sensitive, don't make it personal - about the person's character. Keep the conversation about the behaviour or the issue.**

**4. Keep filling the love and trust tank.**

Do all you can daily to keep the love/trust tank as close to full as possible. Remember that to stay healthy in marriage, it takes 5 positive interactions (love and trust-building words and/or actions) for every negative one...and the masters of marriage have a ratio of 20 to 1.

## COMMUNICATION EXPERIENCE

Working alone for two minutes, fill in the blanks in this statement as many times as you can:

*In our relationship, I would appreciate more \_\_\_\_\_ and less \_\_\_\_\_.*

After two minutes, start sharing. Listen to one of your spouse's responses. Do not debate what they are saying. Listen and then ask questions as needed in order to understand. Then share one of your responses. Keep taking turns as long as you wish or until all your responses have been shared.