



What if you had someone coaching you on how to communicate in your relationship? This book will guide you through the most prevalent and damaging habits that plague many relationships and provide practical solutions to these problems.

**Relationship Rescue:
What To Do When You Don't Know What To Do**
By Garrett Lange

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Relationship Rescue



WHAT TO DO WHEN
YOU DON'T KNOW
WHAT TO DO

AUTHOR, SPEAKER, AND RELATIONSHIP COACH

GARRETT LANGE

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Saint Petersburg, Florida

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Is Communication Really That Important?

I won't presume to know why you are reading this book, but chances are, you want to improve your relationship. Well, I have some good news! Improving your relationship is exactly what we will focus on in this book.

As I reflected on the idea of writing this book, I couldn't help but think of all the times I have seen people posting about their relationship problems on social media or complaining to their co-workers about their significant other. Let's be honest, struggling relationships are an epidemic, and you are not alone! However, regardless of what your relationship problem is, it can most likely be improved with good communication. The vast majority of relationship problems can be traced back to a breakdown in the communication of the people involved.

There is an interesting thing about communication that most people do not acknowledge. Communication in and of itself is not the answer! It is very possible for two people to be communicating incorrectly and be doing tremendous damage to the relationship, just as much as it is possible to be building your relationship through good communication. If you were to take a couple of people who have no experience in masonry and ask them to start building a brick house, you would most likely not get a great product, even though they were "laying bricks". The idea that just because you are talking to one another you are doing some good is not the case. It is this fallacy that creates scenarios where two people who do not know how to properly communicate continue to engage in destructive conversations because they become convinced that they are "communicating".

Although I am now enjoying the most amazing, communication-rich relationship of my life, it wasn't always this way. I was married at the age of 20 and, aside from an array of other problems I brought into the relationship through my immaturity, I was a terrible communicator! I was

guilty of most of the aspects of poor communication that we will cover in this book. But there is hope. If I was able to overcome being the “world’s worst communicator”, you can also learn everything you need to know to begin building your relationship to be everything you hoped it would be.

If you are ready to stop having fights and start having productive conversations that lead to understanding and change, then stick with me. Let’s begin!

Chapter 1: Silence is Not Golden.

One of the most common problems that I hear when I am coaching couples is that one of the partners in the relationship will not communicate. One partner finds themselves chasing down the other in conversation and the endless flurry of attempts to communicate seems to be met with either silence or resistance to talking. Maybe this describes your relationship. I can tell you, that, when I was married at 20, I was not necessarily unwilling to communicate, but I certainly didn't know how to articulate my thoughts and feelings. By the time my first marriage was coming to an end, (after 18 years), I had developed a wall so high that nothing could bring it down. Conversations were no more than an onslaught of emotions and complaints that I felt like I just needed to endure for a time until the words stopped coming, and then I could

“THE PROBLEM WITH
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ILLUSION THAT IT HAS
TAKEN PLACE”

offer an appeasing sentence or two to hopefully move on and put the conversation behind me. Now as terrible as that sounds, that was the place I found myself in. I do not tell you this to justify my poor communication, but rather to help

you understand where I was and how I got there.

Expectations. This is a word that has plagued many relationships. Most of the time when it comes to expectations in a relationship, the problem arises when one partner fails to meet the expectations of the other partner. However, when it comes to poor communication, or the absence of communication entirely, the problem arises when one partner lives up exactly to the expectations of the other! “What do you mean?” You ask. Great question! Let me explain. What if I told you that you had to have a conversation with someone about a sensitive topic, and you knew in advance that they would be angry, emotional, and critical of you, how likely are you to want to have that conversation? If

you do decide to have that conversation, how guarded might you be? How quickly are you likely to take something the wrong way since you are expecting that to be how they talk to you anyways? Will you be on the lookout for something critical or harsh? Can you picture yourself confirming in your own mind as you hear them talk that “this exactly how I knew it would go”? With all these thoughts running through your mind, how likely are you to be patient, understanding, and seeking resolution first? Unless you are the extremely rare exception, you won’t.

Now I want you to reflect on the past conversations you have had with your significant other. Do the conversations become emotional? Does one of you get irritated or frustrated? Does it tend to focus on

WHAT DOES MY PARTNER
EXPECT TO HAPPEN WHEN
WE COMMUNICATE?

someone being at fault for the circumstance? Ultimately, is it a good experience that leaves both of you feeling like progress has been made? If you are honest with yourself and you can identify some of these negative characteristics in your communication history, I want you to ask yourself: “What does my partner expect to happen when we talk?” It is a good exercise to answer this question for yourself as well. What do you expect to happen when you communicate with them? The answer to this question will be the driving force in the willingness or unwillingness of your partner to communicate with you. This is extremely important to understand! Keep in mind, it doesn’t matter what reality is. What matters is what your partner believes. If your partner is convinced that you are always going to get upset and be critical, regardless of whether or not you think you do, if they believe it, they will not want to engage in a difficult or important conversation with you.

I can tell you from my own experience that when I used to hear the words “we need to talk” I would cringe. I would mentally “hunker down” in my mind and just tell myself to stay calm and wait it out. No wonder I had a failed relationship! So how do you change it? How do you get your

partner to be willing to talk to you? You need to change their beliefs about how the conversation will go. Unless you can begin proving to them that the next conversation will be different from the previous ones, they will not change their willingness to begin having those conversations with you. This can be difficult. Especially if the pattern of poor communication has been going on for a long time. Remember, nobody changes their mind about something just because they are told they should. They need to change their mind for themselves based on evidence. Therefore you need to ask yourself, "what can I do to begin changing my partner's mind about what they can expect from our communication?". It is essential that you take some very specific time and energy to evaluate this for yourself. In order to do this well, you need to go back to the question I asked you earlier: "What do you think your partner expects from your communication?" Be honest with yourself. Self-justification or pride needs to be thrown out the window right now. If you are not willing to take a serious look at your own habits and negative tendencies, you might as well stop reading this book right now, because you will not achieve any lasting change if you take the position that you have nothing to improve. Once you have identified the communication killing tendencies that you have, you need to acknowledge them to your partner. I am not telling you to do this because your partner needs to know what negative aspects you bring to the communication dynamic. They already know your negative tendencies far better than you do. I am telling you to do this because it is important that your partner understands that you are aware of the fact that you have some areas that you need to improve. Your acknowledgment and expression of a desire to stop your negative communication habits is Step 1 of changing your partners' beliefs about what they can expect. What is Step 2? Step 2 is articulating to your partner what your conversations should look like if the negative aspects you bring to the table were no longer present. You want to help your partner envision what a productive conversation could be and will be moving forward. Step 3 is implementation. You need to begin practicing the changes you describe to them. This step is critical. You do not need

to be perfect or flawlessly implementing everything you describe, but you do need to be showing evidence that you are working on changing. You also need to acknowledge to your partner when you don't get it right so that they can see that you are aware and trying.

Do not perform Step #1 and Step #2 if you are not willing to follow through with Step #3. If you perform Steps #1 and #2 and then skip Step #3 you will be doing more harm than good. You will only solidify in your partner's mind that the negative expectations they have about your communication are true, and, despite your claims to want change, no change can or should be expected.

Something else to keep in mind: if you are in a relatively new relationship, it is possible that your partner is responding to you based on what they've experienced in their past relationships. This was very true of me. I found myself reacting to certain things very negatively because of the assumptions I had created during my past marriage. When the woman who is now my wife would try to communicate with me I would immediately shut down, not because she had done anything wrong, but because I was conditioned to believe that the conversation would be nothing more than a condemnation of myself without any real resolve. However, I would caution you to not be too quick to convince yourself that their unwillingness to talk is because of a previous relationship with someone else. Be willing to consider the possibility that you are the one creating an environment that makes them not feel safe to share openly how they feel.

I can remember a time in my first marriage when my wife told me that she wanted me to be open and honest about everything I thought and felt. I wasn't sure that it was a good idea. We had some significant differences in certain areas of our lives. I decided to try being honest about something a little personal and out of my comfort zone. I was quickly criticized for having such thoughts and was made to feel very poorly about it. I distinctly remember telling myself, "I won't make that mistake again!". Now in hindsight, I can admit that what I shared was not a very appealing thought, but it doesn't matter. What matters is that

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I found myself convinced that it was not safe to be open and honest. If either you or your partner are feeling like it is not safe to be open and honest in your relationship, there is a huge problem. You need to understand what is causing that feeling to exist, and then work at creating an environment where that belief can be changed.



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