



The "Talking Box" Exercise

It is important for spouses, parents, and all family members to keep lines of communication open with each other. Sometimes it is hard to begin a conversation, especially if there are important topics involved. This activity can help to prompt family discussion of important issues.

Activity Preparation

1. Set Up

- Select a box or bowl large enough to contain a number of index cards. Have index cards available for family members to use or fill out.
- Use questions provided and fill them in on the index cards, or take time to generate your own interesting and meaningful questions to ask each other. Create a set of "Talking Box" index cards to be used and added to over time.
- Create questions that will meet the needs of your family members. Different questions are interesting or appropriate for persons of different stages in life.

2. How To Use the Talking Box

- Put the box on a table or chair with family members gathered around. Allow each person to choose a question.
- Have each person respond to the question that they select from the Talking Box. Allow others to share thoughts, comments, or stories as they feel.
- Take the box on family outings and trips in the car to prompt discussion. Use it as part of a family fun night or party.
- Discuss one question from the Talking Box for meal, evening or bedtime talks with other family members.
- Use questions from the Talking Box to prompt family conversation prior to discussing an important family concern.

3. Agree to the Following Rules

- Family members may not criticize one another for comments made during Talking Box discussions.
- If people don't want to answer a question, they may choose another one or pass.
- No one should be pressured into participating in this activity.

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Sample Questions – Younger Family Members

- What is your favorite color?
- What is your favorite food? Why?
- What is the best game you have ever played?
- What was it like learning how to swim?
- What is the most exciting thing that you like to do?
- Talk about your best friend.

Sample Questions – Older Family Members

- What is something you worry about?
- What day from your childhood would you want to relive?
- What is something important you have learned about life?
- Describe something that happened recently that made you very happy.
- What would you take with you from your home if there was a fire and you could take only one item?
- What do you think happens to people after death?
- What is your favorite book (movie, video, sport, etc.) and why? How has it influenced you?
- Who do you think has influenced you the most as a leader?

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