



A PRACTICAL DISCUSSION BOOK

Speaking as Husband and Wife

How to speak, how to choose tone and words, and how to put things to one another as husband and wife, in easy times and hard, always keeping respect.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَرِثُوا النِّسَاءَ ...

Before we begin

Two people can convey the same meaning, yet one builds a household and the other tears it down. The difference is not in what is said but in **how** it is said: the tone of voice, the choice of words, the timing, and the intention behind them.

The Qur'an tells spouses to live together 'in kindness' (وَعَايِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ — An-Nisa' 4:19), and the Prophet ﷺ said: 'The best of you are those who are best to their families, and I am the best of you to my family' (narrated by at-Tirmidhi, sahih). Good character within the home begins with the tongue.

This book is short and practical. It does not teach you how to win an argument; it teaches you how to protect the relationship. For in a household, to win the argument but lose affection is no victory at all.

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Each chapter opens with a verse of the Qur'an. This book focuses on **how to speak** in a way that protects love and respect; it is not a fatwa. Further reference at mypolygyny.com.

01

START HERE

The tongue is a trust

A single word can build a household or bring it down.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا ﴿٧٠﴾

"O you who believe, fear Allah and speak words that are right (true)."

Al-Ahzab 33:70

Words leave their mark

A wound on the skin heals, but a wound from words can be carried for years. In a household, the person we love most is also the person we find easiest to hurt, because he or she is the closest and trusts us the most.

This is why Islam gives such weight to the tongue. 'Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him speak good or keep silent' (narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim). This rule does not stop outside the front door; it begins inside the home.

An example within the home

The Prophet ﷺ said: 'The best of you are those who are best to their families, and I am the best of you to my family' (narrated by at-Tirmidhi, sahih). He helped with the housework, joked with his wives, and never spoke harshly.

This means that the measure of a good man is not found in public, but in front of his wife and children, when no one is watching. That is where true character is tested.

Frequently asked questions

I am kind to other people but quick to anger at home. Why?

Because at home we feel 'safe' to let our stress out. But that is exactly the mistake: the people most deserving of our patience are our own family. Recognising this habit is the first step to changing it.

02

TO NE

Choose your tone, not just your words

The same sentence in a different tone is received with a different meaning.

فَقُولَا لَهُ قَوْلًا لِّئَلَّا يَعْلَمَ أَنِّي نَذَرْتُ لَهُ آيَةً فَلَا يُخْشَى ﴿٤٤﴾

"Then speak to him with gentle words, that he may take heed or fear."

Ta-Ha 20:44

Allah commands gentleness, even towards Pharaoh

The verse above is Allah's instruction to the Prophets Musa and Harun when they went before Pharaoh, the most tyrannical man of his time. If even Pharaoh was to be spoken to gently, how much more the wife or husband we love.

Gentle does not mean weak, nor giving way on what is right. Gentle means getting your meaning across without causing hurt, because our aim is to be understood, not to win.

Same message, different tone

Hurtful tone

- ✗ "Why are you so late?!"
- ✗ "You can't even do that."
- ✗ "Right, I can't be bothered to talk."
- ✗ "Do as you please."

Caring tone

- ✓ "I was worried just now — please let me know next time."
- ✓ "Let me show you another way."
- ✓ "I need a short rest, let's carry on shortly."
- ✓ "I respect your choice, but let's talk it over first."

Time and place matter too

Do not discuss weighty matters when hungry, tired, or in front of the children and guests. Choose a calm time, a private place, and a heart that is ready.

Sometimes putting a conversation off for a few hours saves a few days of sulking.

03

LISTEN

Listen first, answer later

Half of the solution is feeling heard.

الَّذِينَ يَسْمَعُونَ الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ أَحْسَنَهُ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ
وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿١٨﴾

“(Namely) those who listen to the word and follow the best of it; those are the ones whom Allah has guided, and they are the people of understanding.”

Az-Zumar 39:18

Listening is an act of loving worship

Many spouses do not want an instant solution; they want first to feel understood. When we cut in, correct, or jump straight to a 'solution', our spouse feels brushed aside.

Truly listening — looking at the face, putting down the phone, nodding — is already halfway to calming the problem.

How to listen well

1

Stop and give your attention

Put the phone down, look at your spouse, and really listen, not just wait for your turn to speak.

2

Repeat it back to be sure you understand

'So what you mean is...?' This shows you were listening and avoids misunderstanding.

3

Acknowledge the feeling

'I understand why you feel that way.' Acknowledging a feeling does not mean agreeing; it means respecting.

4

Only then offer your view

Once your spouse feels heard, share your own view gently.

Frequently asked questions

If I completely disagree, do I have to pretend to agree?

No. Listening is not agreeing. You can say: 'I hear you and I understand how you feel, but I see it from another angle — can we talk about it?' Be honest, but respectful.

04

IN EASY TIMES

Don't wait for hard times to speak kindly

Love that goes unspoken is easily mistaken for love that has gone.

وَمِنْ ءَايَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ
بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

"And among His signs is that He created for you wives from among yourselves, that you may find tranquillity in them, and He placed between you affection (mawaddah) and mercy (rahmah)."

Ar-Rum 30:21

Appreciate before it is too late

Many only praise their spouse after losing them. Yet one 'thank you' a day strengthens a household more than a thousand gifts once a year.

The Prophet ﷺ was affectionate and enjoyed joking with his wives. Love in Islam is not only a duty; it is also warmth that is shown.

Small things that mean a great deal

- ☒ Say thank you for the 'ordinary' things your spouse does every day
- ☒ Praise one thing about your spouse today, and mean it
- ☒ Ask how their heart is, not just about work and the children
- ☒ Make du'a for your spouse in their presence: 'May Allah have mercy on you'
- ☒ Use the affectionate name they like
- ☒ Spend time without phones, even 15 minutes a day

Warmth is a charity

A smile, a compliment and a kind word to your spouse are not trivial; they calm the heart and bind affection. A home that often hears kind words is seldom a lonely place.

05

IN HARD TIMES

Disagreeing without hurting

Anger is normal; what sets us apart is how we handle it.

وَلَا تَسْتَوِ الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ ۚ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ
وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ ﴿٣٤﴾

"And good and evil are not equal. Repel (evil) with what is better; then the one between whom and you there was enmity will become as though he were a close friend."

Fussilat 41:34

The problem is the problem, not the person

In an argument it is easy to forget that we are one team facing one problem, not two enemies facing each other. Attack the problem, never your spouse's dignity.

When angry, the Prophet ﷺ taught us to stop, to sit down if standing, and to make wudu, because words said in anger are rarely words we do not regret later.

How to talk when tempers are hot

1

Stop before you explode

If your voice starts to rise, stop: 'I need to calm down first, let's continue in a little while.' This is not running away; it is rescuing the situation.

2

Use 'I feel', not 'you always'

'I feel hurt when...' is easier to hear than 'You always...', which makes the other person defensive straight away.

3

One issue at a time

Do not drag up ten old faults. Settle only the one in front of you.

4

Never threaten talaq

Threatening divorce in anger plants fear and destroys the sense of safety. Such words are hard to take back.

During an argument

What tears down

- ✗ Shouting and swearing
- ✗ Silence for days
- ✗ Raking up and comparing
- ✗ Involving family or outsiders
- ✗ Threatening talaq

What builds up

- ✓ Lower your voice, slow the pace
- ✓ Ask for a break, then return to talk
- ✓ Focus only on the issue at hand
- ✓ Settle it between the two of you first
- ✓ Reassure: 'We will sort it out together'

06

MEND

Asking forgiveness and forgiving

A strong household is not one that never errs, but one that knows how to make up.

وَلَا يَأْتَلِ أُولُوا الْفَضْلِ مِنْكُمْ وَالسَّعَةِ أَنْ يُؤْتُوا أُولِيَ الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ
وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلْيَعْفُوا وَلْيَصْفَحُوا أَلَا تُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ
لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٢٢﴾

"...and let them forgive and overlook. Do you not love that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

An-Nur 24:22

Forgiving is strength

No household is without mistakes and misunderstandings. What sets a happy household apart is how quickly they make up, not the absence of quarrels.

Allah links forgiving one another with the hope of being forgiven by Him. Forgiving your spouse does not mean he or she was right; it means the relationship is worth more than ego.

How to apologise properly

1

Admit it; don't make excuses

'I was wrong just now, I'm sorry' — with no 'but'. 'Sorry, but you started it' is not an apology.

2

Name what you regret

Naming the specific thing shows you truly understand its impact.

3

Show change, not just words

A true apology is followed by effort not to repeat it.

4

Accept the apology and close that chapter

Once forgiven, do not bring it up again. Forgiving means letting go.

Frequently asked questions

My ego makes it hard to apologise first. What can I do?

The Prophet ﷺ said that the strong person is not the one who wins at wrestling, but the one who controls himself when angry (narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim). The one who starts the apology is not the loser; he or she is the most mature and the most courageous.

I have forgiven, but I still feel hurt. Is that normal?

It is normal. Forgiving is a decision; healing is a process. Keep talking gently and honestly, and if the hurt is very deep, a counsellor or a trusted mediator can help.

From this → Try this

Avoid saying

- ✗ "You never listen to me."
- ✗ "Whatever you like." (said sulkily)
- ✗ "Your mother is just the same."
- ✗ "If it's going to be like this, we may as well divorce."
- ✗ "You're so lazy."
- ✗ "Why can't you be like so-and-so's wife?"

Try saying

- ✓ "I felt unheard just now — can we try once more?"
- ✓ "I don't quite agree, but let's think it through together."
- ✓ (Leave the family out of it) "Let's focus on the two of us first."
- ✓ "I'm tired and hurt — can we take a short break and carry on later?"
- ✓ "When the housework isn't done, I feel tired doing it alone. Can we share it?"
- ✓ "I really appreciate it when you do this for us."

Summary: Do & Avoid

Do

- ✓ Choose a gentle tone even when the news is heavy
- ✓ Listen fully before answering
- ✓ Say 'I feel...', not 'You always...'
- ✓ Praise and appreciate small things every day
- ✓ Apologise first; do not wait for the other to begin
- ✓ Pause when angry; resume when calm

Avoid

- ✗ Raising your voice, shouting or threatening talaq
- ✗ Using silence (the silent treatment) as a weapon
- ✗ Raking up old faults and comparing with others
- ✗ Name-calling or insulting their family
- ✗ Discussing household matters with outsiders first
- ✗ Winning an argument at the cost of affection

Frequently asked questions

If the other person is the one who raises their voice first, is it wrong for me to answer back?

Answering harshness with harshness only adds fuel to the fire. Try lowering your tone — 'Let's talk properly' — or ask for a short break. Holding yourself back when angry is a sign of strength, not of defeat.

I am simply not good at sweet talk. What should I do?

You do not need to be sweet; being sincere and gentle is enough. One heartfelt 'thank you' or 'I value you' is enough. Good communication is a small habit repeated, not a grand sentence.

When should we seek outside help?

If conversations often turn into serious quarrels, if there is continual humiliation, or if there is violence — and if anyone is in danger, call 999 first. After that, seek a counsellor, the religious office, or Talian Kasih 15999. Asking for help is no disgrace.