

# One Way to Better Understanding

By Mary Boike

A lot more goes into a marriage than sharing a single name and bank account. People are looking for companionship; a special quality of living; intimacy; self-disclosure; reassurance from mates; freedom to "be;" and the experience of self, the other and the union of the two. Each marriage is unique as each combination of two people makes for a unique relationship. There are no fixed rules for living a marriage but there are tools which can be used to help make marriage a more positive experience.

Communication is one such tool. It is easy for a couple to feel a license to talk to each other in ways that they wouldn't to a friend. This is ironic in that spouses should be very best friends. For instance, with a friend you are careful to resolve conflict in a pleasant manner. You make sure you are smiling and understanding, and you give the other person plenty of eye contact and frequent head nods to acknowledge that you're listening. You would not approach friends with an angry face, nor would you smirk or glare at them. Your voice is tender, warm affectionate and caring. You would not think of being cold, blaming, accusing or sarcastic. Even your body posture is relaxed and physical distance between the two of you is reduced. You would not throw up your hands in disgust or make rude gestures. The whole context of the communication situation is different with a friend. How much more effective communication would be if a couple continued to treat each other with the consideration expended on a friend.

Effective communication also consists of listening to both what a spouse is saying and feeling. Often the feeling behind a statement is more important than what is actually being said. However, listening is not enough. The communication process must be carried one step further by expressing what you think you heard your mate say. At times you may also want to express how you think your spouse is feeling about the subject being discussed. We gain a sense of being understood when the feeling is accurately recognized. Another technique is to ask for feedback so that you can evaluate if your spouse heard what you really intended to say and if your feelings were accurately recognized. This allows any misconceptions to be cleared up and the discussion to proceed on a better level of understanding. In addition to clarifying understanding, your actions show the other person that you care. This helps to make a person feel important and loved.

Another aspect of communication is sharing. All too often a couple will hesitate to express their feelings, thoughts and desires with each other in the hopes of avoiding conflict and disagreement. The spouse is expected to magically discover what they are. This is often referred to as a hidden agenda. You have something you would like your spouse to know or to do but won't directly tell what it is. Instead, you let your spouse stumble around until he guesses the answer. Meanwhile, you

remain distressed because it appears that your spouse is so insensitive. Without sharing your thoughts and feelings your spouse has no ability to know where you're at on an issue or that you're unhappy about something. A spouse is not a mind-reader. For you to get what you need, you must tell your mate. Your willingness to be open and up front about your needs encourages your mate to do likewise. It promotes a supportive environment for growth.

In order for a spouse to share intimate feelings, there must be a feeling of psychological safety. Each person can provide this safety for the other by being accepting. Accepting means being nonevaluative or nonjudgmental. This does not mean that you agree with everything your spouse says but only that you accept it as a valid point of view. You acknowledge that it is okay to have a point of view different from your own.

Communication is also negotiating. Negotiation is a process of stating what each person is willing to do about an issue until each party feels comfortable with the final solution. This recognizes the right of each person to have needs met and respected.

Communication means setting time for sharing and resolving conflict. In this way the emotional buildup of anger and resentment associated with unexpressed feelings, unmet needs or unresolved conflict is less likely to reach such un-

## No Need To Worry About Gifts

Picking out a wedding gift can be a headache. Especially if the giver wishes the gift to be unusual, practical, and a meaningful one that will last throughout the couple's years together. Here are a few unique ideas:

- A gift certificate for marriage enrichment in one year.
- Selected books like "Love is All" by Joseph and Lois Bird; "Secret of Staying in Love" by John Powell; "A Joyful Meeting" by Drs. Mike and Joyce Grace; "Living Happily Ever After" by Thomas N. Hart; "Marital Intimacy: A Catholic Perspective" by Anzia and Durkin.
- A Family Bible.
- Meaningful plaques or a wall hanging to decorate their new home.

## Groom Hints

If the wedding is formal, what do I wear?

In the daytime, a cutaway coat and striped trousers. However, in some contemporary weddings the groom will wear a white tailcoat, but traditionalists hold out for the gray cutaway.

For a contemporary evening formal ceremony, the groom may wear a black or white full dress (tailcoat), while the traditionalist will wear the classic white tie and tails.

manageable proportions.

Communication is useful not only when conflict arises but also for positive experience. It should not be neglected as a way to promote growth and enhancement. Communication can be used to express positive qualities in the spouse. We all like to hear good things about ourselves and hear appreciation for the hundreds of little things we do, but we frequently forget to express this appreciation for the things we like about others, to them. Through communication you can share your own goals and desires for yourself or for your marriage, family or career. You can share your feelings and how you're growing and changing.

In turn, you might want to share how you would like your marriage to be changing so as to enhance growth as a couple. In this way you keep your marriage alive and growing.

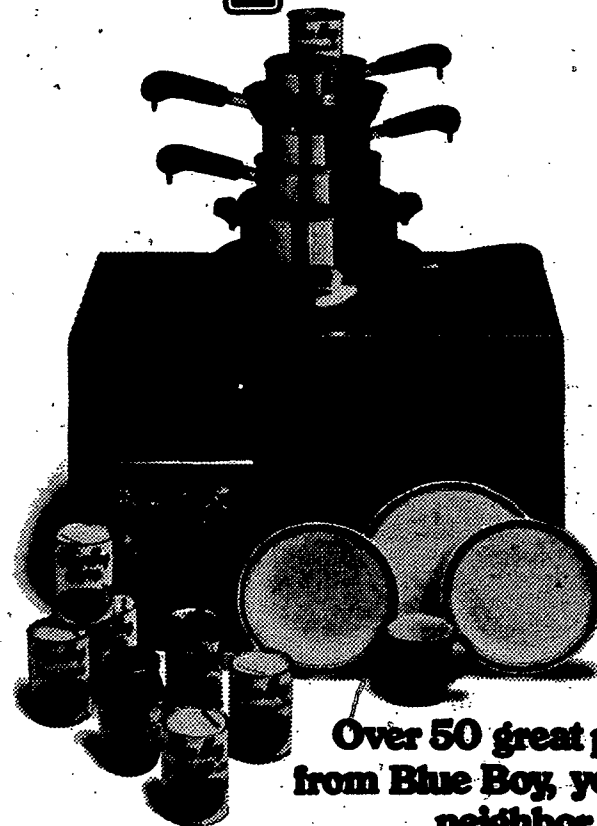
Before marriage is a good time to evaluate your level of communication as a couple. How have you felt when discussing areas of conflict? Do you as a couple tend to focus only on negative issues? Does one person always initiate communication? Do you feel comfortable talking about sexuality, occupation, recreation, friends, child-rearing, size of family, finances, division of household responsibilities,

**"We all like to hear good things about ourselves and hear appreciation for the hundreds of little things we do, but we frequently forget to express this appreciation for the things we like about others, to them."**

religion and spirituality? Do you know your future spouse's expectations in these areas? If not, why? Some reflection on these questions will give you an estimate of how well you two com-

municate and may pinpoint areas needing attention. Developing good interspouse communication will enhance your relationship and help to keep it a rewarding experience throughout the coming years.

## Enter Blue Boy's Home Cookin' Sweepstakes



Over 50 great prizes from Blue Boy, your good neighbor.

- Grand prize: Litton Meal-in-One® microwave oven
- 5 second prizes: 13-piece set of Revere Ware® copper clad cookware
- 15 third prizes: 16-piece set of Corelle® dinnerware by Corning
- 30 fourth prizes: Gift carton (12 assorted cans) of Blue Boy canned vegetables

Enjoy Blue Boy vegetables, in cans with the white plate lining that helps preserve garden-freshness and flavor. Your good taste in vegetables could win you a great prize for your kitchen.

**Blue Boy**

Curice-Burns, Inc. Coast to coast with regional brands.

### Here's all you have to do to enter:

Mail this coupon and one label from a can of Blue Boy vegetables or the name "Blue Boy" on a 3 1/2" x 5" card to:

**Blue Boy Sweepstakes**  
**P.O. Box 22854**  
**Rochester, New York 14692**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ (Please Print)  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_  
 State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone No. (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Area Code \_\_\_\_\_

Winners will be notified by mail. Entries must be postmarked no later than March 31, 1982. No purchase necessary. Offer good in certain states only. Please read official rules for further qualifications and information.

- Official Rules**
- Winners will be selected by random drawings from all entries received. All prizes will be awarded. Only one prize to a family.
  - The Grand Prize: A Litton 1550 microwave oven (1.5 cubic foot capacity).
  - 5 second prizes: 13-piece set of Revere Ware® copper clad cookware.
  - 15 third prizes: 16-piece set of Corelle® Dimension IV microwave-safe dinnerware by Corning in "Cinnamon".
  - 30 fourth prizes: Gift carton (12 assorted cans) of Blue Boy canned vegetables.
  - No purchase is required. Each entry must be accompanied by a label from any can of Blue Boy vegetables or a 3 1/2" x 5" card on which you have printed the name "Blue Boy."
  - All prizes will be awarded. Enter as often as you wish, but each entry must be mailed separately and accompanied by an official entry label. No facsimiles will be accepted. Send entries to Blue Boy Sweepstakes, P.O. Box 22854, Rochester, New York 14692.
  - Entries must be postmarked no later than March 31, 1982. Winners will be notified by mail by April 30, 1982. After notification, please allow 8 weeks for delivery of prizes.
  - This sweepstakes is not open to employees of C.B. Foods, Curice-Burns, Inc., their affiliates and advertising agencies, or persons under 18 years old. Offer good only in the following states: NY, Pa., Va., Mass., N.H., Conn., Me., N.J., Ohio. Void where prohibited.
  - No cash substitutes or exchanges. Winners may be asked to provide an affidavit of release and eligibility including Social Security number. Sweepstakes subject to all federal, state and local laws and void in states where prohibited by law.
  - For the names and addresses of winners, send a stamped self-addressed envelope to: Winners, Blue Boy Sweepstakes, P.O. Box 22854, Rochester, New York 14692.
  - Chances of winning dependent upon number of entries.

## Roy

When th  
of Engla  
Diana Spe  
wedding—  
almost e  
western w  
television s

The  
wedding  
and David  
wrapped i  
nuptials.

Withi  
ceremony  
manufact  
of being a  
adaptation  
brides-to-l  
copies?

Accord  
buyers  
manufact  
of the La  
said.

It's not  
royal w  
affected t  
for the  
worn by  
she marri  
Monaco f

Harold  
curator  
Blum De  
the Fas  
Technolo  
thinks- th  
gown sty  
court dre  
province

"Take  
wedding  
Until the  
century,  
weren't  
were m  
occasion