

Anna:

Enough
Talk:
L
oving
Without
Saying a
Word.
This is
Stay
Happily
Married
with
episode
#238.

Announcer:

Welcom
e to Stay
Happily
Married,
your
source
for
weekly
updates
on the
latest
tips and
advice to
build a
happy
and
healthy
marriage
.

Anna:

I'm Anna
Riley

and I'm
your host
today.
Welcome
to the
show.
We've
all heard
the age
old
saying,
but do
actions
really
speak
louder
than
words?
For
couples
dealing
with
relationships
problems
, in many
ways,
actions
do speak
louder
than
words.
Partners
often
want
more
attention
and
affection

from
each
other and
a lack of
such can
make
them feel
misunder
stood or
neglecte
d. Many
couples
will
argue
about the
little
things
because
they
don't
know
how to
commun
icate the
deeper
issues.

When it
comes to
the
verbal
side of
things,
some
couples
get
caught
up on
what

they intended to say and the words they used rather than understanding the impact of their non-verbal cues like body language and tone of voice and their actions. Though frustration finds a way to creep in in these situations, our guest today, Dr. Susan Orenstein, says there is a way to quell it.

As a
license
psycholo
gist and
the
Director
of
Orenstei
n
Solution
s, Susan
sees a
wide
variety
of these
commun
ication
problems
, and
strives to
help
couples
improve
their
relations
hip
beyond
words.
Welcom
e to the
show,
Susan.
I'm so
glad you
could
join us
today.

Dr. Orenstein:

It's a
pleasure.
Thank
you.

Anna:

D
efinitely.
All right,
when we
think
about
commun
ication,
or when
people
think
about
commun
ication,
they
generally
think
about
talking
back and
forth, but
is that it
or is
there
another
way to
commun
icate
with
each
other,
that
couples

don't
necessari
ly
consider
?

Dr. Orenstein:

That's
definitel
y not it.
We are
commun
icating
all the
time, and
so much
of our
commun
ication is
nonverba
l. Think
about the
family
dog and
what,
like, if I
think
about my
dog and
the bond
that I
have and
all my
family
members
have
with the
dog
without
any

words
spoken
at all.

Anna:

Very
true.
Yeah.

Dr. Orenstein:

And I
actually,
I'm
sorry, I
actually
had a
couple
that it
was
really
fascinati
ng, the
gentlema
n was
from
Japan
and the
woman
was from
Germany
and what
was
interestin
g is there
was a
really
huge
language
barrier,
and it
was so

clear to
them that
they
knew
they
didn't
speak the
same
language
, so they
were so
careful
with
each
other and
they
were so
warm
and so
tender
and they
would
check
things
out.
They had
an
absolutel
y
fantastic
relations
hip.

Anna:

Right,
and so
obviousl
y they
wouldn't
be

talking
to each
other
with
words
that
much, if
there's
that
barrier
there.

Dr. Orenstein:

Correct.

Anna:

Right.
So let's
talk a
little bit
about
what a
couple
can do.
What are
some of
the most
crucial
ways
couples
can
communi-
cate and
be
connecte
d
without
talking?

Dr. Orenstein:

Okay.
First of

all, they can be really aware of the non-verbal's. What I mean by non-verbal's is the tone of our voice, nonverbal cues, like if we have our arms crossed and our face scrunched up, or if we have a relaxed facial expression.

Anna:

Right.

Dr. Orenstein:

That's huge. And I think everybody knows

these things when they see it, but they may not be able to articulate it. So if we're talking and somebody rolls their eyes or sighs, right away we know that that person is disrespecting us and it just feels awful.

Anna:

Right, right.

Dr. Orenstein:

So couples can be more, become more aware of

how they
are
represent
ing
themselv
es in
their
non-
verbal's.

Anna:

Right.
So then,
if there's,
so you
kind of
mentione
d the eye
rolling
which
seems
like that
would
maybe,
potential
ly build
up some
hostility
and
negativit
y, so
what
happens
to the
foundati
on of a
relations
hip or a
marriage
when

there's
this
buildup
of
negative
communi-
cation
and all
the
hostility,
and stuff
like eye
rolling?

Dr. Orenstein:

Well, I
think if a
couple's
lucky
and
smart
enough
to
recogniz-
e that
they
have
these
difficulti-
es they
will,
they'll
come to
my
office
and they
can get
help, and
that's the
great

news.
Now, if
they
keep
these
patterns
going
where
there's
the
disrespec
t and the
tension
and it's
uncheck
ed, then
they're
just
looking
for,
really,
lots of
misery.

Anna:

Right.
So, I
guess it
would be
really
importan
t then for
these
couples
to learn
the right
ways to
commun
icate
with

each
other
without
using
aggressi
on or
hostility
or in a
way
being
obnoxio
us.

Dr. Orenstein:

Right.
And
there's a
big
differenc
e
between
feeling
frustratio
n and
anger
and how
you
express
it. There
are
actually
lots of
really
healthy
ways to
express
your
frustratio
n and it's
really the

duty of each partner in the couple to have a way to bring up a request, file a complaint in a direct way. The problem is when it's brought out and it's communicated in these hostile ways that things just go amiss.

Anna:

Yeah. So if you're talking in a hostile way, I guess, what

could be more the issue is not necessarily what you're saying, but then, how you're saying it. So, why is it that the way we say things often means way more than what we actually say?

Dr. Orenstein:

That's a great question. My guess is, you know, I have to guess, probably somewhere within

our
evolutio
nary past
that
animals
could see
us
gritting
our teeth
more
than
understa
nding
words. I
don't
really
know the
answer
to that,
but that's
a great
question.
The
other
thing is
sometim
es
couples
commun
icate and
there's
not the
hostility.
There is
not the
non-
verbal's.
They're
just

having a conversation, but it keeps going on for hours and hours. So that's another example where the talking actually backfires

I have a couple, they came in and they were describing the way they would try to settle their disagreements. They would have these marathons

conversations,
where
they
would
stay up
until 2 or
3 in the
morning,
they'd
each be
repeating
themselves,
and I
would
think
they'd be
completely
exhausted.
I
would
be. But
then
before
you
know it,
you
know,
another
week or
two
would go
around
and then
they'd
have
round
two and

round
three and
they'd
keep
recycling
the same
conversa
tion and
not get
anywher
e. That's
an
example
where
that
could
just be
too much
talk and
they
really
need to
commun
icate in a
different
way.

Anna:

Yeah. So
if these
couples
continue
to, you
know,
people,
like you
said,
they get
in these
maratho

n talks
and they
are just
going on
and on
and it
seems
like it's
never
ending,
and like
you said,
they're
repeating
themselv
es, and
it's
almost
like each
partner
kind of
puts up a
barrier or
a
blockade
to the
other and
they just
want to
get out
what
they
want to
say and
not
necessari
ly listen
to what
the other

person is
saying,
so in that
sense
you're
saying
it's
definitel
y smarter
and it
would be
more
beneficia
l for
them to
learn
how to
commun
icate in a
different
way.
And so
I'm kind
of
curious
as to
when
those
kind of,
when
talking
isn't
working,
what
would
you
suggest
from that
point?

Dr. Orenstein:

I think you hit the nail on the head. I have people come in my office and we actually do talk, but we talk in a different way and I create different conditions in my office than the couples would have in their home. So while they're talking, I'm coaching them on their non-verbal's. If I see

that one
partner
or the
other is
repeating
themselves I let
them
know
"You're
repeating
yourself.
What is
it that
you're
trying to
communicate?"
The
other
thing,
the other
reason
actually,
sometimes people
repeat
themselves and
recycle
things is
because
they
want to
make
sure
they're
understood.

Anna:

Right.

Dr. Orenstein:

And their partner is not showing that they understand because, A, they don't have good listening skills. Maybe they really do understand but they're not able to express that; or, B, they agree to things they don't really mean all the time. So one person will say

"Look,
when
you go
out at
night
with
your
friends
and
you're
going to
the bar if
it's going
to be
after 11
o'clock
please
tell me
what
time
you're
coming
home"
and that
partner
goes
"Sure"
and then
on the
way out
the one
partner
says
"Okay,
remembe
r to call
me" and
they'll go
"Okay,

fine" and
then they
don't call
or they
don't
pick up
their
phone or
the texts.
That
could be
why
people
are
repeating
these
conversa
tions
because
people
might be
agreeing
to
somethin
g with
their
words,
but then
with
their
actions
they're
doing
somethin
g quite
different.

Anna:

Right.
So

there's
that, like
I said,
that age
old
saying
that
actions
speak
louder
than
words. I
think
that that
is very,
very
true. It
seems
like
someone
would, I
mean,
there
would be
problems
within a
relations
hip if
you're
used to
your
partner
saying
somethin
g and if
they
never
follow
through,

then
eventually you're
just
going to
give up
on
believing
them or
trusting
what
they say
and so
that can
obviously
create
a lot of
problems
.

Dr. Orenstein:

That's
right,
and
perhaps
in the
meantime,
from
developing
that
trust,
sometimes
people's
strategy
will be
to nag or
to repeat
themselves
and

that
doesn't
work.

Anna:

Right.
But there
is that, I
think,
you
know,
for them,
like you
said,
they
want to
be
understo
od and
that is
importan
t. I think
it is
importan
t in a
relations
hip to be
understo
od and
everyone
wants to
be
understo
od and
have that
validatio
n, but I
guess if
they're
not

getting
their
point
across
one way
then they
need to
start
trying
something
different.

Dr. Orenstein:

You
know, I
think one
tip I give
people is
if you've
said
something
once
and
you're
sure your
partner
isn't hard
of
hearing,
because
actually,
believe it
or not,
sometimes
we
say
something
and the
person

literally
doesn't
hear us.
They're
in the
other
room-

Anna:

Right.
Yeah.

Dr. Orenstein:

Or on a
cell
phone
and we
lose,
we've
seen all
those
commerc
ials
where
you lose
the gist
of it. But
if you're
clear that
they
actually
physicall
y heard
what you
said and
you've
said it
more
than
once
then you

have to
take a
good
look at
yourself
and say
"Okay,
I'm
repeating
myself. I
need to
have a
different
way to
express
this."

Anna:

Does it
also
involve
maybe,
on the
other
partner's
part,
would it
involve
them
learning
how to
understa
nd your
way of
commun
icating
better?
Or where
does that
kind of

go? If
you do
need to
get a
point
across
and the
way
you've
tried to
do that
before
doesn't
work,
what do
you say
to those
kind of
couples?
Like,
where do
you go
from
there?

Dr. Orenstein:

Okay.
Well, I
think
there are
two parts
to your
question.
One, that
I'm
going to
respond
to first is
if you're
the

partner
of the
partner
who's
repeating
themselves
or
nagging,
I think
that
could be
a clue to
you
"Hey,
my
partner
doesn't
feel
understood.
They're
not
getting
their
needs
met.
Perhaps
I'm
agreeing
to
something
that I
didn't
realize or
there's
some
misunderstanding.
" And

that happens all the time with couples. People will use abstract language, they'll come up with agreements that are really vague, and people just honestly have a communication. So if you're on the other side of a partner who keeps repeating themselves you have to ding, ding, ding realize

"Hey,
maybe
I'm
really
not
getting it
and I
need to
slow
things
down
and
understa
nd." And
then I
think
part two
to your
question
is "What
can
couples
do if
they
keep
having
these
conversa
tions and
they're
not
getting
anywher
e?" And
what I
recomme
nd, what
I love to
do, is my

profession is see couples in my practice and help them to be able to take a different perspective and to stop doing things that aren't working.

Anna:

Right.
Go in a different direction
.

Dr. Orenstein:

Right.
And one thing I tell couple is if you look at an optical illusion, there's a famous optical illusion

probably
most
people
are
familiar
with, it's
a picture
of an old
lady, and
then
there's a
beautiful
, young
woman
in there
and you
can only
see one
at a time.

Anna:

Right.
Yep.
Yep.

Dr. Orenstein:

That's
exactly
what it
feels to
me, like
each
partner
in the
relations
hip feels
like, like
they
complete
ly can
see their

image,
their
perspecti
ve, and
they just
can't
switch,
but
fortunate
ly with
experien
ce and
with my
being
able to
sit back
a little
bit I can
see both
at the
same
time and
I can be
able to
show
them that
image of
both
people's
perspecti
ves at
the same
time.

Anna:

Which
is, that's
good,
they
probably

need to
see that
kind of
thing and
hear that.
So, do
you
think
that
when we
get,
when
people
are in
these
relations
hips that
have
commun
ications
problems
, do you
think
that
certain
partners
sometim
es feel
helpless
or sort of
like
they're
victims
if they're
one
partner
that
maybe
they feel

like "Oh,
I always
try so
hard to
get my
point
across
and I just
never
can get
my point
across"
and so
they kind
of take
on that
victim
role.

Dr. Orenstein:

And
Anna, I
think,
bingo, I
see that
so often
that
people
feel like
they're
being
bullied,
they're
being
mistreated,
and
that
they're
the
victim

and
unfortun
ately
partners
can start
to see
each
other as
the
enemy
and
that's
really
sad
because
then
there's a
kind of
natural
defensiv
eness
that
takes
place
and
people
can't
really be
in the
moment
and trust
each
other any
more.

Anna:

Right.
Exactly.
So what
can these

couples
do
differentl
y to feel
less
helpless
or one
partner
in
particula
r to feel
less like
they're a
victim?

Dr. Orenstein:

One
thing
couples
can
focus on
to get
out of
the
maratho
n
sessions
and the
repetitio
n of the
conversa
tions is
just
focusing
on their
behavior
s and we
call,
there's
lots of

different
concepts
in
couples
counseli
ng that
your
listeners
might
have
heard of.
There's,
John
Gotman
calls it
the
"Emotio
nal Bank
Account
" and
Chapma
n calls it
the
"Love
Languag
es."

Anna:

Right,
right.

Dr. Orenstein:

What we
can
focus on
is how
can we
show
caring
behavior
s? How

can we
reach out
to our
partner
and
enjoy a
walk
together,
enjoy a
meal
together,
ask them
how
their day
is, watch
a funny
TV
show?
That
really
helps
with the
bond as
well.

Anna:

For sure.
So if
we're
going
back to
talking
about
your
words
versus
your
actions
or how
they

coincide
and go
together
and then
the
follow
through
with
your
words,
how
critical
would
you say
it is for
partners
to be
congruen
t with
what
they say
and what
they do?
And kind
of like,
I'm
thinking
of a
situation,
some
people
might
think
that if
someone
says
"Okay
yeah,
honey,

I'll take
out the
trash this
morning
" and
then they
don't do
it.
Somethi
ng as
small as
that, or
when it
gets to
be
somethin
g larger,
like say
someone
cheated
and then
they say
"I won't
cheat
again"
but then
they do
cheat
again, is
there a
big
differenc
e
between
those
two kind
of
situation
s or

would
you say
that in
general
it's just
across
the
board,
whether
it's a
small
issue or
whether
it's a
very
large
issue, it
is really,
really
important
to do
what you
say and
say what
you do.

Dr. Orenstein:

I think
it's
essential.
At the
same
time
we're all
human. I
could
say I'm
going to
take out
the trash

and
forget.
There
are little
things
like that
where
we're all
human,
but
obviousl
y, I think
if it's a
pattern
where
you say
things
that you
don't
mean or
you
actually
mislead
somebod
y, there's
deceit,
you hide
informati
on, that's
so, so
hurtful
and for
some
partners
they
actually
feel like
they've
had a

trauma
when
they
discover
that their
partner
has been
betrayin
g them.
It could
be an
affair, it
could be
lying
about
spending
money,
it could
be all
kinds of
things. I
think the
essence
of trust
is
keeping
your
word and
I tell
couples
"You
have to
be really
careful,
if you
don't
agree to
things, if
you

really
haven't
thought
about it
and you
don't
mean it."
So that's
so
crucial.

Anna:

Right.
Yeah.
And then
I see,
you
know, I
can see
something
happening
in a
relationship,
like
with the
actions
and the
words, if
one
partner
continuously,
like
you were
talking
about a
pattern,
like if
one
partner is

in this
pattern
of not
followin
g
through
with
what
they say
then it
seems
like
maybe
the
words
that they
say or
their
apologie
s or
whatever
it may
be, all
those
things,
they start
to lose
meaning
in a
sense.

Dr. Orenstein:

That's
right.
And I
think the
person
on the
other end
of the

failed
agreement feels
duped.
So if you
think
about
Charlie
Brown
and Lucy
and the
football
and Lucy
says
"Come
kick it"
and then
Charlie
Brown
says
"Okay,
I'm
going to
do it
again"
and then
"Ahhh!"

Anna:

Right.

Dr. Orenstein:

I've seen
people
go
through
that and
I
remember
seeing
one

woman
and she
went
through
the loss
of her
mother
and her
husband
hadn't
been so
dutiful
but right
around
that time
he said
"Look, I
really
care
about
you, I'm
going to
be
there."
So she
built up
her
hopes
that he
was
going to
be there
during
that
rough
time and
then she
would
try to

call him
and he
wouldn't
answer
his
phone.
He
wouldn't
return
his texts.
So it's
actually
more
painful
for
somebod
y to be
promised
somethin
g and not
get it. It's
just
much
better
not to
agree to
somethin
g when
you can't
keep that
commit
ment.

Anna:

Exactly.

Dr. Orenstein:

It's
counter-
intuitive
for some

people,
but when
they
come to
couples
counseli
ng and
they can
be
honest
and say
"You
know
what?
The next
few
months I
am going
to be
working
60, 80
hours a
week
and I
can't go
out to
dinner
with
your
friends"
that's
just
actually
a lot
better
than
when
they're
saying

"Sure,
I'll go
out" and
then it's
9 o'clock
and you
can't
reach
them on
the
phone
and they
come
late. So I
think
just
getting
all your
cards on
the table
and
being
honest
with
yourself
and your
partner
about
what
you're
willing
to agree
on and
not agree
on can
make
things go
so much
smoother

in a
relations
hip.

Anna:

Right.
Yeah.
And
even
with
these
couples
having
issues or
if people
have
these
problems
in their
marriage
and they
seem
like they
can be
pretty
daunting
to fix or
correct,
but it
seems
like
through
what
we've
talked
about
and
stuff,
there is a
way to

fix this,
and there
is help
and
there's
resource
s for
couples
who are
dealing
with
these
kind of
issues.

Dr. Orenstein:

There
sure is.
We have
the
technolo
gy.
We're
really
fortunate
to know
what
works
and
helps
people.
We can
give
them
tools to
be able
to create
a more
loving
relations

hip. So that's the really good news.

Anna:

That is great news, great news.

Dr. Orenstein:

And I do not have any marathons sessions. I can't do them myself, so we pace ourselves and we talk about things in little pieces and manageable steps.

Anna:

Yeah. No, that just gets exhausting.

You're like "I don't want to talk anymore" pretty much.

Dr. Orenstein: I can't do it; right.

Anna: Yeah.
Nope.
Nope.
All right Susan.
Well, is there anything else that we should know?

Dr. Orenstein: I think what I would like to share is that we're all vulnerable and we're all human. We can all do stupid

things.
We can
all say
mean
and
hurtful
things.
The
good
news is
we can
be
imperfec
t. Our
partner
can be
imperfec
t. If we
can learn
to
understa
nd each
other and
forgive
ourselfe
s and
forgive
our
partners,
we can
create a
really
beautiful
thing in
a
relations
hip. You
don't
have to

be
beautiful
or
talented
or
brilliant.
You
certainly
don't
have to
be
perfect.
You just
have to
be there.

Anna:

Right,
and
committ
ed to it.

Dr. Orenstein:

A
bsolutely
.

Anna:

Susan,
thank
you so
much for
talking
with us
and
being on
the show
today.

Dr. Orenstein:

It was a
pleasure

Anna.
Thank
you.

Anna:

To find
out more
about
Susan
and her
practice,
Orenstei
n
Solution
s, you
can visit
their
website
at
[www.ore
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an
appoint
ment.
Thank
you so

much for
joining
us today,
and I
hope
you'll
join us
again
next
week.

For more
informati
on about
this
show
and
future
episodes,
visit us
at
stayhapp
ilymarrie
d.com.

I'm Anna
Riley.
Until
next
time,
Stay
Happily
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Announcer:

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you for
joining
us today
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