

Why Are You Talking?



JOE FERGUSON, PhD

PhD Clinical Psychology, Fielding University
MBA, Wharton School of Business

People talk for a wide variety of reasons. It is important to recognize the motive behind each episode of talking if you want to understand what you and your partner are actually saying to each other. It is conventional and polite to assume that talking is always part of a rational discussion, intended to explore some situation or idea and to facilitate new insights; but this is rarely the case. On the contrary, most human talking is intended a) to persuade someone about something for practical personal reasons, b) to make claims and assertions about one's own personality, character, capabilities or identity, c) to assert dominance or acknowledge subordination in personal, social or professional relationships or d) to establish and maintain a sense of immediate human attachment.

The differences among these motives for human talking are dramatic, and every conversation must be interpreted in the appropriate light if it is to be properly understood. When your partner is making identity statements, you will miss the point if you try to debate or interrogate her rather than listening to what she is trying to tell you about herself and her world. When your partner is trying to get something from you without asking for it directly, he will appreciate it if you recognize that and respond without making him grovel. When your partner is simply trying to connect with you it is futile, counterproductive and potentially paranoid to look for any deeper meaning in that when you should just enjoy the attachment! In every case it is important to know why each of you is talking. If you don't know why you are talking, or why your partner is talking, you are likely to respond in exactly the wrong way. You probably know this already, so it shouldn't be so hard to correct. It's worth the effort. Trust me. Call me.

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332 Forest Avenue, Suite #17, Laguna Beach, CA 92651
(949) 235-2615 ~ DrJoe@Fergi.com ~ www.Fergi.com