

Communication: Elihu's Opinion

Job 32:6 “And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said, I am young, and ye are very old; wherefore I was afraid, and durst not shew you mine opinion.”

Job 32:10 “Therefore I said, Hearken to me; I also will shew mine opinion.”

Job 32:17 “I said, I will answer also my part, I also will shew mine opinion.”

Communication is one of the most important parts to any relationship including marriage. In fact, many couples list “communication” as one of the biggest issues in their marriage (lack of communication, miscommunication, breakdown in communication, etc...). In the book of Job, we can see this “communication” issue as well.

As the reader may be aware, Job went through some horrific trials in quick succession nearly losing everything. These struggles are listed in what I call the “Prologue” of the book. Job ends with an “Epilogue” that reveals how God blessed Job with double what he started with.

The majority of the book of Job, though, is often forgotten. This middle section is what I call the “Dialogue”. In the “Dialogue”, Job's wife speaks, Job speaks, Job's three friends reply negatively to Job, Job and his friends argue, and finally God speaks.

In the midst of all of this, a young man, Elihu, suddenly and briefly appears in the conversation. In masterful fashion, Elihu addresses both Job and his three friends' arguments. What has always amazed me, though, is Elihu's communication etiquette. **Elihu's kind and skilled communication leaves Job and his three friends speechless.** (Job 32:15 “They were amazed, they answered no more: they left off speaking.”)

One important practice of good communication which we see in Elihu is how to present your side of an issue. **Too often conversations breakdown into arguments because someone presents their side as “my way or the highway”.** Elihu, though, clearly and constantly stated his side of the story as “mine opinion”; 3 times in fact.

If you want your marriage to succeed, you must learn to communicate your views as “your opinion”, “this is my viewpoint”; “the way I see it”, etc... Your opinion may actually be fact, or you could be truly mistaken. **Taking the more humble approach of “mine opinion” leaves the door wide open for calm, open, humble communication between you and your spouse.** The moment you start stressing “my point is fact; yours is not”; “I know more than you”; “you don't know what you're talking about”, etc..., you are going to have a breakdown in communication.

So, if you want to have a strong marriage (or any relationship), you need to follow Elihu's example of “mine opinion”.