



Do you ever get overwhelmed by routine and problems, speak almost automatically or on autopilot with your spouse or children, or also live in *whatsapp* groups, neglecting those next to you?

If the answer is yes, we offer you below a “Decalogue,” to improve your communication with your family members, made up of suggestions to maintain or “turn up” the communication within the walls of your home.

When we communicate, we take part in sharing with others what we think, what we have, and last but not least, who we are.

The family, a place of self-giving and mutual acceptance, must be a privileged context for the realization of authentic communication. Yet, often, the problems of daily life lead us to overlook relationships with those we love most.

How to revive, then, a communication that is numb or lacking? Here are 10 quick tips.

### **1) Use technology well**

The modern means of communication are great resources for the family, because they allow us to easily keep in touch: this guides us in the planning of daily activities and helps us to manage communication at a distance.

Be aware, however, and try not to replace face-to-face communication with these modes and not to lose ourselves in chats that have the power to destroy self-esteem and create anxiety... An example? The vortexes of the groups with other parents... If we do not keep the situation under control, our mental health may be affected!

### **2) Cultivate dialogue between the couple**

When one becomes a parent, one understands truly how much energy it takes to raise children. Taken over by controlling the children, we risk setting aside the relationship of the couple. This, however, is counterproductive, both for spouses and for children.

Let us remember that first of all, children need a peaceful environment, of two united parents, who love each other.

Communicate with each other! Do not be afraid to delegate, sometimes, and ask for help in order to spend some time together.

### **3) Don't leave issues unresolved**

If there is something unresolved, leave aside the rest (only as much that is possible, of course: the family must eat and the children must be taken to school) and tackle the problem. Better an extra stain on the floor, than a knot untangled in a relationship...

### **4) Use kind words**

Stress and worry sometimes cause us to raise our voices, to say things rudely, to treat each other with arrogance..

The family is a "machine" that generates patience, but at times the gear gets jammed. Raising one's tone of voice is human, it can happen, especially when the day begins badly and ends worse. We do not lie down, however... we always try to apologize and start anew.

We must also remember that children are inspired by the communication of parents. We educate ourselves about kindness to educate and send them in the same direction.

### **5) Be masters of sharing**

The routine can, at times, lead us to speak only about practical matters (Did you throw out the garbage? Did you talk to the accountant? Did you get the bread?). Let us remember, however, that there is a need for genuine sharing in the family. Talk about what that which overwhelms you, tell stories, jokes...relax together. The family is not composed of isolated planets... Talking, whether a lot or a little, strengthens relationships.

### **6) Use irony even in difficulties**

When something unexpected happens, which upsets our plans (a breakdown, forgetfulness, a scary bill to envy the Lochness monster), the first reaction we have is often to get angry and to dump our stress onto other family members. We have certain long faces, sometimes, that seem to have come straight out of Munch's "The Scream"... Let's learn to not dramatize. Let us remember that problems which does not kill us makes us stronger, and that everything that happens to us will enrich our family history in some way and render us more united ... Let's learn to laugh about the unexpected!

### **7) Hug each other: it isn't just verbal communication that exists**

Did you know that hugs are natural antidepressants, which offer serenity and balance? Try it to believe it! Not everything is resolved with words.

### **8) Remember to say "thank you"**

Pope Francis never tires of repeating how important it is to ask forgiveness and say "thank you" in the family. How could you take him wrong? Receiving gratitude helps us to bring out the best in us. If we are grateful to someone, we should say it to him: nobody can read minds (only women, maybe, are able to, sometimes, but some things can escape them too).

We should never take for granted the good that comes to happen to us. Let's not forget to explicitly thank our families for their help, even if it is only a matter of finding a table set when returning from the supermarket...

### **9) Share even your weaknesses**

How many times, out of pride, embarrassment, or fear... do we wear masks? How often do we try to hide our weaknesses and our sadness? The family, however, must be the first place of acceptance and transparency must prevail. Let's open up and allow our loved ones to open themselves up... a burden brought in two, three, four, halves... as many times as those who share it!

### **10) Know how to say no when needed**

Not everything benefits us and our children. It seems a taken from granted statement, yet often we let ourselves get carried away with the actions, moods, and choices of others.

Let us learn to say no, to correct each other, to choose what is good and what is not for our family. A "no" said with love is better than a "yes" called out of laziness.

And you, do you have any "rules" to add? Write it in the comments. This Decalogue can certainly be enriched by your experiences... Once personalized, why not hang it up in a visible place in the house?