

## CENTERPOINT

For the last few months, we have been exploring effective communication when a loved one has failed to meet a need using the following example: You and your spouse have plans to go to a movie at 7pm. Your spouse arrives home at 6:59 and when you get to the theatre not only has the movie started but it has also sold out! The first step is to state the facts, then to express your feelings and then to state your needs (or unmet needs). You could say something as simple as: "When you got home at 6:59, I felt both disappointed and angry. I was needing some companionship and fun. I also have a need to feel respected."

The last step is to let your partner know how to meet your need. It helps to be as specific as possible but it's important to realize there is always more than one way to get a need met. Instead of saying "don't you ever do that to me again", it would be more effective to state what you want. "I would really like it if you would get home 15 minutes before the start time of any movie we are planning to see." This is a clear solution that your partner can understand and agree to OR not agree to.

To recap: 1) state only the facts of the situation and then your feelings, 2) state what your need is (was), 3) be clear in stating how your need could be met. This way of communication can be used in most any situation not just with couples. Give it a try!

To contact the Presbyterian Counseling Center call: 910-452-7370 or visit us at [presbyteriancounselingcenter.org](http://presbyteriancounselingcenter.org).

-Catherine Butler