

# Tone and Timing

**How** you say something and **when** you say something can greatly determine how it is received by your spouse. Patterns of poor tone and/or timing develop when the emotional connection between the two of you has broken down.

Your tone is directly controlled by one person. **YOU**. You have the ability to choose to be negative or positive.

Below is a list of words that can negatively describe one's tone of voice. As you read through the list think of the tone that you bring to your marriage conversations. Need definitions for each of these words? [Check out this link here.](#)

Accusatory	Apathetic	Bitter
Callous	Condescending	Critical
Disdainful	Gloomy	Haughty
Indignant	Mocking	Patronizing
Pessimistic	Ridiculing	Sarcastic

1. Which negative tone of voice do you tend **to use** in your marriage?

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2. What is your spouse's reaction to that tone of voice?

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3. Which negative tone of voice do you **hear** most often from your spouse?

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4. What is your reaction to that tone of voice?

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5. Looking at the positive tones in the list below which of these would **you** like to incorporate?

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Contemplative	Encouraging	Intimate
Jovial	Optimistic	Sincere

6. What do you need to change in your mindset to be able to use the more positive tones of voice?

I need to focus on \_\_\_\_\_

I need to remember \_\_\_\_\_

*Good timing is invisible. Bad timing sticks out a mile.*

*~Tony Corinda*

You've all been there.

- The conversation that starts right as one of you walks in the door at the end of the day.
- The talk late at night when both of you are tired.
- The attempt at conversation when the kids are screaming.
- The talk in the middle of the day in between appointments/meetings/or running errands.

There are times when it's easy to have a conversation and times when all talk seems to lead to an argument.

1. When do you find that you have most of your arguments or fights?  
Describing the circumstances will help you to identify the pattern.

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2. How do you feel when faced with the prospect of talking at these times?

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3. How have you asked for space or time in the past?

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4. What has been your spouse's response to that?

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Not every topic has to be addressed immediately. Let's put together a game plan for better timing in your marriage.

1. Identify if this is a topic that is an emergency or not. Emergency means you need to make a decision or have a response within a very short period of time.
2. If it is an emergency or something that needs a rapid response let your spouse know that upfront.
3. If it's not, ask your spouse when is a good time to talk.
4. When you are asked for a time to talk, provide an answer. Saying I don't want to talk about this does NOT foster emotional intimacy nor does it resolve the situation.
5. As you both know what the topic is going to be come to the conversation with your thoughts written down. This will help you to have better control of your tone.
6. Agree on how long you are going to discuss the matter (just like you would a business meeting).
7. Understand that not every conversation is going to have an immediate resolution.
8. Keep the list of positive tones of voice available to both of you.