

## Walking the Talk

*A new person joined our walking group, and all he does is complain and tell these horrible stories. I try to change the subject, but he just talks over me and everyone else and goes on and on. I don't want to leave the group, but I dread having to listen to him. What can I do?*

The wisdom of life has presented you with an important opportunity to practice genuine communication. I say *practice* because engaging in potentially uncomfortable and honest conversation is an area where all of us could improve our skills. Courageous communicators are much needed game changers. You can do this!

But first, take time for silent stillness. Begin by asking Universal Wisdom for deeper self-understanding. As it is written in Proverbs, "Wisdom is the principle thing; therefore, with all thy getting get understanding." What within *you* is being triggered by your new walking partner? Criticism, judgment, frustration or fear? When you connect through meditation and prayer with the peaceful presence of all knowing, even just for a second, you can come back into any situation with a new perspective.

Psychotherapist Diane Barth says that in the course of her work as a therapist, she has found many nonstop talkers use their words to stop themselves from knowing what they are feeling. This pattern can also be rooted in insecurity and a need to be in control, or it may stem from a simple lack of awareness.

I encourage you to bravely consider a whole new approach. On your next walk ask him questions, even if you must interrupt to do so. Then *listen* with authentic curiosity. Stay present, and you will know when to ask if you can share something with him.

Consider starting by saying, "This is a little uncomfortable for me, but ...," then tell the truth. Engaging in this new way may feel awkward at first. Do it anyway. The most difficult communications can lead to significant breakthroughs and blessings for all involved. Be that portal of new possibilities. Pray for fresh eyes to see, new ears to hear and the faith to walk your talk in love. ❀



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