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Do you feel unheard, unseen, or misunderstood by your spouse? It's common for people to feel as though their spouses don't fully

understand where they're coming from—or even hear what they're trying to say at all. The good news is, you're not alone and, it's possible to solve this problem.

STEP 1. TELL YOUR SPOUSE HOW YOU'RE FEELING

If you haven't already tried to broach the subject with your spouse, now might be the time to try. We recommend approaching your husband or wife when you're feeling as calm and steady as possible. An angry outburst in the middle of conflict, such as, "You never listen to me!" will never go over as well as a thoughtful, measured conversation.

There's no guarantee that your spouse will respond well, especially if this is a longstanding issue. However, attempting to start the conversation is your first step. It's possible that you've simply become disconnected due to busyness or the daily obligations of your life and your job.

STEP 2. PUT YOUR FEELINGS IN WRITING

Let's say you tried having a face-to-face conversation with your spouse about being heard, but it just didn't work the way you'd hoped. You could attempt to write your spouse a letter describing your experience. Be careful **not to blame your spouse** when you communicate your feelings. It's always possible that their failure to hear you has been unintentional.

Putting your feelings in writing without blaming or making generalized statements gives you a chance to think through exactly what you want to say. It also gives your spouse the opportunity to receive the message without the high emotions that can come from a discussion. It can be difficult to respond well to hard conversations, particularly when one feels blamed or singled out for a pattern in the relationship. Putting your feelings in writing can go a long way toward clarifying the message that you want to get across—and toward helping your spouse potentially embrace it.

STEP 3. SPEAK WITH A TRUSTED MENTOR TOGETHER

Sometimes, no matter how hard we try to get a message across to our spouse, it can be difficult to help it land effectively. If your efforts to tackle the issue have been unsuccessful so far, it might be time to bring in an objective third-party. This is a person with the wisdom, and possibly the professional credentials, who can help you both build better communication and listening skills.

Healthy marriages that are experiencing communication challenges could benefit from a marriage mentor or trusted pastor with whom both spouses feel comfortable communicating. However, if your marriage has been struggling for a while, or if you've found yourselves in a stalemate, getting help from a licensed professional therapist could give you tools that will help you communicate more effectively.

No matter what, try to address issues with your spouse from a place of love, rather than a place of hurt. When they understand how much they mean to you—even when you're upset—that knowledge might help open their heart.