

# Can You Solve Problems With Your Spouse?

BY VAL FARMER  
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I am continually amazed at the number of intelligent, well-meaning couples who fail to communicate and resolve differences in their relationships. On the job, they are great. With their friends, they are great. With each other, they are like squabbling 10-year-olds.

Usually on a job, there is agreement about goals and clarity about who is responsible for certain activities. Communications center around decisions on how best to get the job done and how much money, time and energy are going to be devoted to various projects.

It's not like that in a marriage. A lot of the conflict has to do with trying to decide what is best — or right — or good. Also, it is not etched in stone who should do what. Each partner has strongly held opinions and emotions about these matters, primarily from his or her experience from growing up in their own families.

*"What is the best way to handle a teenager's violation of curfew?" "Do we really need to buy that?" "How important or how often do we show affection between us?" "Is the hunting trip that important?" "Who does the work around here, anyway?" "How clean do we keep the house?"*

The answers are not obvious, even though each partner seems to think so. These differences can be alarming and threatening.

Happily married couples address their painful differences and work through them. It is a test of their love. Too many unhappily married couples either avoid conflict or else the process blows up in their faces.

• **Trust.** Successful communicators take risks in talking about sensitive subjects when there is a backdrop of love, trust and mutual respect. Security in the relationship grows when each partner appreciates the other's abilities, opinions and essential goodness. A spouse who senses this bedrock of commitment and love will dare to bring up sensitive issues because he or she knows that the marriage isn't continually on trial.

Also, the willingness to talk about delicate problems depends on whether the overall tone of the relationship is positive and mutually rewarding. Touchy subjects bring pain,



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Some things are not going to change. There are some things about our spouse that are going to be forever exasperating. These qualities or strongly held values or opinions need to be accepted.

• **Minimize defensiveness.** You can minimize the defensiveness of your partner by telling how a specific situation or behavior makes you feel. Focus on issues, not personalities. For example:

"I feel something is wrong." "This is my opinion. I'm interested in how you feel about this." "I may be wrong but this is how I see it." "Help me understand how you see this issue?" "What do you think?"

• **Get a commitment.** Sometimes people recognize there is a problem but refuse to do anything about it. Further discussions won't be helpful until there is a willingness to work on the problem.

• **Listening to understand.** I wish every couple would approach listening to a loved one as carefully as they would any examination or interview they will ever take. Wouldn't it be great if notes were taken, if clarifying questions were asked, if rebuttals and disclaimers were restrained and if courtesy was extended?

• **Showing courtesy and respect.** Don't interrupt. Make sure that your spouse's point of view comes out fully and completely. Respecting the right for their partner to finish his or her thoughts and to draw them out is a gift.

Use conversational etiquette to transfer the floor back and forth as you share per-

uncertainty and temporary alienation. The key is that both partners know that the alienation is temporary.

• **Agreeing to disagree.** These couples also know that they don't have to agree on everything, only on the important things. As a 19th century psychologist, William James, said, *"The art of being wise is the art of knowing what to overlook."*

spectives. How your partner feels about the process of communicating with you is more important than finding a common solution.

• **Reflecting main points.** Help bring feelings into the open. Reflect back a summary of his or her main points before answering.

Don't be mechanical or technical. Show respect and concern in the way you reflect back their points. Body language means a lot.

Allow your partner to correct any misunderstandings of what you have heard. Understanding your partner's ideas are key to finding a mutual solution that meets both your needs.

Allow time to allow for tensions to decrease and each of you to think about what you've heard. Some conversations take place over time before issues finally take shape.

• **Problem-solving.** When you come to a common definition of the problem and understand each other's views, then you are in a position to propose and generate solutions. Too many people skip the understanding and listening part and jump into problem-solving. That doesn't work well.

The question becomes, *"Now that we agree on what is wrong, what can we do about it?"* It is time to brainstorm for alternatives. Solutions and alternatives should meet both partners' needs. Thinking time is important.

Pros and cons are weighed. A decision needs to be clearly made and commitments given toward a specific plan. Details need to be fleshed out. The plan can be implemented on a trial basis. A time frame is set aside to review how the plan is going and to make any necessary adjustments.

This is incredibly important. Couples often get divorced when one of them gives up thinking problems can be solved with his or her marriage partner.

For more information on marriage visit Val Farmer's website at [www.valfarmer.com](http://www.valfarmer.com).

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## VISITING HOURS

# Proper Disposal For Medications Is Key

BY KELLY SCHOTT

Director of Pharmacy, Avera Sacred Heart Hospital

Medicines play an important role in treating many conditions and diseases, but when they are no longer needed it's important to dispose of them properly to avoid harm to others. Below, we list some disposal options and some special disposal instructions for you to consider when throwing out expired, unwanted or unused medicines.

### MEDICINE TAKE-BACK PROGRAMS

Medicine take-back programs for disposal are a good way to remove expired, unwanted or unused medicines from the home and reduce the chance that others may accidentally take the medicine. Contact your local pharmacist to find out when the next medicine take-back program in your community will be held.

### DISPOSAL IN HOUSEHOLD TRASH

If no medicine take-back program is available in your area, consumers can also follow these simple steps to dispose of most medicines in the household trash:

- Mix medicines (do NOT crush tablets or capsules) with an unpalatable substance such as kitty litter or used coffee grounds;
- Place the mixture in a container such as a sealed plastic bag; and
- Throw the container in your household trash

### FLUSHING OF CERTAIN MEDICINES

There is a small number of medicines that may be especially harmful and, in some cases, fatal in a single dose if they are used by someone

other than for whom the medicine was prescribed. For this reason, a few medicines have specific disposal instructions that indicate they should be flushed down the sink or toilet when they are no longer needed and when they cannot be disposed of through a drug take-back program. When you dispose of these medicines down the sink or toilet, they cannot be accidentally used by children, pets, or anyone else. Look on [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov) for a list of these medications.

You may have also received disposal directions for these medicines when you picked up your prescription. You can find instructions on how to dispose of specific medicines at [www.dailymed.com](http://www.dailymed.com) by searching on the drug name and then looking in one of the following sections of the prescribing information:

- Information for Patients and Caregivers
- Patient Information
- Patient Counseling Information
- Safety and Handling Instructions
- Medication Guide

FDA remains committed to working with other Federal agencies and medicine manufacturers to develop alternative, safe disposal policies. If you have additional questions about disposing of your medicine, please contact the Food & Drug Administration at 1-888-INFO-FDA (1-888-463-6332).

Source: [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov)

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# Keep Yankton Beautiful: It's All About Community

BY AGNES EIDE  
KYB Board Member

Ten years ago, my husband and I were looking forward to living in a small, friendly community. We decided to check out Yankton after reading a few bits on the Chamber of Commerce's website. Upon our first visit, we were seduced by the people we met, as they were all saying what a wonderful community it was; and, the ones we met were not originally from Yankton, but mostly from the East Coast.

I will never forget how excited we were to move to that small town. Everything was unfolding the right way, everybody was very helpful, starting with our realtor, and all the way to the storekeepers who would deliver all we needed in a record time. I guess you could say it was love at first sight.

We did not see the Mall, we had no idea how many grocery stores were around, we had not checked out the schools, we did not know which churches were in town and we didn't even know about the lake...but we left Omaha and never looked back.

Our hearts were set on Yankton, South Dakota.

To this day, we have not been disappointed, and I should say that we have way surpassed our expectations in various areas. We are more than ever under the charm of the Yanktonians...always impressed by the quality of people we meet, closer than ever to our friends and totally amazed by the commitment to volunteering.

As I was studying for the Naturalization exam early this year, I took very seriously the rights and responsibilities that I would be pledging myself to as a future American. One was about joining a community group as a way of participating in our democracy and improving the quality of life where we live. So I joined Keep Yankton Beautiful because the philosophy of the group felt very close to my heart.

Coming from France, I thought I could offer a different outlook to our town. Back home, recycling is like a way of living, so I was familiar with the subject and it made sense to me to step up to the plate and make a difference for our community. I knew I could offer my eagerness, determination and enthusiasm to make Yankton an even greater Yankton.

Ten years ago, I fell in love

with the people but as my attachment grows every year, I realize I am paying more attention to how beautiful the historic downtown looks, how wonderful the Lewis and Clark Lake is, how entertaining the River Missouri is, how precious are the grounds of the Monastery and the Benedictine Sisters, along with Mount Marty, how fortunate I am to be around the natural beauty of this area ... but all this needs to be preserved and cherished at all time.

I'm not going to tell you what to do, as we all have to make choices that fit our life purpose...but as for me I made my choice. I am all for cleaning, recycling, reusing and reducing because it feels right in my heart.

I know when I stop my car to pick up a card board box that fell from a truck, I'm doing the right thing. I am convinced, for example, that I am helping others by going to Goodwill, both when I drop off or buy things there. I love going to the Transfer Station/Recycling Center to bring our recycling items as I know I help the Earth.

By the way, I thank all the employees there for their dedication to their work. I love to chat with them, and a friendly smile brightens their hard working day! Please use our Transfer Station and our recycling pick-up days frequently.

I may stop you and ask you if you need a pocket ashtray because those cigarette butts will never ever disintegrate and I don't want them in our waterways, but remember my heart talks common sense. I will go out of my way to pick up some trash flying away from the trash cans not secured.

When we hear about carbon foot print, it all sounds a bit remote...but the reality is here, right down to our town of Yankton and its beautiful county. I am asking you to look into and to



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Board member Agnes Eide's and a friend are pictured at the Great American Cleanup which was held in April.

please support our local group, Keep Yankton Beautiful, an affiliate of the non-profit Keep America Beautiful, which believes that each citizen holds an obligation to protect the environment, and can make real differences through their daily actions and choices.

With more than 50 years of public education and "roll-up-your-sleeves" action, Keep America Beautiful has made significant progress in community improvement.

As I reflect on my Christmas wish list, I would love to see all businesses in Yankton and surrounding areas participate in our Keep Yankton Beautiful program and become a member. I wish all stores would stop using plastic bags and incentivize the use of reusable bags only, as I see those

plastic bags flying all over our beautiful countryside. I wish for a single stream recycling so the sorting of recyclable materials (paper, plastic, glass and metals) would not have to be done by individuals, to make things easier. And finally, I wish to see more individual memberships during this upcoming year in Keep Yankton Beautiful.

KYB does not get operating funds from the city, county, state, or federal governments and must rely on donations, grants and memberships. We all have our part to do. Our mission requires diverse partnerships with all community stakeholders. Working together — businesses, government, neighborhoods,

individuals and other nonprofit teams — we can be successful in improving our communities.

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