

# Are You Able to Read Minds? | Marriage Tips Series

■ by Duane Kapp, MA, Marriage & Family Therapist, Chief Operating Officer

There is a unique skill that many believe they possess; it is, believe it or not, the ability to read minds! Oh, I know what you are thinking (smile); you do not believe that this could be true. Yet, if we are honest, many of us believe that we often do know what certain others are thinking. And this may be somewhat true in business relationships, but it is a destructive “skill” when it comes to dating or marriage. In fact it is such a common problem with couples that it is written about in text books, studied in experiments and observed by therapists right during a counseling session. The sad thing about this “skill” is that it often destroys a love relationship or at least weakens it.



## MARRIAGE TIP | Do NOT Read Your Spouse’s Mind!

“Mind reading” is held by many therapists to be one of the main reasons marriages are so difficult to put back together. It does not seem to make any difference what one person in the relationship says if the other person in the relationship KNOWS what that person “really” means! In fact, research using electrical brain response graphs will show that if one spouse says something that the other person does not believe to be true, the listening spouse will not appear to have heard anything at all.

The only way to stop this destructive behavior is to trust (or forgive) the other person in the relationship. Believe that the other person (the one that is a gift from God) is truly trying to make clear what he or she is saying. You, as the listener can ask lots of questions, but ask to understand what is being said --- not to prove that the other person is really thinking something different from what he or she is saying.

We can only grow in our ever-changing love relationship if we listen to each other and do our best to respond to what is being said, versus what we think he or she is “really” saying. It is better to have a healthy relationship than to continually “guard” against the chance of being fooled by the one you love.

And let me warn you — this is a very difficult relationship habit to break (in case you were thinking otherwise). ■

Twenty-five percent of the people who come to Chicago Christian Counseling Center come for marital or couple counseling. We therefore offer a “Marriage Tips” Series in each *Pressing On* Newsletter edition. Even if you are not married, these tips matter to any close relationship.

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