



Nonviolent communication

How to communicate with connection and influence

One of the most important basics in a relationship is having good, effective communication. It is how we bond, make ourselves understood, and show that we understand one another.

Expressing our feelings, needs, and desires can be hard.

So hard, that we sometimes end up in a vicious circle of misunderstanding, conflict, and harsh words. Especially in our closest relationships and often with people we work with everyday.

So how can we express ourselves in an empathic and effective way?

How can we help the other person to meet our needs too?

That is where Nonviolent Communication comes in, grounded in this belief:

**“Every criticism, judgment, diagnosis, and expression of anger;
is the tragic expression of an unmet need.”**

— Marshall Rosenberg

NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION (NVC)

NVC keeps our attention focused the observations, feelings and needs that create an opportunity for compassion, from that place of compassion, we can make a request.

(Warning: It feels wierd at first, it is not how we would naturally talk, especially when we are full of emotion, but it works!)

The model has four parts:

Observations

The concrete actions we observe that affect our well-being

Feelings

How we feel in relation to what we observe

Needs

The needs, values, desires that create our feelings

Requests

The concrete actions we request in order to feel well.

Like this: what I am observing, feeling, and needing; what I am requesting to enrich my life; what you are observing, feeling, and needing; what you are requesting to feel well.

Let's give it a go...

Start by identifying a conflict or a discussion you have recently experienced.

Practice these steps in the model:

1. OBSERVATIONS

To observe means to notice what is happening without evaluating, interpreting, or judging.

Remember this: Observations can be recorded on a camera.

An example: Person X arrives late to the meeting, sits down and picks up their phone.

We might make these interpretations: You're always late! You don't care about me or this project.

To observe, begin with the sentence... When I see/hear/notice that ...

I notice it's 10.30. We had decided to meet at 10.00.

I see you are texting while I'm talking to you.

2. FEELINGS

The second step is about noticing what you feel *before* sharing your observations.

Name the feeling without judging or evaluating it.

To actually feel our feelings – and share them — can be wierd, scary, uncomfortable or unfamiliar to us. But we will connect better with what is happening in ourselves and be able to connect with others, when we talk on the level of feelings rather than thoughts.

Begin with the phrase I feel ...

Example: When I see that you are texting while I am talking to you, I feel sad/angry/unimportant/irritated.

3. NEEDS

The third step is to communicate what you need in the moment. It increases the possibilities for the other person to be able to meet your needs.

Begin with the phrase Because I need / value ...

You never listen to me = I do not feel heard → Need: to be seen and heard.

You do not prioritise me = I feel alone → Need: to feel a connection.

For example: When I see you texting while I'm talking to you, I feel unimportant, because it's important for me to be listened to.

4. REQUESTS

The last step is about saying what concrete action I need or want from the other person. Try to avoid words such as must and should.

Begin with the phrase Would you be willing to ...

For example: Would you be willing to put away your phone for the rest of the meeting while we talk about the project?

Go back to Humanly Guides to find our

[List of Feelings](#)

[List of Needs](#)

SUMMARY

Healthy relationships and connection are vital for us to thrive

This guide presents a simple example and this is a good place to start. Practice expressing and listening in a nonviolent way in a safe environment so that when you are in a more emotionally charged situation, you will be able to handle it with more ease.

This is just a taster but this is a skill that takes time and practice to master.

NEED MORE HELP

We can help more, would you like:

Training and Coaching for your leaders and managers?

One-day team workshop on Nonviolent communication for teams?

One-to-one coaching to help support you in your relationships and interpersonal skills?

Get in touch

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If you want to explore more you can join the Human Leadership Collective Community.

Or explore how you can work with us with a free chat.

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