

COMMON COMMUNICATION CHOICES

Sometimes the following communication choices may be very welcome, and help build connection. Sometimes they will be very disconnecting. The guideline is to pay attention to whether there appears to be a strong connection with the other person. NVC suggests that you build **CONNECTION** using **EMPATHY** for the speaker's feelings and needs, and **HONEST EXPRESSION** of your feelings and needs.

If you deliberately want to use one of the communication strategies below, it's often good to check that the other person is open to it. For example: "I have some advice I'd love to give you, would you like to hear it?" If they say no, return to building connection with empathy and honest expression.

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| <p>REASSURING "I think it will all work out OK" "There's nothing to worry about" "You'll find a way through this situation"</p> | <p>ADVICE/SUGGESTIONS "You should..." "Why don't you..." "Have you tried..." "If I were you I would...." "When this happened to me I..."</p> |
| <p>HELPING THE SPEAKER TO SEE SOMEONE ELSE'S POINT OF VIEW "I think your boss was just trying to be helpful" "Maybe your sister is really stressed out at her new job"</p> | <p>ATTACKING THE ENEMY "Your boss is a loser" "Your sister is insane" "Obviously it's his problem not yours" "That guy sounds like an idiot"</p> |
| <p>STORIES "This reminds me of my relationship with my ex-wife. We always argue about...." "I was in a situation like this once, and what I did was....."</p> | <p>CORRECTING THE FACTS "That's not what I said" "From what I've heard that's not really what happened" "Did you say this happened at 12th and Dolores? Because I don't think 12th crosses Dolores."</p> |
| <p>SYMPATHY "I feel horrified by your story..." "I know how you feel, I've been through the same thing" "I've been there, believe me, I know!"</p> | <p>EXPLAINING "You're feeling angry either because you were hurt or scared, that's always where anger comes from" "I know why that happened, it's because...." "Let me explain this to you using NVC principles..."</p> |
| <p>DISAGREEING "Your boss did exactly what she was supposed to do, you're the one who's at fault." "You're looking at this the wrong way"</p> | <p>AGREEING "You're so right, I'm being totally unreasonable." "You're being totally victimized, I agree." "Yes, like you say, she should apologize to you."</p> |
| <p>APOLOGY "I'm sorry for my part in this" "I screwed up. Sorry. Won't happen again."</p> | <p>PERSUASION "Look, just go to the doctor, you know that's what you need to do, why are you fighting it?" "You always end up in this kind of situation, it's obvious that you need to break up with him and start again. Here are the reasons why..."</p> |
| <p>TAKING IT BACK "I take it back." "Pretend I didn't say that."</p> | <p>TELLING THE OTHER PERSON HOW THEY FEEL AND WHAT THEY NEED "You're feeling helpless and vulnerable." "You're angry, because you want more respect."</p> |

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| <p>WRONG MAKING “I can’t believe you did that!” “You should know better than that at your age!”</p> | <p>PSYCHOANALYSIS / DIAGNOSIS “Sounds like your boss has bi-polar disorder” “I think this is because you have Attention Deficit Disorder” “This all comes from your relationship with your parents.”</p> |
| <p>GENERALIZATION “Doesn’t everyone have this problem?” “This is just a phase you’ll pass through.”</p> | <p>DISMISSAL / MINIMIZING “You don’t have to feel this way.” “This isn’t really a problem.”</p> |
| <p>REFRAMING/SEEING THE POSITIVE SIDE “This sounds like a great opportunity for you to grow as a person.” “Here’s another way to look at this....”</p> | <p>SPIRITUAL BYPASS “God will take care of you.” “It’s all in the hands of God.” “Whatever happens is perfect.”</p> |
| <p>ACKNOWLEDGMENT/COMPLIMENTS “I want to acknowledge you for all the great work you’ve been doing.” “You are a powerful human being.” “I know you’re really trying to fix our relationship.”</p> | <p>COACHING “What would be the perfect outcome for you from this situation?” “What would you like to acknowledge yourself for in this situation?”</p> |
| <p>WHY QUESTIONS “Why are you feeling this way?” “Why do you need that?” “Why did he/she do that?”</p> | <p>DEMANDS “Calm down” “Stop yelling” “You have to empathize with me!”</p> |
| <p>SARCASM “Oh yeah, it was all the other person’s fault and you were totally innocent. I’m sure!” “I’d love to carry on listening to your very interesting story, but I have to go.”</p> | <p>TEACHING “I used to worry too, but I found it just wasn’t useful, so maybe you can stop worrying too.” “Let me explain to you how this works....”</p> |
| <p>RIDICULING “You’re being ridiculous” “Don’t be so silly!”</p> | <p>SHUTTING DOWN “There’s nothing I can say back to that.” OR Listener stays silent, looks away, shrugs etc.</p> |
| <p>CONSOLING “It wasn’t your fault, you did the best you could.”</p> | <p>PHILOSOPHIZING “As a Christian, I believe that...” “As an NVC practitioner, I believe that you are responsible for your own feelings.” “Every conflict is a co-creation.”</p> |
| <p>PREACHING “Everyone knows that’s an immoral thing to do” “Have you no regard for your fellow man?” “We must find compassion for others!”</p> | <p>ONE-UPPING “That’s nothing, you should hear what happened to me...” “Sure your relationship ended. You should try going through a divorce – it’s much worse!”</p> |
| <p>THREATENING / CAUTIONING “You better change this pretty soon or there will be dire consequences” “If you don’t tell her I will!”</p> | <p>INTERROGATING “Why did you keep this a secret from him?” “How long has this been going on?” “Tell me the name of the person you’re talking about!”</p> |
| <p>CALLING OUT</p> | <p>SCIENTIFIC BYPASS</p> |