

COMMON WAYS OF RESPONDING (that will probably not land as EMPATHY)

Some of the following communication choices may sometimes be very welcome, and help build connection. Some of them will usually be very disconnecting. If connection seems to be decreasing, and tension increasing, try switching to **EMPATHY**:

- be present
- connect with the other person’s experience
- get clear on their feelings and needs, what’s important to them, what they’re observing and how they’re interpreting what they’re observing.

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, maybe switch back to **EMPATHY**.

<p>REASSURING “I think it will all work out OK” “There’s nothing to worry about” “You’ll get through it, you always do!”</p>	<p>ADVICE/SUGGESTIONS “You should...” “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 argued 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” “That’s not what happened” “Did you say this happened at Church and 31st St? I don’t think that intersection exists.”</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, 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>

TAKING IT BACK "I take it back." "Pretend I didn't say that."	TELLING THE OTHER PERSON HOW THEY FEEL AND WHAT THEY NEED (RATHER THAN ASKING...) "You're feeling helpless and vulnerable." "You're angry, because you want more respect."
WRONG MAKING "I can't believe you did that!" "You should know better than that at your age!"	PSYCHOLOGICAL DIAGNOSIS "Sounds like your boss has bi-polar disorder" "I think this is because you have A.D.D" "This all comes from your relationship with your parents."
GENERALIZATION "Doesn't everyone have this problem." "This is just a phase you're going through."	DISMISSAL "You don't have to feel this way." "That's not really a problem."
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...."	SPIRITUAL BYPASS "God will take care of you." "Everything happens for a reason." "It's all just an illusion."
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."	COACHING QUESTIONS "What would be the perfect outcome for you from this situation?" "What would you like to acknowledge yourself for in this situation?"
WHY QUESTIONS "Why are you feeling this way?" "Why do you need that?" "Why did she do that?"	DEMANDS "Calm down" "Stop yelling" "LISTEN TO ME!!!"
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 watch some paint dry."	TEACHING "I used to worry too, but I found it just wasn't useful. The way to beat worry is..." "No, that's not right, the way it works is..."
RIDICULING "You're being ridiculous" "Don't be so silly!"	SHUTTING DOWN "There's nothing I can say back to that." OR Listener stays silent, looks away, shrugs etc.
CONSOLING "It wasn't your fault, you did the best you could."	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."
PREACHING "Everyone knows that's an immoral thing to do" "Have you no regard for your fellow man?" "We must find compassion for others!"	ONE-UPPING "That's nothing, you should hear what happened to me..." "You should try divorce – it's much worse!"
THREATENING "You better change this pretty soon or there will be dire consequences" "If you don't tell him I will!"	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!"
RETRACTION "I take it back, pretend I didn't say anything"	JOKES...