



Better Communication

For Work & Life

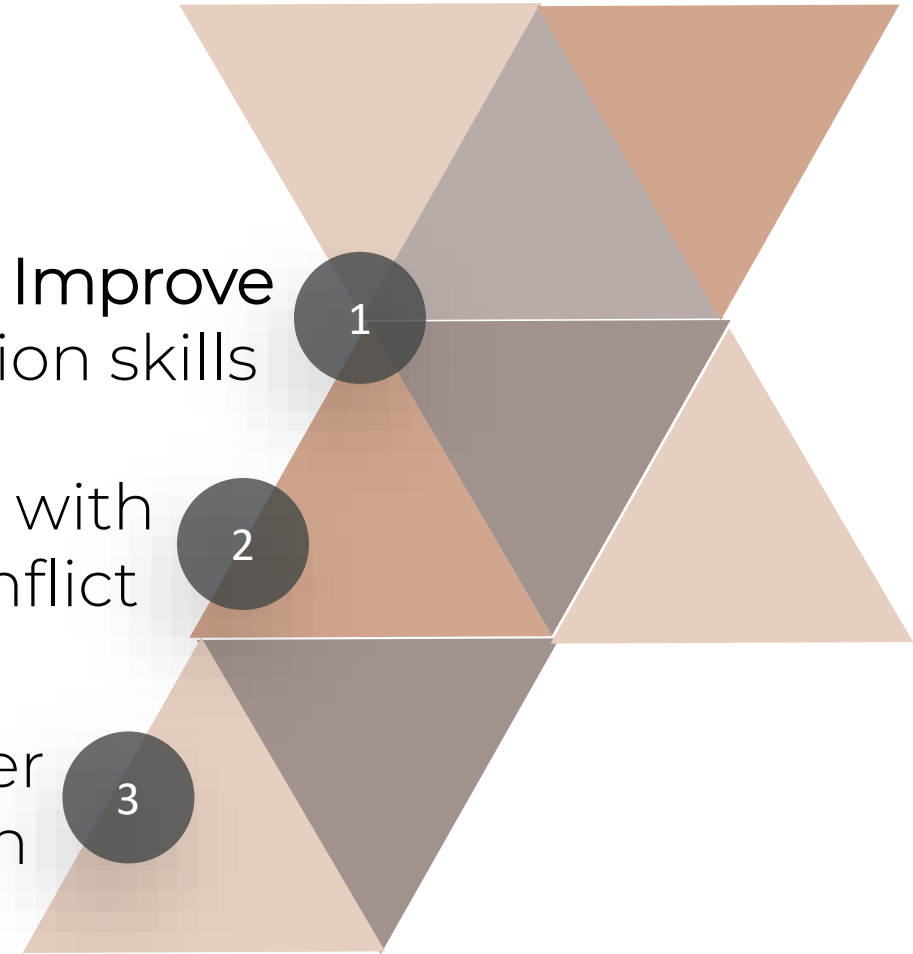
GOALS



1 Improve
communication skills

2 Work skillfully with
interpersonal conflict

3 Understand the needs behind other
people's unskilled communication



This Webinar

1

Draws from
“Nonviolent
Communication”
developed by
Dr. Marshall
Rosenberg

2

Integrate
practices from
other
psychotherapy
models and
modern
neuroscience

3

Numerous
models show
that these basic
principles are
sound and
evidence-based



Transformation is **HARD**



1

Psychological development and healing takes time

2

Surface problems often have deeper rooted issues that may take months or years to address

3

Some studies suggest working through childhood trauma takes 15-30 months of therapy





1

Learning new skills is significantly easier

2

Doesn't require as much work as personal psychological growth

3

Skill building can bring immediate results

4

Healthy communication ripples throughout workplace culture

**Improving
communication
is low-hanging
fruit for
workplace culture**



Case Study

1

I was coaching a CEO of technology company

2

Making good progress on emotional/psychological concerns over the course of 12 months

3

Wasn't translating into the business (bottom line, turnover, systems issues)

4

Taught him and his team

5

Dramatic change in about a month that rippled throughout the entire company



Case Study

- 1 Communication improvement improved numerous aspects of the business very quickly.
- 2 Profits increased, turnover decreased, systems improved, job satisfaction improved etc.
- 3 Bad communication made everyone defensive and was the invisible bottleneck holding the company back.

Bring to Mind a Difficult Conversation

1

Bring to mind a difficult conversation you might be avoiding

2

Personal or professional

3

Take a few minutes to write out what you want to say (type if possible)

4

Be unfiltered in what you want to express

5

Make accusations, rant, curse

Bring to Mind a Difficult Conversation

Example

“You are always late.”

You clearly don't care about these meetings. This behavior is unacceptable. You are sabotaging the rest of the team's work. I don't know why you bother anymore. You deserve to be fired for this. If you come late one more time, I'm going to recommend you be written up or terminated.”

S e p a r a t i n g

Thoughts & Feelings in **Communications**

1

Those feelings of frustration and anger are valid

2

It's ok to have thoughts like that

3

Mindfulness of your internal thoughts and feelings will only help communication

4

We want to create a pause before expressing these to ensure it maximizes the likelihood of achieving our goals



What is Violent Communication?

1

Not talking about hate speech, threats of physical harm etc.

2

Aren't making any claims about the impact of speech

3

Think of it as “Aggressive” or “Unskillful”



What is Violent Communication?

1

Black and white thinking
(You are *always* late)

2

Judging/Making
assumptions (You are late
because you don't care)

3

Making
demands

4

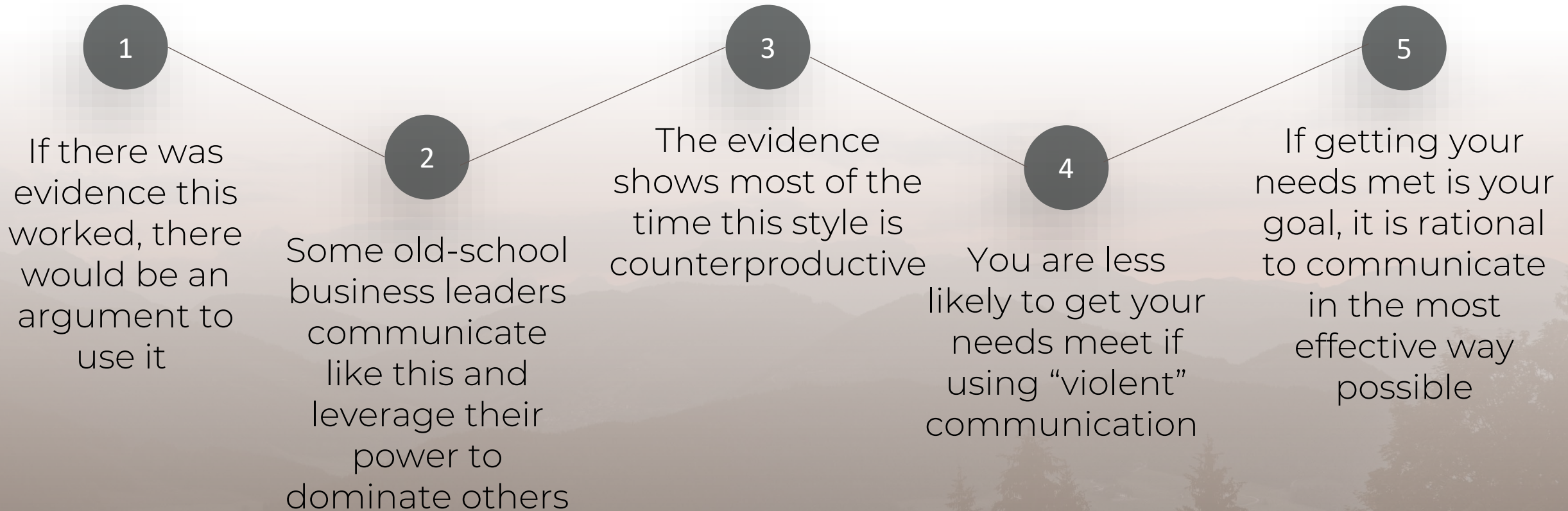
Denial of
responsibility
on your part

5

Deserve/ Moralistic
language



Does This Type of Communication Work?



What is your GOAL?

1

Using this example, we can assume the speaker's goal is for their coworker to come to the meeting on time.

2

Being clear about your goal will help you determine the best method to communicate.

3

We can use this goal as criteria to evaluate good and bad communication.

4

More likely or less likely to come on time?



The Brain & Criticism

1

Understanding the brain helps contextualize why NVC methods work so well and why violent communication is counterproductive.

2

Brain scans show distinct patterns of how we react to criticism, judgments, and aggression.



Activation of Amygdala



The amygdala detects criticism as a threat, similar to a physical threat, which can trigger an immediate emotional response. This reaction is part of the brain's rapid, automatic system for assessing potential threats to our well-being or social status.

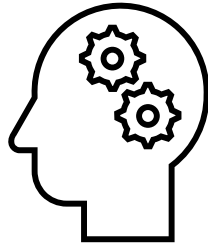


Release of Stress Hormones

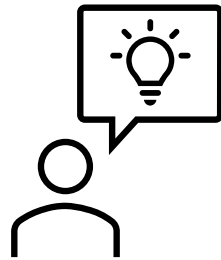
The perception of threat leads to the release of stress hormones, such as cortisol and adrenaline. These hormones prepare the body for a fight-or-flight response by increasing heart rate, blood pressure, and glucose levels in the bloodstream.



Reduced function of the Prefrontal Cortex



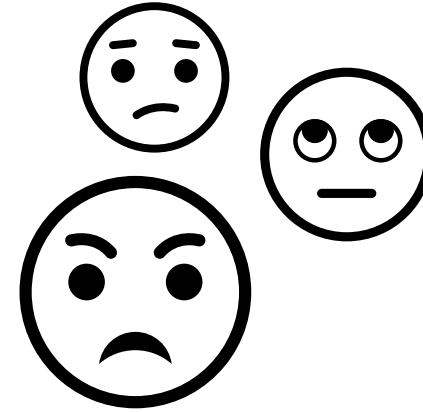
The prefrontal cortex is responsible for higher-order brain functions, such as reasoning, planning, problem-solving, and regulating emotions.



When the amygdala is activated, it can inhibit the prefrontal cortex, reducing its ability to function effectively. This can impair logical thinking, decision-making, and the capacity to consider alternative perspectives or generate creative solutions.



Increased Emotional Reactivity



With the prefrontal cortex's functioning compromised, individuals are more likely to respond from an emotional rather than a rational standpoint. This can lead to defensive behavior, aggression, or withdrawal, further hampering effective communication and problem-solving.



Memory and Learning Effects

1

Prolonged exposure to stress hormones like cortisol can affect the brain's ability to form new memories and learn from experiences.

2

This means that not only is the immediate capacity for logical discussion impacted, but the ability to learn from the interaction and adjust future behavior may also be compromised.



Violent Communication Leads to Shutdown



We become different people when we feel criticized!



We become less rational, more defensive, and more emotionally volatile.

Therefore, good communication must reduce the chance of defensiveness and the brain changes that come along with it.



Challenging Political Beliefs

1

Kaplan and colleagues at USC's Brain and Creativity Institute performed functional MRI scans to understand what happened when people's political beliefs were challenged.

2

"When the participants were challenged on their strongly held beliefs, there was more activation in the parts of the brain that are thought to correspond with self-identity and negative emotions" - Vox

3

Parts of the brain associated with rational thinking saw a reduction in activity.

4

Parts of the brain associated with one's identity being under attack saw increased activity.



Accusations Invite Defensiveness

How is someone
supposed to
respond to

*"You are always
late."*

*"No, I'm not". "
That's because of
X" "You don't
know what else is
going on in my
life".*

This doesn't
give your
counterpart
any
meaningful
information:
needs,
observations,
feelings,
requests etc.



60 Second Check in:

Recall a Difficult Conversation

1

Recall a difficult conversation when you were triggered and communication shut down. What did that feel like?

2

Stay with the feeling of fight or flight.

3

Now, imagine being in that state and having a difficult conversation with someone. How does it feel?



The Most Important Slide



The next slide is the most important slide in the presentation



Take a picture, note in your phone, write it down etc.



Summarizes the key method to improve communication



4 Steps to Nonviolent Communication



1

State an
observation



2

Name your
feelings



3

State your
needs



4

Make a
request

Late for Work Example

1

I notice you arrived at 9:15 for our 9:00 meeting.

2

I feel anxious when people arrive late because I don't know when to share the most important information.

3

As the leader of the meeting, I need to know when everyone will arrive.

4

In the future, can you please let me know if you will be late, or suggest another way to solve this issue?

Analysis

1

No accusations

2

Stating facts observable to you (including your feelings)

3

No judgments

4

Taking responsibility for your experience

5

Bypassing the criticism pathways of the brain

6

Clear about what you need



Observation vs Evaluation

- 1 You arrived at 9:15 (Observation)
- 2 This was the second time you were late this week (Observation)
- 3 You don't care about others in the meeting (Evaluation)
- 4 You are sabotaging the rest of the team's work (Evaluation)



60 Second Check in:

How Would You Respond?

1

You are always late.

2

You don't care about these meetings.

3

You are sabotaging the rest of the team's work.

4

You deserve to be fired.



I vs You Language

1

Some “You” language is OK, but it tends to increase defensiveness.

2

“I” language decreases defensiveness and is more based in reality.

3

“You don’t care about our work” vs “I feel unappreciated”.



Global Statements are Hard to Verify

- 1 “You are always late”
- 2 “You don’t care”
- 3 “You are like this”
- 4 “You never...”

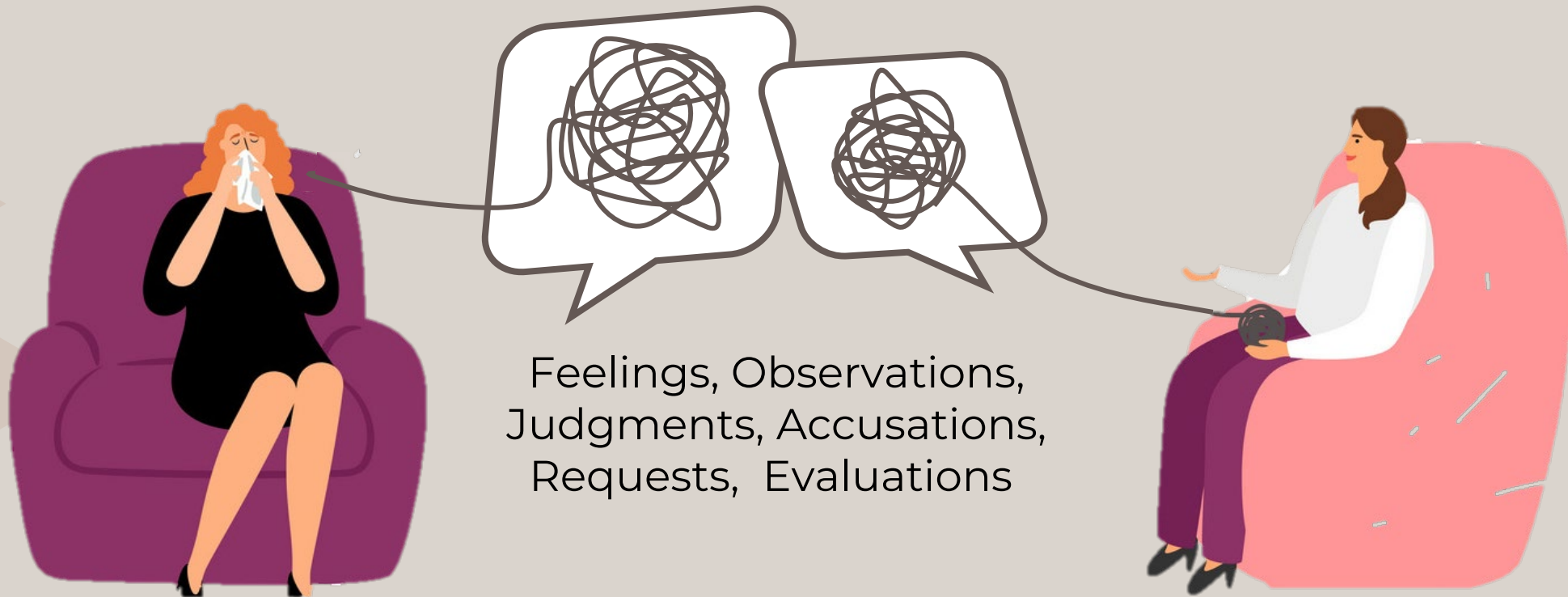


Accusations, Judgements, “Deserve” Language Induce Defensiveness



- 1 It doesn't matter if you are right!
- 2 When someone is focused on defending themselves, healthy communication becomes extremely difficult.
- 3 These types of communication force a person to defend themselves.
- 4 They still don't know what we want/need!



Most Communication is Jumbled



What are your Assumptions?

- 
- 
- 1 We assume the person doesn't care, but we don't know
 - 2 Could be competing meetings, health issues, technology problems, misunderstandings of expectations etc.
 - 3 We always risk that our assumptions are wrong
 - 4 Our direct observation and stating of our feelings are grounded in 1st person experience and more reliable



See out other's window

“

Decades ago I saw a patient with breast cancer , who had, throughout adolescence, been locked in a long, bitter struggle with her naysaying father. Yearning for some form of reconciliation, for a new, fresh beginning to the relationship she looked forward to her father's driving her to college- a time when she would be alone with him for several hours. But the long-anticipated trip proved a disaster: her father behaved true to form by grouching at length about the ugly, garbage-littered creek by the side of the road. She, on the other hand, saw no litter whatsoever in the beautiful, rustic, unspoiled stream. She could find no way to respond and eventually, lapsing into silence, they spent the remainder of the trip looking away from each other.

”

See out other's window

“

Later, she made the same trip alone and was astounded to note that there were two streams - one on each side of the road. “This time I was the driver,” she said sadly, “and the stream I saw through my window on the driver’s side was just as ugly and polluted as my father had described it.”

-Dr. Irvin Yalom, “The Gift of Therapy”

”

Letting Go Of Assumptions



1

Sometimes we are correct, but lack context.

2

Sometimes we are wrong.

3

Openness to having incorrect assumptions allows for healthy communication.



4 Steps

1

When (observable action) happens,

2

I feel (emotion).

3

I need (your need).

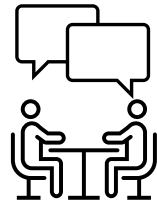
4

I am asking (request).

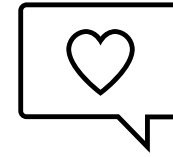
Unpacking Example



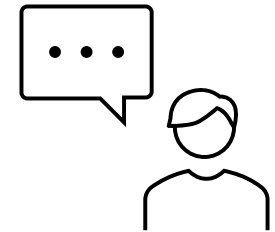
Sticking to
simple,
observable facts
deescalates
conflict



Sharing of
feelings skillfully
usually diffuses
defensiveness
and creates
closeness



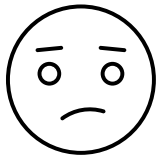
Stating needs
clearly helps your
counterpart
understand your
perspective



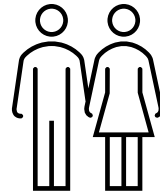
Making a clear
request makes
resolution
possible



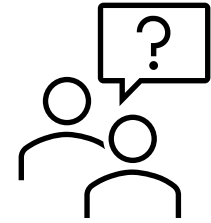
Understanding Needs



In this model, most conflict comes from a misunderstanding of peoples' needs



We need to learn to communicate our needs in way that another person can hear



We need to ask questions and create safety to understand our counterpart's needs



Needs Literacy

1

We must be clear what our needs are in order to communicate them.

2

Most of us did not grow up learning how to communicate our needs!

3

Be patient with yourself and others in identifying and naming your needs.



Common Objections

1

Why bother with this method if you are right and the other person is wrong?

2

It feels like a “song and dance”.

3

I’m doing all the work.

4

I don’t want to sugarcoat.



Letting go of Right and Wrong

1

Even if you think your counterpart is 100% wrong, “violent” communication is rarely productive.

2

Defensiveness will not change behavior, lead to self-reflection, or foster communication.

3

People are more open to change their opinions, reflect on their behavior when they feel safe.



Safety and Context

1

If you are interested in communication, safety is always better.

2

Take a moment and ask yourself “ Is this person too upset to talk right now?”

3

Timing is important - might need to come back at another time.

4

“Strike when the iron is cold.”

5

Red/Yellow/Green light model.

What are your goals?

1

Experiment and see which method works best.

2

Be honest - is your goal to win a fight, or get your needs met?

3

Clarity of your goals will improve your communication.

Talk About a Difficult Conversation

"It feels like this is a difficult topic to talk about"

Can ask "Is this a good time to have a discussion"

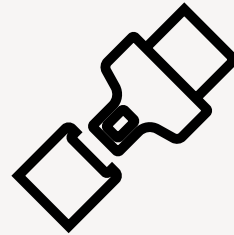
It's important for me to discuss this with you. I get the feeling that I can't bring it up.

Can you help me come up with a plan to discuss this together?

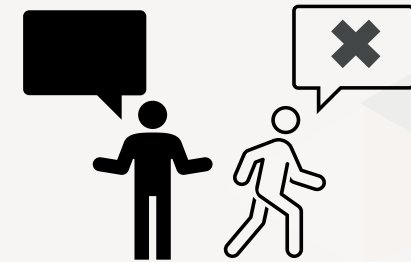
Naming Negativity Skillfully Diffuses it



Don't be afraid
to label
negative
emotions



Labeling emotions
skillfully deactivate
amygdala and
creates safety



Ignoring
emotions
gives them
energy

The Four Steps of Listening with NVC

1

Observations: *What facts are being communicated?*

2

What feelings are being experienced?

3

What are this person's needs?

4

What are they trying to request?



How to listen to unskillful communication

- 1 Listening to unskillful communication is as important as learning to communicate skillfully!
- 2 Your counterparts who aren't in this course will continue to communicate unskillfully.
- 3 Don't try and force NVC on anybody - help them by listening.
- 4 Ask yourself: what does this person need?



How to listen to unskillful communication

1

If they are upset, help them calm down.

2

Help name emotion in skillful way.

3

Mirror back their feelings.

4

“It sounds like you need (x), and you are asking me to (x).”

5

“Did I get that right?”



Creating a Culture of Healthy Communication

- 1 Model, don't preach.
- 2 Share resources.
- 3 Create space for people to express themselves.
- 4 Commit to continued learning.



Chat GPT to Improve Communication

1

Chat GPT has limitations and isn't a substitute for working with a professional.

2

Don't share confidential information.

3

Use with caution like you would use GPS - don't drive off the road.



Chat GPT before a Difficult Conversation

1

Write out everything you want to express before a conversation.

2

Vent, be emotional, unskillful etc.

3

Serves two purposes - helps you express emotions and clarify needs.

4

Put into Chat GPT and ask “Can you please apply the principles of Nonviolent Communication to this conversation?”



Sample Response

“

"I've noticed you've been late to our meetings, which worries me because our team relies on everyone being on time. I feel concerned about how this affects our work together. Could we talk about what's happening and find a way to support you in arriving on time? I really want to work this out together."

”



Chat GPT before a Difficult Conversation

1

You can ask to regenerate response as many times as you'd like.

2

Ask to change tone.

3

Experiment and find what works for you.



Chat GPT and Emails

1

Chat GPT can analyze email threads and individual emails and help edit using the nonviolent communication principles.

2

You can add an entire email thread into Chat GPT and ask for insight about the dynamic between the two people.



Chat GPT and Emails

- 1 Ask for feedback how your emails can improve.
- 2 Ask what a counterpart's potential needs and feelings might be.
- 3 Ask for patterns in your or other's communication patterns.



Chat GPT and Conflict Resolution

1

Can be used as a neutral third party (with a grain of salt).

2

With permission, ask two parties if they are open to taking an existing email thread and having Chat GPT to analyze it using NVC principles.

3

You can discuss the results with the two people while continuing to use NVC principles.



Bonus

Zoom View



1

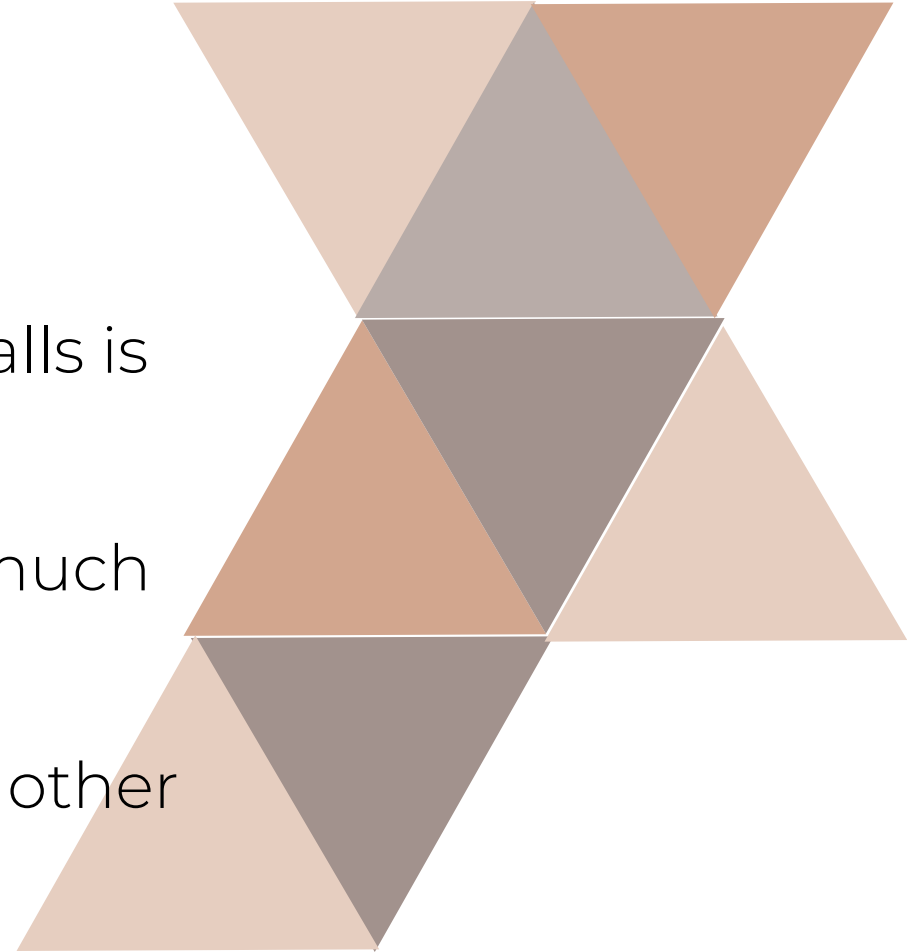
Some of the fatigue from zoom calls is from seeing your self view.

2

This is awkward and creates too much self-consciousness.

3

“Hide Self View” or minimize it on other platforms.



Toxic Communication

Toxic Culture

1

There is no substitute for healthy communication.

2

Wellness programs, compensation etc. won't solve bad communication.

3

Unhealthy communication leads to a survival mentality.



Cheat Sheet

Summary



1

State Observation

2

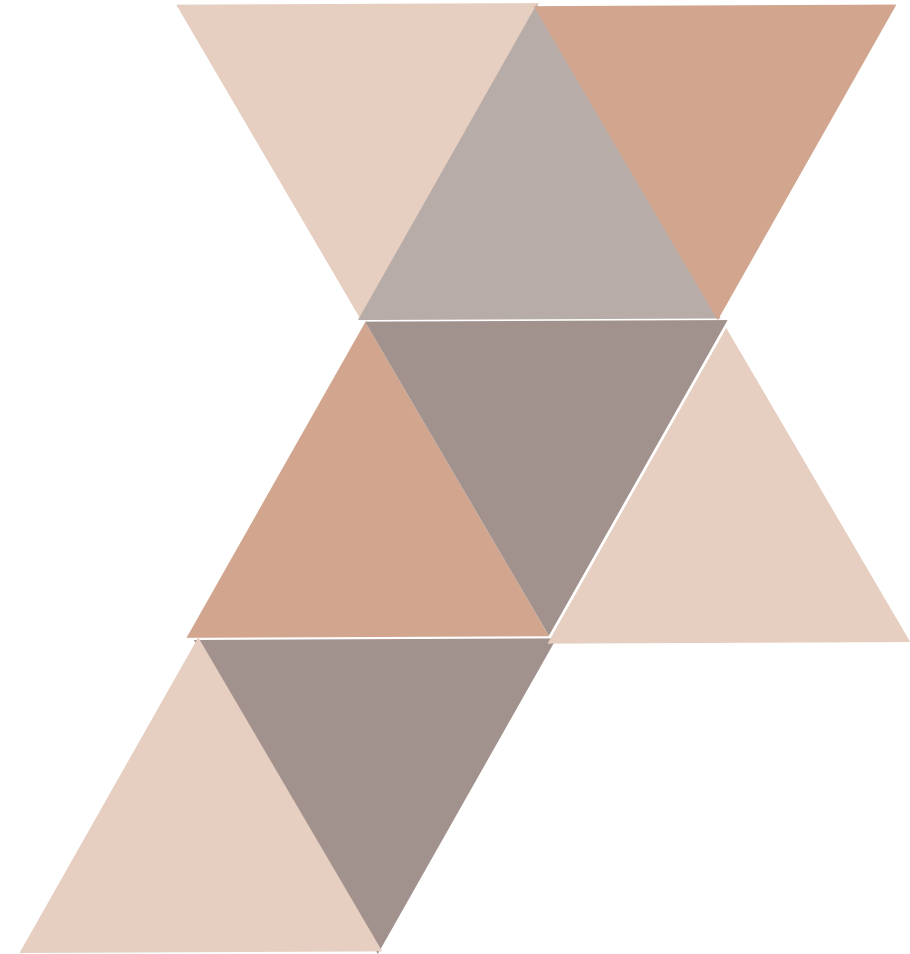
Name Feelings

3

State your Needs

4

Make a Request

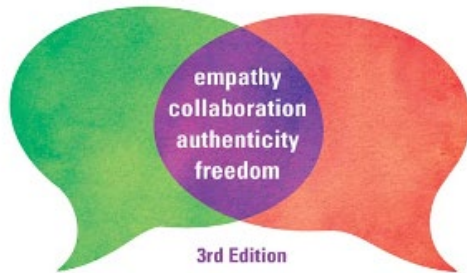


Further Learning

If "violent" means acting in ways that result in hurt or harm, then much of how we communicate could indeed be called "violent" communication.

Nonviolent COMMUNICATION

A Language of Life



Words and the way we think matters.
Find common ground with anyone, anywhere,
at any time, both personally and professionally.

MARSHALL B. ROSENBERG, PhD

Foreword by **Deepak Chopra**

Endorsed by Satya Nadella, Arun Gandhi, Tony Robbins,
Marianne Williamson, John Gray, Jack Canfield, Dr. Thomas Gordon, and others

Nonviolent Communication: A
Language of Life: Life-Changing
Tools for Healthy Relationships
by Marshall Rosenberg

Youtube/ Articles/ Chat GPT





Contact me

I will follow-up with slides via email
Bill@integratedmindtraining.com

Reach out with questions and follow-up!
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workshops on communication.



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