

Nonviolent Communication Tool

Nonviolent communication is a way of expressing yourself without blame while prioritizing understanding. By focusing on empathy and clarity, it can help to:

- **Strengthen relationships** through mutual understanding
- **Build deeper connections** by addressing needs and emotions
- **Embrace differences** without resorting to blame, criticism, or defensiveness

Follow its four core principles to help strengthen your communication and foster positive interactions.

1 - Communicate Observations

What it means: Describe what's happening objectively, without judgment or interpretation. Focus on actions and situations, not assumptions or blame.

How to do it:

- Describe the specific behaviours or events affecting you.
- Avoid mixing observations with assessments.

Examples:

- ✓ "You interrupted me while I was speaking."
- ✗ "You're always rude and don't care what I say."

What to avoid: Avoid using assumptions or judgments. Instead of saying, "You don't respect me," describe the specific behaviour that made you feel that way.

2 - Communicate Feelings

What it means: Clearly express your emotions using specific emotional vocabulary. Sharing your feelings helps others understand your experience without assigning blame.

How to do it:

- Use "I feel" statements followed by an emotion (e.g., anxious, joyful).
- Connect your feelings to specific events or behaviours.

Examples:

- ✓ "I feel overwhelmed when multiple tasks are assigned without clarification."
- ✗ "I feel like you don't care."

What to avoid: Avoid vague or blaming language. Instead of saying, "That makes me feel bad," focus on describing your emotions with clarity (e.g., "I feel frustrated when...").



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3 - Communicate Needs

What it means: Identify the unmet needs behind your feelings to clarify what's important to you and create opportunities to address them.

How to do it:

- Reflect on what your emotions reveal about your needs.
- Use direct statements about your needs and link them to your feelings.

Examples:

- ✓ "I need more clarity about my responsibilities to feel confident in my role."
- ✗ "I need you to stop being so careless."

What to avoid: Try not place blame, as it can create guilt and make it harder for the other person to respond with kindness and care.

4 - Communicate Requests

What it means: Formulate requests clearly while respecting the other person's autonomy. Focus on specific, actionable steps they can take.

How to do it:

- Use phrases like "Would you be willing to...?" to frame your requests.
- Describe the actions you'd like to see rather than the ones you don't want.

Examples:

- ✓ "Would you be willing to call before you arrive to help me plan better?"
- ✗ "Stop showing up late."

What to avoid: Avoid making demands or using threats (e.g., "If you don't do this, I'll..."). Be ready to accept a "no" and work together on alternatives if needed.

Reference: *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life* – Marshall B. Rosenberg

