



Barriers to Communication

NVC Chapter 2: Communication that Blocks Compassion

While you are waiting...



Think of something someone said to you that stopped communication. Or think of something that you said to someone that stopped communication. Write ONE of them below (trigger statement).

Breakout room activity:



Introduce yourself and share your statement. Categorize your phrase into the type of barriers Marshall Rosenberg describes in his book. (Your statement may not match these exactly.)

Communication that Blocks Compassion

(Moralistic) Judging	Making Comparisons	Denial of Responsibility	Communicating Our Desires as Demand
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correcting: "I think you meant..." • Criticizing: "It will never work. We tried it 5 years ago." • Name-calling and labeling: "Are you nuts?" • Evaluating or Analyzing: "I know he was trying to make me look bad." • "Us" versus "Them": "I can't believe THEY did that!" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare myself to others: "I'll never be able to cook like you." • Comparing others: "Your sister always did good in math" (implied "why can't you?"). • Comparing to an unrealistic achievement "Mozart finished a symphony by the age of 12." • Telling a better story: "Wait 'til you hear what happened to me...." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions of others: "I hit my child because he ran into the street." • Group pressure: "Everyone else was doing it." • Dictates of authority: "I lied because the supervisor told me to." • Gender, social, age roles: "I hate cooking, but I have to do it." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fixing or educating: "You should watch this video." • Giving unsolicited advice: "Have you thought about..." "Did you ever try..." • Moralizing: "If you cared about your children, you would..." • Explaining or using a logical argument: "You don't understand, the facts are..." • My idea better: "...hey, I've got another idea... how about"
		Avoiding	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoiding: "That reminds me of a time when I..." • Consoling or unrealistic reassuring: "I'm sure it will be better in the morning." 	

Why do we use barriers to communication?

The phrases above are common. Why might we use them? What are the possible consequences?



What's Behind the Judgmental Thinking?

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Connecting to needs behind judgments (breakout room activity):

STIMULUS: The player will share their trigger statement (see p. 1).

Feelings & Needs: Partner(s) will offer empathy guesses. The player silently receives the guesses. Note the ones that resonate with you.

PLAYER'S FEELINGS:

PLAYER'S NEEDS:

EMPATHY FOR SELF: Having chosen the feelings and needs that resonate, the player will say aloud the training wheel sentence: "When I hear _____, I feel _____ because I need/want _____."

CONNECT TO THE NEED: Now that the player has identified a need, take a moment to connect with this need. *What would it be like to have this need met?*

ARE YOU WILLING? From this space, are you willing to guess the feelings and needs behind the stimulus?

GUESSING THE OTHER'S FEELINGS:

GUESSING THE OTHER'S NEEDS:

EMPATHY FOR THE OTHER: Having guessed the feelings and needs of the other, the player will say aloud the training wheel sentence: "When they said ____, I wonder if they felt ____ because they wanted/needed ____."

CONNECT TO THE NEED: Now that the player has guessed a need for the other person, take a moment to connect with this need. *What would it be like to have this need met? Look at the stimulus — does it feel any different?*



Debrief: What was this exercise like for you?



Summary

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