

How to Practice Nonviolent Communication



Nonviolent communication helps you have happier, healthier relationships with your friends and family. It was created by Psychologist Marshall Rosenberg in the 1960s and is still a popular technique today. Nonviolent communication means speaking to others in a way that is honest and empathetic. When we are empathetic, we see things from another person's point of view and try to understand what they are feeling. And when we are honest, we are better communicators because we can share our feelings openly and help others understand us.

Practicing nonviolent communication is easy! Here's how to do it:

- **Relax and observe.** Before you react, take a moment to listen to what the other person is saying and what is happening. Look at the facts without labeling them as "good" or "bad." Try not to blame the other person or react with anger. That way, you can communicate calmly and work together to compromise. You'll also be able to practice empathy and understand where the other person is coming from.

Having a hard time staying calm? You can always leave the conversation and say that you need a second to cool down. This is a good strategy for when you're caught up in your emotions and feel like you might say something that would upset the other person. Then, you can come back and continue your conversation with a more relaxed mindset.

- **Name your feelings.** Tell the other person how you feel, but don't accuse them of making you feel this way. For example, instead of saying, "You are making me feel upset," say, "I am feeling upset right now." This will help them understand and listen without feeling like they need to defend themselves. Remember to check in and ask how they are feeling, too.



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· **Ask yourself what you need.** When our needs are met, we feel happier and don't argue as much. But when they're not, we might feel irritated and take out our frustrations on others. When you are communicating with someone, ask yourself: what do you need right now? For example, maybe you feel like you need more support from your friends or more space and time alone. To communicate your needs to others, you must understand what you need first!

· **Make a request.** This is where you tell the other person what they can do to meet your needs. When making a request, try to phrase it as a question instead of making a demand. For example, "Could you please clean the dishes after you're finished dinner?" works a lot better than saying, "Clean the dishes next time!" It's important to be clear about what you need. It's also important to listen to others' requests and see if there is anything you can do to meet their needs.

To summarize, let's practice using an example. Imagine that your sibling plays music too loud at night and it keeps you up. This makes you tired at school the next day. You want to tell your sibling to keep it down. To practice nonviolent communication, you could say:

Observation: When I hear music playing late at night...

Feeling: I feel upset...

Need: Because I have class in the morning and need to have a good sleep.

Request: If you listen to music tonight, could you please use headphones?

Communication can be tricky, especially when we're upset with someone and trying to get our feelings across without starting an argument. But by keeping these tips in mind, we can have more peaceful relationships and make sure that everyone's needs are met! Try using nonviolent communication in your everyday life to improve your listening skills and advocate for yourself.