



Key Advice

Nonviolent Communication

Nonviolent Communication (NVC), developed by Marshall Rosenberg, is a method for communicating with honesty and empathy. It is particularly useful in situations where there may be disagreement, tension or frustration. NVC is not about being polite or avoiding conflict. Instead, it helps people stay connected while expressing themselves clearly and listening to others with openness.

The goal of NVC is to foster mutual understanding and trust. It helps people express what is alive in them: their needs, emotions, and experiences, without blaming others or making assumptions. In team settings, this creates a space where participants feel safe to speak honestly, take each other seriously, and create an optimal environment for meaningful collaboration.

The Four Steps of NVC

At the heart of NVC is a simple but powerful structure consisting of four steps. These steps guide us in expressing ourselves clearly and listening attentively.

1. **Observation**

Describe what you see or hear without adding interpretation, judgment, or blame.
Example: "In the last three team meetings, we started about ten minutes later than planned."

2. **Feeling**

Name what you feel in response to what you observe. Focus on your emotional experience, not on your thoughts about others.
Example: "I feel frustrated and restless."

3. **Need**

Identify the need that is connected to your feeling. Needs are universal human values¹ such as safety, clarity, appreciation, or autonomy.
Example: "I have a need for structure and clarity."

4. **Request**

Formulate a clear, concrete, and doable request that could help meet your need. It should be stated positively and be open to negotiation.
Example: "Would you be willing to start our meetings on time from now on?"

¹ If students struggle to find the right words, you can refer them to the Feelings and Needs Inventory, based on the work of Marshall Rosenberg.



The power of NVC lies in making a shift from blame or judgment toward self-connection and constructive dialogue.

Examples

- Positive team moment: *“What really supports me in this team is that I can make mistakes without being judged. That helps me feel safe and encourages me to keep learning.”*
- Tension or frustration: *“When I get interrupted while speaking, I feel frustrated and disheartened. I need more space to express my thoughts. Could we agree to let each person finish before responding?”*