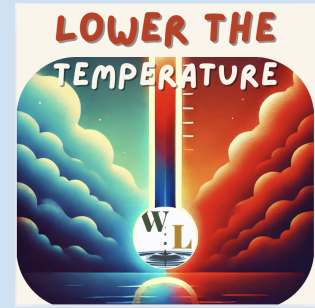


## *Cultivating Deep Listening*



### Coaching Awareness of High- and Low-Temperature Communication

**Table 1: High-Temperature Demanding or Controlling**

High-Temperature Sentence Starter	Keywords	Why They Might Raise the Temperature	NVC, Low-Temperature Variant
You/we need to...	"Need," "must"	Implies control, creating resistance.	Would you be willing to...?
I expect you/us to...	"Expect"	Places the speaker in a position of authority, dismissing collaboration.	I'd like to share what I need and hear your thoughts on how we can meet this expectation together.
Why didn't we/you...?	"Why"	Implies blame or failure, making the other person defensive.	I noticed that [specific observation]. Can we talk about what happened?
You/we should have...	"Should have"	Assigns judgment to past actions, often creating guilt or frustration.	It would have been helpful if [specific action]. How can we ensure this happens next time?
You/we must...	"Must"	Commands rather than requests, leading to resistance.	I'm requesting that [specific need]. How do you see this working?
This is how we're going to do it...	"This is how"	Suggests inflexibility, shutting down input or collaboration.	Here's one approach I have in mind. I'd like your input on this—what do you think?

**Table 2: High-Temperature Implying Blame or Judgment**

High-Temperature Sentence Starter	Keywords	Why They Might Raise the Temperature	NVC, Low-Temperature Variant
-----------------------------------	----------	--------------------------------------	------------------------------



## Cultivating Deep Listening



I don't understand why you/we...	"Why"	Questions intent in a way that feels critical or dismissive.	Can you help me understand your perspective on [specific situation]?
That's not how it's supposed to be done.	"Not supposed to"	Implies judgment and undermines the other person's approach.	I'd like to revisit the process for [specific task]. Could we look at this together?
Why can't you/we just...?	"Why," "can't you"	Suggests incompetence or exasperation, discouraging collaboration.	What support or resources would help you feel more confident about [specific task]?
I thought you/we would have...	"Thought you would"	Implies disappointment or unmet expectations without clarity.	I was expecting [specific action]. Was there something that got in the way?
This doesn't seem like it's working because of...	"Doesn't seem," "because"	Assigns blame to others or external factors without addressing solutions.	I'm observing some challenges with [specific issue]. How do you think we can address this?
What were you/we thinking when you...?	"What were you thinking"	Challenges judgment or intent, creating defensiveness.	Can you walk me through your thought process? I'd like to understand your reasoning better.

**Table 3: High-Temperature Dismissing or Minimizing Input**

High-Temperature Sentence Starter	Keywords	Why They Might Raise the Temperature	NVC, Low-Temperature Variant
We've already tried that.	"Already," "tried"	Dismisses new ideas, making the speaker appear closed-minded.	I appreciate your suggestion. Could you share how you see it working differently this time?



## Cultivating Deep Listening



That's not relevant right now.	"Not relevant"	Suggests the other person's contributions are unimportant or misplaced.	Can we table that for later? I'd like to focus on [current priority] first.
That's not a priority.	"Not a priority"	Minimizes the other person's concerns, reducing engagement.	Right now, we're focusing on [specific goal]. Could we revisit this after that's addressed?
Let's move on from that.	"Move on"	Implies the topic is unworthy of discussion, discouraging deeper dialogue.	This is an important topic. Let's make sure it's captured to discuss further at a better time.
I don't think that's the best idea.	"Not the best idea"	Critiques without offering constructive feedback or alternatives.	I see where you're coming from. Can we explore other options to see what aligns best?
We don't have time to discuss that.	"Don't have time"	Dismisses input by prioritizing speed over inclusivity.	We're on a tight schedule today. Let's schedule time to discuss this in more detail later.

**Table 4: High-Temperature Overgeneralizing or Assuming Intent**

High-Temperature Sentence Starter	Keywords	Why They Might Raise the Temperature	NVC, Low-Temperature Variant
You/we always...	"Always"	Uses absolutes, making people feel unfairly generalized.	I've noticed a pattern where [specific behavior]. Can we talk about how to address this?
You/we never...	"Never"	Creates defensiveness by erasing positive contributions.	I'm concerned about [specific action not happening]. How can we work together to address it?



## Cultivating Deep Listening



Everyone agrees that...	"Everyone agrees"	Assumes consensus without evidence, silencing dissent.	Some people have shared that [specific feedback]. What's your perspective on this?
Clearly, this isn't working.	"Clearly"	States opinion as fact, which can feel dismissive.	I'm concerned that [specific situation] isn't achieving the results we need. What are your thoughts?
You/we don't seem to understand...	"Don't understand"	Implies incompetence or lack of capability.	Can I clarify something to ensure we're on the same page?
It's obvious that...	"Obvious"	Assumes agreement, leaving no room for discussion.	It seems to me that [specific observation]. Does that align with what you're seeing?

**Table 5: High-Temperature Closing Off Input or Shutting Down**

High-Temperature Sentence Starter	Keywords	Why They Might Raise the Temperature	NVC, Low-Temperature Variant
This is already decided.	"Already decided"	Shuts down input, making others feel excluded from decisions.	Here's the decision we've come to. I'd love to hear your thoughts on how to implement it effectively.
We're going with my idea.	"My idea"	Centers authority on the speaker, ignoring other contributions.	I'd like to suggest this approach. Does this align with your understanding, or do you see alternatives?
I'm not looking for suggestions.	"Not looking"	Dismisses collaboration, reducing buy-in.	For now, we're focused on execution. Later, we can reflect and gather input for future improvements.



## Cultivating Deep Listening



Let's just stick to the plan.	"Stick to the plan"	Implies rigidity and lack of adaptability.	The current plan is working well for now. Are there adjustments you'd recommend for next time?
We'll handle it my way.	"My way"	Suggests inflexibility and dismisses alternative solutions.	This is the approach I feel works best currently. Let's revisit if we see any issues arise.

### Cited Work

Rosenberg, M. B. (2003). *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life*. Puddledancer Press.

Center for Nonviolent Communication. (2011). *Assessing the impact of Nonviolent Communication: Final evaluation report*. Center for Nonviolent Communication. Retrieved from <https://www.ganvc.org/research/EVAL-2011-Final.pdf>

Ritchie, J. (2016). *An exploratory study of the relationship between defensive and supportive communication climate and organizational effectiveness* (Master's thesis). University of Ottawa. Retrieved from <https://ruor.uottawa.ca/server/api/core/bitstreams/7c51d4e7-53a2-48ea-937c-63d5edc4e2c5/content>

Becker, J. (2017). *The creation of defensiveness in social interaction II: A model of defensive communication among romantic couples* (Doctoral dissertation). University of Alabama. Retrieved from <https://ir-api.ua.edu/api/core/bitstreams/60f4ccfa-9758-4ca7-b99b-03254bc6d287/content>

Peck, E. W. D. (1998). *Leadership and defensive communication: A grounded theory study of leadership reaction to defensive communication* (Master's thesis). University of British Columbia. Retrieved from [file:///Users/chrisbriggs-hale/Desktop/ubc\\_1998-0109.pdf](file:///Users/chrisbriggs-hale/Desktop/ubc_1998-0109.pdf)

## Marshall Rosenberg's Nonviolent Communication

Rosenberg, M. B. (2003). *Nonviolent communication: A language of life*. Puddledancer Press.

### How You Can Use the NVC Process



Clearly expressing how I

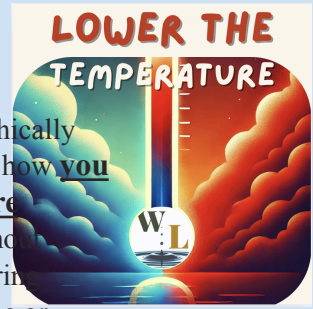
am



# Cultivating Deep Listening

without blaming or  
criticizing

Empathically  
receiving how you  
are  
without  
hearing  
blame or  
criticism



## OBSERVATIONS

1. What I observe (*see, hear, remember, imagine, free from my evaluations*) that does or does not contribute to my well-being:  
"When I (see, hear) . . . "

1. What you observe (*see, hear, remember, imagine, free from your evaluations*) that does or does not contribute to your well-being:  
"When you see/hear . . . "  
(Sometimes unspoken when offering empathy)

## FEELINGS

2. How I feel (*emotion or sensation rather than thought*) in relation to what I observe:  
"I feel ... "

2. How you feel (*emotion or sensation rather than thought*) in relation to what you observe:  
"You feel ... "

## NEEDS

3. What I need or value (*rather than a preference, or a specific action*) that causes my feelings:  
" ... because I need/value ... "

3. What you need or value (*rather than a preference, or a specific action*) that causes your feelings:  
" ... because you need/value ... "

Clearly requesting that  
which would enrich **my**  
life without demanding

Empathically receiving that  
which would enrich **your** life  
without hearing any demand

## REQUESTS

4. The concrete actions I would like taken:  
"Would you be willing to ... ?"

4. The concrete actions you would like taken:  
"Would you like ... ?"  
(Sometimes unspoken when offering empathy)



© Marshall B. Rosenberg. For more information about Marshall B. Rosenberg or



# *Cultivating Deep Listening*

the Center for Nonviolent Communication please visit [www.CNVC.org](http://www.CNVC.org).

