

## Union of Saints, Humanizing vs. Dehumanizing

### Humanizing Conversations

- **Language of recognition:** Acknowledges the person's humanity, experiences, and feelings ("I hear you," "That must be difficult").
  - **Respectful framing:** Talks *to* people, not *about* them as objects or stereotypes.
  - **Curiosity, not judgment:** Seeks to understand instead of assuming.
  - **Empowerment:** Encourages agency and dignity.
  - **Connection-building:** Words foster trust, safety, and shared humanity.
  - **Impact:** Can prevent despair, reduce conflict, and literally save lives.
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### Dehumanizing Conversations

- **Language of erasure:** Ignores or dismisses lived experience ("That doesn't matter," "You're overreacting").
- **Stereotyping / objectification:** Reducing someone to a label, category, or single action.
- **Weaponization of words:** Using speech to shame, humiliate, control, or intimidate.
- **Othering:** Treating someone as "less than" or outside the circle of worth.
- **Disconnection:** Creates alienation, fear, and resentment.
- **Impact:** Can worsen isolation, escalate violence, and contribute to loss of hope or life.

## Humanizing vs. Dehumanizing Conversation Checklist

### Ask Yourself Before / During / After Speaking:

#### 1. Recognition

- Am I treating this person as a full human being, with feelings and needs?
- Or am I reducing them to a problem, label, or stereotype?

#### 2. Tone & Framing

- Am I speaking *with* them (dialogue) or *at/about* them (monologue/gossip)?
- Does my tone convey respect, or does it diminish?

### 3. Intent vs. Impact

- Is my intention to connect, support, or clarify?
- Could my words land as shaming, silencing, or threatening instead?

### 4. Curiosity

- Am I asking open, curious questions to understand?
- Or am I making assumptions and closing off their story?

### 5. Empowerment

- Does what I'm saying affirm their agency and dignity?
- Or does it strip away their voice, choice, or self-worth?

### 6. Connection

- Am I building trust and safety?
  - Or am I creating distance, fear, or alienation?
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## Quick Humanizing Language Swaps

### Instead of...

"You're overreacting."

"That's just who you are."

"Calm down."

"People like you..."

### Try...

"I hear that this feels big for you. Can you tell me more?"

"I see this is part of your experience, but I know you're more than one moment."

"I want to understand what's upsetting you."

"You, as you are..."