Georgios Mediation

Au service du lien humain par la Communication NonViolente

# GOOD COMMUNICATION PRACTICES

- **If anger is present, step out of the conversation**
  - In general, when we are angry, communication becomes ineffective. We risk significantly escalating the conflict, and there is little chance of being truly heard.
  - It is possible to express anger in a nonviolent way. However, this requires at least basic skills of the NVC (Nonviolent Communication*) approach.
  - The best way to manage anger is to connect with our own unmet (human) needs in the situation (self-empathy). Then, when the anger transforms into another emotion, such as sadness or frustration, it can be helpful to practice empathy toward the other person by asking ourselves:
    *"What need is the other person trying to protect by acting in a way that bothers me?"*
  - We are then better prepared to address the conflict in a more effective and pleasant manner (using the NVC approach).

- **Avoid judging or criticizing the person you are speaking with**
  - Judgments and criticism often trigger defensive reactions.
  - In conflicts, judgments and criticism are often the "tragic" expression of unmet needs. They are tragic because when needs are expressed in the form of judgments or criticism, they are unlikely to be heard or met. Even when they are, the relational cost , and possibly more, can be very high.

- **Let people finish speaking without interrupting them**

- **Listen to understand, not to respond**

  - For example, when we hear an opinion that differs from our own, it is useful to try to understand what it is based on.
  - To do so, it is often helpful to ask questions such as:
    - "What observations led you to that conclusion?"
    - "Have you had any particular experience related to this?"
    - "When you say that, what exactly are you referring to?"
    - "What observations are you basing this on?"

- **Avoid using the phrase "Yes, but..."**
  - The word *"but"* is often perceived as dismissing what the other person has just said.
  - Instead, it can be helpful to acknowledge what we have heard, for example by paraphrasing the other person's message to check our understanding. We can then express our own perspective by beginning with: *"At the same time..."* This allows us to add another element without invalidating what has already been said.

- **Avoid the "Who is right?" game**

- We are educated in a society where being right is often seen as extremely important. When we are convinced that we are right, we tend to see this as proof that the other person is wrong (binary thinking).
- It is often preferable to speak from our own experience:
    - "I believe that…", "My experience is that…", "From my perspective…", "According to my sources of information…"
    - This approach is usually more constructive than claiming to possess the absolute and objective truth and assuming that anyone who sees things differently must be wrong.

- **Limit yourself to expressing your opinion without trying to change the other person's opinion**
    - It is very difficult, and often impossible, to directly change another person's opinion.
    - In most cases, it is more effective to express our point of view and give the other person time to process it.
    - If our perspective is relevant, the other person may eventually embrace it later, in light of new experiences or information.

- **Connect before correcting**
    - If we want to make a remark or suggest a change to another person, it is preferable to connect with them first.
    - First, check their state of mind and whether they are available to hear us.
    - Without this prior connection, we risk not being heard and may even worsen the situation.
    - Personally, I find it useful to apply an 80/20 rule in relationships: at least 80% of the time should be devoted to sharing, listening, and connecting, and no more than 20% to requests or adjustments (NVC requests).

- **Pay attention to your tone of voice**
    - If the tone of voice is perceived as aggressive, it may overshadow the actual words being spoken, even if those words are technically nonviolent.
    - The "melody" of the voice can have a greater impact than the words themselves.

- **In conflict situations, use the Nonviolent Communication method**
    - Observation – Feeling – Need – Request.
    - This method is ideally learned through NVC training.

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* Nonviolent Communication – A language of life - Marshall B. Rosenberg