

# Life-Alienating Communication

## Criticism

One form of Life-Alienated Communication is criticism implying wrongness or badness, e.g. "The problem with you is that you are too selfish (lazy, insensitive, inappropriate, etc.). Other words for this kind of communication include "insults," "blame," "put downs," "diagnoses," and "judgments."

## Denial of Responsibility

A second form of life-Alienated Communication denies personal responsibility for our thoughts, feelings, and actions. An example would be words such as "have to" in the phrase, "There are some things that you have to do, whether you like to do them or not."

We deny responsibility for our actions when we attribute the cause of our actions to:

- The actions of others ("I hit my child because he ran into the street.")
- Vague, impersonal forces ("I cleaned up my room because it was necessary.")
- Our psychological history, condition, diagnosis, or personal history ("I drink because I am an alcoholic.")
- To the dictates of authority ("I lied to the client because the boss told me to.")
- To group pressure ("I started smoking because everyone else in the group was smoking.")
- To institutional policies, rules, and regulations ("I gave grades to my student because it was the school district's policy.")
- To sex roles, social roles, or age roles ("I hate going to work but I do it because I am a father and a husband.")
- To uncontrollable impulses ("I was overcome by my urge to eat the candy bar.")

## Demands

Demands are a third form of Life-Alienating Communication. A demand, as defined within Nonviolent Communication, is a request which implicitly or explicitly threatens some form of blame or punishment if the request is not acted upon.

## Justification of Reward and Punishment

A fourth form of Life-Alienated Communication is language associated with the concept that certain actions merit reward and certain merit punishment. An example would be, "He deserves to be punished for what he did."

## Feelings

### When needs are met

**Comfortable**, easy, full, satisfied, content, pleased, relaxed, fulfilled, safe

**Rested**, refreshed, rejuvenated, healthy, energized, strong, invigorated, exuberant, alert, clearheaded, steady, carefree

**Interested**, curious, engaged, intrigued, intent, involved, absorbed, fascinated, stimulated, aroused, engrossed, creative

**Glad**, happy, excited, joyful, delighted, encouraged, amused, playful, confident, cheerful

**Jubilant**, joyful, ecstatic, exhilarated, rapturous, thrilled, alive, passionate, enthusiastic, radiant, adventurous

**Peaceful**, calm, serene, expansive, composed, tranquil, blissful, secure, centered, carefree

**Confident**, proud, empowered, hopeful, optimistic, secure, relieved

**Loving**, connected, touched, warm, affectionate, tender, open, friendly, compassionate, nurtured, amorous

**Grateful**, appreciative, thankful, moved

**Awed**, inspired, wonder, amazed, astonished, spellbound, entranced, enthralled, enchanted, reverent, attuned

### When needs are not met

**Uncomfortable**, uneasy, concerned, troubled, unsettled, disturbed, startled

**Tired**, weary, fatigued, exhausted, lethargic, heavy, sleepy, lifeless, bored, depleted

**Confused**, uncertain, unclear, unsure, conflicted, dizzy, ambivalent, doubtful, hesitant, torn, perplexed, mystified, lost

**Sad**, hurt, pain, misery, grief, anguish, distress, miserable, sorrow, mournful

**Nervous**, anxious, tense, distressed, edgy, jittery, distracted, distraught, overwhelmed, daunted, frazzled

**Fearful**, worried, wary, foreboding, dread, horror, petrified, scared, mistrustful, suspicious, alarmed

**Annoyed**, frustrated, aggravated, irritated, displeased, impatient, irked

**Mad**, angry, furious, outraged, vengeful, exasperated, bitter, resentful, disgusted, indignant, appalled

**Disconnected**, indifferent, apathetic, numb, withdrawn, distant, reserved

**Gloomy**, discouraged, melancholy, lonely, depressed, hopeless, resigned, disheartened, despairing

**Embarrassed**, ashamed, guilty, regretful, remorseful, insecure

## NEEDS INVENTORY

### Autonomy

- To choose one's dreams, goals, values
- To choose one's plan for fulfilling one's dreams, goals, values

### Celebration

- To celebrate the creation of life and dreams fulfilled
- To celebrate losses: loved ones, dreams, etc. (mourning)

### Interdependence

- Acceptance
- Appreciation
- Closeness
- Community
- Consideration
- Contribution to the enrichment of life (to exercise one's power by giving that which contributes to life)
- Emotional Safety
- Empathy
- Honesty (the empowering honesty that enables us to learn from our limitations)
- Love
- Reassurance
- Respect
- Support
- Trust
- Understanding
- Warmth

### Integrity

- Authenticity
- Creativity
- Meaning
- Self-worth

### Physical Nurturance

- Air
- Food
- Movement, exercise
- Protection from life-threatening things: viruses, bacteria, predatory animals, other humans
- Rest
- Sexual expression
- Shelter
- Touch
- Water

### Play

- Fun, etc.

### Spiritual Communion

- Beauty
- Harmony
- Inspiration
- Order
- Peace

### The Process of Nonviolent Communication

