

Nonviolent Communication is both a consciousness and a process of communicating. It's not so much the words we use, but how we *choose* to be with ourselves and others. The following are ways you can communicate compassionately with yourself and others:

1. When you hear yourself judging, evaluating, analyzing, or labeling yourself or others, try to stop and turn it into a pure observation of what you actually see or hear. Then ask yourself, *What am I feeling and needing at this moment?*



2. When you hear yourself say *I should...*, *I must...*, or *I have to...*, try to change it to *I choose to...*, *I want to...*, *I would like to...* and then connect with your needs and values. For example, *I want to wash the dishes because I value cleanliness and order. I choose to go to work because I value the contributions I make there, and the meaning and purpose it provides me.*
3. Be concrete and specific. Use positive language, asking for what you do want and not what you don't want. If you make requests of others or self, it will be easier to hear a request than a demand.
4. If you hear *no*, connect with the *yes* behind the *no* by continuing to connect with your own and the other person's needs before going to a strategy or action to meet the needs.
5. Remember, seek first to understand and then be understood. If you first give empathy to the other person, it is more likely they will be able to hear your feelings and needs.
6. Know that understanding others does not equal agreement with their thinking or strategies. Some people are unwilling to give empathy because they don't agree with someone. Once the other person has felt understood then it's a good time to share your honesty.
7. No matter what someone says, or how they say it, it is NOT a statement about you: it is about **their** feelings and **their** needs from **their** world of experience.