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M3. EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN THE WORK OF A VOLUNTEER

*When you speak, you only repeat what you already know.
When you listen, you have the chance to learn something new.*

„GOOD COMMUNICATION” - WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Each work requires communication, which is why it is difficult to overestimate its importance. Every day a volunteer deals with communication at various levels: with the organisation, with coordinators (leaders) of the organisation, other volunteers, pupils and their guardians. Good communication is a skill that leads to the intended effect. However, in the course of each contact, distortions, misunderstandings, and disruptions can occur, making communication less effective. The gap between the intention and the result can have a significant impact on work efficiency and the quality of interpersonal contacts.

The ability to communicate effectively depends on many skills:

Proactive listening

One of the habits of effective acting¹ relates to effective communication - try first to understand and only then – to be understood.

This refers to the ability to consciously listen at a deep, empathetic level, trying to understand the intentions and point of view of the other person, and to make a deliberate effort to understand the other person's message. It is not as easy as it might seem and the proof of it is the fact that we are

¹ Stephen R. Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Free Press; Revised edition, 2004.

successful in proactive listening only when we like the interlocutor or when he/she says things that are interesting to us and in line with our expectations. With this in mind, any important conversation should be approached with the intention of understanding the message - listen to hear better.

Proactive listening becomes especially important when we have to decide to take action on the basis of the information obtained (communication error can cost us a lot), as well as when we feel the desire to reject the message. This desire (or rather reluctance) makes it difficult to listen carefully, which may result in very valuable information escaping our attention.

Hereinafter, there is a model² which facilitates the understanding of the communication process between people.

Clarifying and checking

There is a possibility of distorting any communication. Therefore, the first step to effective communication is to accept that there is something of value in what others have to say. This makes it easier to evaluate the information in terms of both its content (**what** the other person says) and the intent (**why** and **what for** they say it). By using open-ended questions, reflecting or paraphrasing, you are showing that you care about understanding and being understood. Accurate diagnosis of the situation increases the likelihood of making the right decision.

Bridging the gap in opinion

Different opinions and different points of view are fertile ground for a conflict to break out. Both sides tend to have an attitude in which they perceive the situation in terms of a potential 'win' or 'loss'. Concentration on defending one's own position and scoring the "opponent", distracts the conflicted persons from the essence of the matter, and apart from a possible temporal advantage of one of them, it does not move a step towards good understanding. What should I do when there is a disagreement? First of all, identify it by checking two things:

- What and why is important for me?
- What and why is important for my opponent?

The difference of opinion may be due to different definitions of the same matters, their different interpretation, divergent needs or opposing values. Once you've realised the difference, it's up to you to decide what to do next. You can engage in a discussion to talk about the difference, look for ideas, and find alternatives if you are ready to do so. You may as well give up (e.g. when you just don't feel up to it, or you are limited by the restrictions in place).

The above presentation shows a basic suggestion in a situation of a potential conflict. You may not always have the resources to undertake the search for ideas and alternative solutions. In addition, these limitations do not have to be on your side at all, they can be completely independent of you.

² Discussed in the book by Friedemann Schulz von Thun, *The Art of Talking to One Another*, Hanser 2020.

However, before you decide whether to discuss a disagreement or to give up, always check what is the essence of this difference, i.e. what and why is important for you, and explain what and why is important for the interlocutor. It will be an extremely valuable and important lesson for you for the future.

Showing recognition

It has been commonly understood that praise and recognition are the roles of leaders, teachers and parents. Complementing your superiors is not a commonly accepted behaviour. On the other hand, both research and daily practice show that regardless of status, age, or social role, everyone needs recognition and praise³. By giving them regularly and in the right proportions, you have a positive effect on both yourself and the recipient. You invest in positive emotions and relationships.

Expressing gratitude and thanking (for help, participation, support, suggestions) are very authentic and well-received expressions, appreciated by everyone - colleagues, pupils, superiors, and parents - especially when we want to show that we notice what they do and appreciate it because it is important to us and has a positive impact on our lives.

I SAY MORE THAN I SAY, I HEAR WHAT I WANT TO HEAR – FOUR LEVELS OF MESSAGE

Every message, like any other communication, has a sender and a recipient. What the sender expresses at the content level is not the only aspect of the communication process. It is equally important why she/he says this and what goal he/she wants to achieve. The diagram below illustrates the complexity of interpersonal communication resulting from the fact that many factors, both content and relationships (beliefs, views, opinions that are not directly formulated) are important.

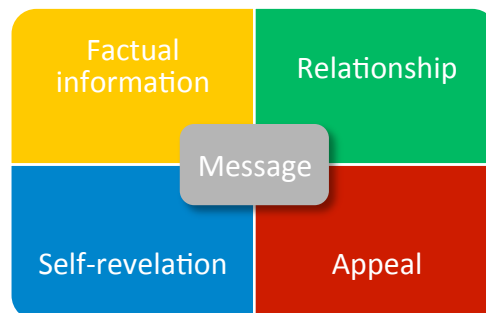


Figure 1 Four-sides model – Four levels of message according to Friedmann Schulz von Thun

1. Content (factual information) - what do I want to communicate? What are the facts? What? Where? When?

³ Miłosz Brzeziński, *Głaskologia*, 989 Instytut Kreowania Skuteczności 2013.

2. Mutual relationship - how do I treat my interlocutor? What do I think about my interlocutor and what is our relationship to each other?
3. Self-revelation – what am I saying about myself and about my current state?
4. Appeal - what I want to achieve, and what impact to make. What do I want to persuade my interlocutor to do?

All 4 levels are equally important, as well as the consistency of the message - compliance of the verbal message (spoken words) with the non-verbal one (gestures, facial expressions, voice volume, etc.). Intonation and tone of voice as well as body language can strengthen the message, and they can also confuse the recipient ("but what is your point?" - a question expressed directly or appearing in the head of the interlocutor).

Examples of inconsistency:

- You say you care about something but your voice lacks energy and your resignation is visible.
- With a raised tone you ensure that you are calm.
- You declare yourself as being open to a different point of view while crossing your arms over your chest and leaning back.
- You want someone to help you with your duties and instead of expressing the request directly; you resentfully say, "I'm rushed off my feet".

The recipient, who passes the information through his/her own filters of perception, gives meaning and interprets it, also influences the quality of interpersonal communication. Everyone has glasses with their favourite filter and they are not always rose-coloured glasses ...

The recipient is not free from distortions and misrepresentations, because reacting to all four levels of speech, she/he may also tend to treat the message selectively, and according to "I only hear what I want to hear". This phenomenon is known as an oversized ear. The recipient's oversized ear can be:

- Objective ear – focuses on facts; may not hear the interlocutors' request
- Appeal ear – focuses on the wishes and needs of the interlocutor; may ignore the facts.
- Self-revelation ear – focuses on the interlocutor's "I" message; searches for feelings and motives behind the words.
- Relational ear (touchy) - is sensitive to the way the sender addresses and expresses his/her opinion on him/her.

M3.S1. SUPPORTING COMMUNICATION WITH YOURSELF

Your self-image will have a significant impact on your level of satisfaction with communicating with other people. High self-confidence will make your communication less burdened by your struggle for status or the so-called a touchy ear.

The level of self-confidence is a product of many factors, including those that occurred in the past. From the point of view of internal positive communication with oneself, two components deserve special mention:

Belief in your own effectiveness

The building blocks of self-confidence are attitude, beliefs and previous experience, the ability to manage your own emotions and also a certain strength that helps to recover relatively quickly after failures. As W. Churchill said, "Success is going from failure to failure without losing your enthusiasm." In this context, success is the ability to assess resources realistically, rational thinking, no fear of creativity or making mistakes, flexibility, openness to change, and also trust in competences (own and those of colleagues). The energy that inspires self-confidence is the conviction that "I can do it".

Self-confidence can and should be developed. Here are some strategies:

1. Always be on your side - don't scold, blame or condemn yourself. How many per cent of the time do you criticize yourself instead of taking your side? If your pattern is self-criticism and negative self-esteem, such as "How could I have been so stupid?!", "Why did I mess things up again?" notice that you are criticizing yourself and who you are. Change your questions by focusing on facts, actions, and behaviour. Reply: "What went well?" And when things haven't gone according to plan, ask yourself, "What exactly went wrong?", "What should I do to accept the results and not feel bad about it anymore?" Regardless of everything, always be accompanied by the mantra "I am OK, You are OK, others are also OK".
2. Make a list of successes. Take a large piece of paper (you can use a flipchart), set aside some time and go on a journey from the past to the present. Draw a life axis, divide it into periods (three years, five years - as you prefer), and then, for each age group, write down all the situations in which you felt proud of the achievement. You may be tempted to depreciate your own successes, especially when you are trying to compare it to your perfect dream. The following may then appear: "yes, but..." If you do that, the more necessary this exercise is for you. Regardless of whether they are big or small successes, great triumphs or small satisfaction - everything has its own weight and importance because it has shaped a unique person. You.
3. Five Angels in your Life. Consider what five people in your life played a key role in building your self-confidence? List the names of these people and answer the following questions:
 - 1) How did these people express themselves, personify their self-confidence?
 - 2) What did they encourage you to do?

- 3) How did they motivate you?
- 4) What did they say and do that made you feel they believed in you?
- 5) What did you learn from them?
- 6) How much is their teaching present in your life?
- 7) What makes you remember about their lessons? And on the other hand, what makes you forget about their lessons?

Write freely; give in to the flow of consciousness and intuition. Only after finishing the work, compare the notes you made on each person. Do you notice any recurring events, descriptions? What are your conclusions?

4. Unconditional self-acceptance is a job to be done and consists in the determination that you accept yourself whether or not you've achieved a goal or earned recognition. Unconditional self-acceptance means accepting yourself as you are, instead of "I would be pleased with myself if...", "I would accept myself but..." It's assuming that I'm always good enough. Does this mean that I don't have to change anything, improve and be happy with a poor result, or that I lack ambition? Not at all! Self-acceptance means that you accept yourself as a human being, as a person of value, EVEN if the results of your actions today are not perfect and DESPITE the mistakes you have made. Lack of self-acceptance will cut your wings ("I screwed up again", "I'm hopeless"), while the implementation of the principle of unconditional self-acceptance will reduce your fear, reduce anxiety "what will others say?" and frustration. Note that it is your actions that may need correction (after all, you develop and learn from birth to death!), not yourself. A witch-hunt (looking for the guilty one) is of no use. This is a barren task. You are always OK! And others also.

Self-respect

Everything that has been said before comes from the belief that you are a valuable person. Not better and not worse than the others. Just as important, just as respectable. When we respect ourselves, we show others how to treat us, and we also accept other people, whether they share our views or not.

Whether you like it or not, your inner self-image influences your verbal and non-verbal communication. What you think about yourself will affect the intonation of your voice, confidence in your voice, body posture, how you react to different views, and how you feel every time you talk to another person. Do you want to feel good? Just think of yourself well! It is worth emphasizing: self-esteem, unconditional self-acceptance, self-respect has nothing to do with arrogance, conceit, looking down at others. The flip side of the coin: self-denial, constant inner criticism and self-blame

are harmful gremlins⁴ whose snaky aim is to belittle you, which has nothing to do with humbleness or modesty. Let these beautiful words of Marianne Williamson⁵ be an inscription to you:

Your playing small doesn't serve the world.

There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you.

We are all meant to shine, as children do.

Let this be your beacon.

⁴ You will find evidence for the existence of gremlins and learn effective ways to deal with them in the book by Rick Carson, *Taming your gremlin: A Surprisingly Simple Method for Getting Out of Your Own Way*, HarperCollins Publishers Inc. 2003.

⁵ This passage from the book by Marianne Williamson, *A Return to Love*, is sometimes attributed to Nelson Mandela. But he was also quoting Mrs. Williamson.

M3.S2. ASSERTIVENESS

A 'No' uttered from deepest conviction is better and greater than a 'Yes' merely uttered to please or worse, to avoid trouble. (Mahatma Gandhi)

Volunteers are usually people with a big heart, ready to help others, willing to take on additional tasks, but ... sometimes having problems with assertiveness. Some myths have arisen around this topic, so let's first clarify what assertiveness is and what is not. A lot is said about it, not always reflecting the essence of the matter.

The core of an assertive attitude (behaviour) is everything that is discussed in the section on unconditional self-acceptance, managing with things, and self-respect.

You have a lot of work/ study, yet you agree to take part in some local event that a friend urges you to do. You know that your work is urgent, and the party will anyway take place without your participation, and yet not only you do not refuse, but also come out with the initiative to bake two cakes. Then you sit at night on your own work, scolding your inability to say "no" firmly. Again, you reproach yourself for not being able to say "no", you regret that your needs are not respected, and as a result you feel very badly about it (and yourself). Another example: you feel angry that someone criticized you in a wrong way. It would be best to calmly address the facts, present arguments, talk about your feelings, start a conversation, but... you did not have the courage. By fearing a "quarrel", you swallow the feeling of humiliation, suppressing anger at yourself because of the unfair opinion. Sounds familiar?

Assertiveness is not an inborn feature, although previous experiences may have a significant impact on its appearance or absence. You can definitely learn it.

One way you can experiment with yourself is to add a "NO Day" to your calendar (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday ... "What day do we have today? Today is the "NO Day"). It means moving beyond your safe comfort zone, but only there you can experience and learn something.

THE „NO DAY“

Acknowledge that today, whatever happens, you say NO.

However, do not plan official matters for the NO Day, because you it may not end well at all. But maybe just in case, inform your immediate surroundings that you are planning such a day today.

Someone proposes that you take a walk - you calmly say NO. Someone talks you into eating your favourite cookie? You answer NO. A close friend ask you to do him/her a favour - you answer NO, someone offers help - you also say NO etc. Always calmly, always friendly - you refuse. At the end of the day (Phew! It must have been tough!) you summarize the NO Day by writing down (preferably in a special notebook for assertiveness exercises) the answers to the following questions:

1. When was it easy for you to say NO, and when did you feel resistance or embarrassment?
2. How did you feel saying NO when someone asked for something?
3. How did you feel when someone tried to get you to do something?
4. What was the difference between saying NO to friends and to strangers?
5. In what situations did you feel okay to say NO?

6. What did you think about yourself when you said NO? How did this affect your self-esteem?
7. What specific emotions you felt in various situations? Fear? Anger? Shame? Or maybe something completely different?
8. When you feel bad when saying NO, which of your needs is unmet? How else can you take care of it?

One of the obstacles to developing assertiveness is the fear that those around you will start to perceive you as being selfish, aggressive, or that you will lose friends when you start saying no. It may be that the "friends" who used you because of submission will not be happy, or even lose interest in you. But here is the question - do you still want to have such friends? Moreover, neither communicating one's needs does not have to be aggressive, nor does refusing or asking for help have to be submissive or fearful. Assertiveness is not getting your own way at all costs, or the art of selfishness. It is your right to be a free and respected person.

FIVE RIGHTS OF ASSERTIVENESS⁶:

1. You have the right to express yourself, your opinions, needs and feelings - as long as you do not hurt others.
2. You have the right to express yourself - even when it hurts someone else - as long as your intentions are not aggressive.
3. You have the right to make your requests to others - as long as you recognise that they have the right to refuse.
4. There are situations where the rights of individuals are not clear. However, you always have the right to discuss the situation with another person.
5. You have the right to exercise your rights.

As you might have already noticed, each of the above rights relates to the foundations of an autonomous person, respecting her/his own and other people's rights. This is a very important aspect, because, as you probably know from your own experience, submission does not add power or well being, and aggressive people are rather given a wide berth (maybe with the exception of sociopathic personalities who feed on conflict, and therefore constantly provoke arguments and confrontation).

The right to express yourself, your opinions, needs and feelings - as long as you do not hurt others.

You can have an absolutely different point of view, an opinion opposite to that shared by the majority, and there is no reason not to communicate it. If you do not cross the borders of personal areas of other persons, i.e. you do not put pressure to change their mind, do not criticize their views, do not mock them, do not use hate speech - everything is fine. You have space for your own views; you give this space to others.

The right to express yourself - even if it hurts someone else - as long as your intentions aren't aggressive. Let's go back to the example on page 8. You can expect a friend who asks you to help out with a party to be disappointed or even offended by your refusal ("I don't understand what

⁶ The author of the *Bill of Assertive Rights* is Herbert Fensterheim, an American psychologist and psychiatrist.

happened to you, I could always count on you"). If he/she's a real friend, she/he'll get over it. And she/he will understand. Finally, he/she will admit that you impressed him/her with the way you explained rationally the reasons, explaining your needs. Maybe - if she/he sometimes lacks assertiveness (if he/she was offended at first, probably yes) – he/she will learn something from you?

The right to make your requests to others - as long as you acknowledge that they have the right to refuse. This principle works both ways. Someone has the right to ask you for something, you have the right to refuse. You too can ask a favour by accepting the right to refuse. Note that the rule excludes manipulation, pressure or the use of a privileged position (e.g. towards a pupil or when you are a coordinator in the organisation).

There are situations where the rights of individuals are not clear. However, you always have the right to discuss the situation with another person. Go back to the basics of communication and the skills of bridging the gap in opinions. It is worth checking, it is worth explaining, without assuming anything in advance. With open-ended questions, determine what is important to each of the parties and what room of possible action you have, then the assessment of the situation will become clearer for you.

You have the right to exercise your rights. And learn to exercise them.

<p>PASSIVE behaviour</p>	<p>ASSERTIVE behaviour</p>	<p>AGRESSIVE behaviour</p>
<p>"They know better, I'd better keep my head down."</p>	<p>"We are all equal, everyone can have a good idea. Let's look for a solution to the problem."</p>	<p>"I know better! It's a waste of time to discuss, we'll do as I want."</p>
<p>"Too bad for my nerves. Let them do what they want. Suit yourself."</p>	<p>"I can give up X, what are you willing to give up?"</p>	<p>"I will not give up anything! You have to be tough to get what you want."</p>
<p>"Ok. Let others decide, I will not impose. "</p>	<p>"We have different points of view. How can we use it?"</p>	<p>"All are wrong but me!"</p>
<p>you apologise</p>	<p>you look for solutions</p>	<p>you give orders</p>
<p>you agree</p>	<p>you ask and propose</p>	<p>you criticise</p>
<p>you prefer to work on your own (even after a night) than ask for help</p>	<p>you ask for help and respond to the same type of requests</p>	<p>you demand help, you accuse others of giving too much work to you</p>

M3.S3. NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION (NVC)⁷

Why do we lose touch with our compassionate nature to the point of being violent? What quality allows some people to stay in touch with their own compassionate nature, even under circumstances that put them through the most severe tests?

We achieve a natural state of compassion when the violence fades from our hearts, when we remove judgments, criticism, comparisons from our language, and when we stop using punishments and rewards to achieve our goals. Nonviolent communication is based on openly expressing your feelings, needs and wishes and the ability to read them in the words of other people, regardless of the form in which they are communicated. It facilitates dealing with the situation of a conflict (in the organisation, between people, groups or resulting from difficult contacts with parents of the pupils). The basis of nonviolent communication (NVC) is empathy, which is understood as sensitivity to the emotions and states of other people, although it can sometimes be associated with weakness. If you know a bit about the rules of defensive sports (e.g. aikido) then you know that this art is about avoiding confrontation effectively; similarly, in NVC the goal is a peaceful coexistence of people with different beliefs, needs and interests. The basic NVC model is to follow a sequence of four phases (see boxes on page 13).

TWO TYPES OF COMMUNICATION: „JACKAL LANGUAGE” AND „GIRAFFE LANGUAGE”

Open expression of feelings, needs and wishes and the ability to read them in the words of other people, regardless of the form in which they are conveyed M. B. Rosenberg calls "the language of the giraffe" - "because the giraffe has a huge heart, and this way of communication comes from the heart". However, according to Rosenberg, most of us use the "jackal language" on a daily basis, that is, a language that blocks empathy and provokes conflicts. This way of communicating is deeply present in our culture and our mentality. It is related to the tendency to judge everyone and everything. It comes from the belief that any behaviour can be "good" or "bad", "appropriate" or "inappropriate", "acceptable" or "unacceptable". Hence, "bad" (unacceptable) behaviour and beliefs should be punished and combated by all means. Given that the "jackal language" is typical of our culture, we use it habitually, considering it to be the "normal" way of communication. We usually do not see that the expressions we use include judgments, demeaning or disqualifying other people's behaviour, views or attitudes. To simplify, we tend to believe that by calling someone, for example, a "neurotic", we are simply making an "objective" diagnosis, and that it has nothing to do with insulting, judging, or expressing our subjective relationship to the person. In other words, we prefer to believe that our statements are only an objectified description of someone else's behaviour rather than an expression of our needs and feelings and the implicit judgments that follow.

⁷ The author of the communication model known as Nonviolent Communication (NVC) is Marshal B. Rosenberg, psychologist, therapist, mediator, author of the book *Nonviolent Communication*, PuddleDancer Press 2015.

MESSAGES BLOCKING EMPATHY - „JACKAL LANGUAGE”

In Nonviolent Communication, there are several types of statements characteristic for the "jackal language", the common denominator of which is that they block empathy and, consequently, favour the emergence of conflicts in communication situations. These are:

1. Making moral judgments and criticizing,
2. Comparing, classifying, evaluating,
3. Diagnosing and interpreting,
4. Using expressions that suggest a lack of personal responsibility.

The last of the mentioned categories is quite broad and covers seemingly different linguistic expressions. Moreover, the expressions used within this category may seem quite natural and neutral. Therefore, it is worth taking a closer look at them in order to "disturb" the habitual, thoughtless use of them. We deal with rejection of personal responsibility when we assign responsibility for our own behaviour to:

- undefined, impersonal forces (e.g. "I cleaned the apartment because I had to"),
- conditions, diagnoses or personal history ("I drink because I am an alcoholic"),
- reactions or actions of other people ("I hit the child because he ran out into the street"),
- orders or suggestions from some authority ("I lied to the client because my boss told me to"),
- group pressure ("I started smoking because all my friends were doing it"),
- policy of an institution, its principles and rules ("I had to do it because this is the policy of our school"),
- social roles related to gender, age or profession ("I hate giving lectures, but I do it because I am a lecturer"),
- impulses that cannot be controlled ("I ate another chocolate bar because I couldn't help myself").

Every time we find the causes of bad mood or our own emotional discomfort outside of ourselves, we are exposed to fall into the "jackal language". NVC teaches that the immediate external "cause" of our behaviour should not be confused with the real motive or cause. An external stimulus is only a trigger for an emerging interpretation that only secondarily evokes specific feelings, and these in turn trigger our habitual reactions or behaviours.

Generally speaking, "jackal language" is used to criticize, shame and blame others or yourself. We also use the same language that we use in relations with other people when we have an internal dialogue with ourselves. Thinking about someone's or one's own behaviour in terms of guilt entails accepting punishment, and consequently also justifies the use of violence - according to the scheme that "the guilty should be punished".

MESSAGES TRIGGERING EMPATHY - „GIRAFFE LANGUAGE”

Messages based on empathy and messages triggering empathy use elements of the language of observation, feelings, needs and requests. **The four-phase model of nonviolent** (and nonmanipulated) communication proposed by Rosenberg consists of the following phases:

NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION MODEL

- **FIRST Stage – Observing without judging**

Observation without moral judgment - such observation is of what can be recorded with a video camera. Everything else is a value judgment. Observation does not allow the use of phrases such as: always, never, everyone, etc. According to Rosenberg, observing without judging is the highest form of human intelligence. While we cannot completely eliminate evaluations from our statements, we can nevertheless separate observation (in the strict sense of the word) from evaluative interpretation.

- **SECOND Stage – Recognizing and expressing feelings**

Emotions aren't positive or negative. They just are. They arise both when our needs are met and when they are not satisfied. Feelings do not exist by themselves; they are the mirrors of deeply hidden needs. For many people, identifying (and labelling) them is very difficult. This difficulty has many aspects and may be due to various reasons. For example, as a result of past experiences, many people have learned to hide (and even not recognise) their feelings for fear of being made fun of or hurt in some way. Another type of difficulty is that speaking directly about your feelings requires **taking responsibility for what you are going through**. In turn, in order to be willing and able to take responsibility for your own feelings, you must learn to accept them. This applies especially to the so-called negative feelings such as anger, disappointment, and jealousy. To be able to do this, one would need to recognize that there are no "bad feelings" but, at best, better and worse ways of expressing and dealing with them.

- **THIRD Stage – Connecting currently experienced feelings with needs**

The ability to connect current feelings with needs (values, aspirations) can be very difficult for people who, for various reasons, are used to ignoring their own needs. In a practical sense, linking the currently experienced feelings with your own needs would consist in implementing the habit of thinking and talking about your feelings within the framework of the formula: "**I feel ... because I want** (I have a need, it is important for me to)...". This remark applies to people who have trouble recognizing their own needs, not someone else's. In the case of the latter, it would be helpful to ask a slightly different question, formulated according to the formula: "**Do you feel ... because you want** (you need, it is important)..."

- **FOURTH Stage – Formulating specific requests**

First of all, don't confuse **requests** with **demands**. The difference is that in case of a request we emotionally grant the addressee the right to refuse it. This means that if we are refused, it will not

provoke any emotional sanctions on our part, i.e. we do not take it as offense, disrespect, etc., and we do not criticize or blame the other party. We recognize a request by the fact that it does not break the empathic contact with the other party. In order for the request to be feasible at all and to be possible to implement, it should be as specific as possible, not vague or enigmatic. We should ask for what someone might **do** rather than feel or think.

CONDITIONS FOR THE EFFECTIVE APPLICATION OF THE 4-PHASE MODEL OF NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION:

1. You start with the first stage and only stop when you have completed the fourth stage. You focus on what is happening to you, what you want, what you want to ask the other person for (or if you empathize with your interlocutor, then you are properly aware of their emotions and needs) and you move forward efficiently.
2. In your statement you mention only one emotion/ feeling and one need, which is most obvious to you in a given situation - this way your interlocutor will get a clear message about what is important to you and what he/she needs to relate to.
3. Concentrate on a specific situation, do not use too many words, talk about the topic, stick to one thread and do not add others - this way you will not lose the attention of the interlocutor.
4. Remember that the purpose of nonviolent communication is to make contact, want to understand and maintain good relationships, and the four-step method can help, but it is not a tool for making anyone do anything or controlling others.
5. The intention to express a proposal/ request rather than a demand will be better understood when you include a question for the interlocutor, giving him a choice: "Do you agree?" "Is it acceptable to you?", "Is it possible for you? ". In this way, you give the interlocutor space to make a decision; you signal that you are also interested in her/his perspective.

BENEFITS OF USING THE CONCEPT OF NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION

First of all, it should be noted that Nonviolent Communication is not only a concept and philosophy, but also a training program. And like any practical skill, it can be mastered at the level of decent craftsmanship or a masterly art. Its usefulness and even the obligation to respect its principles in crisis situations seems obvious. When talking to a terrorist or potential suicidal, any carelessly used word interpreted as judgement or criticism can end the dialogue, leading to a catastrophe. Similarly, in any situation of an existing conflict between two people or groups, the usefulness of a mediator who efficiently applies the principles discussed here may be the only chance to prevent destructive escalation. The concept of Nonviolent Communication can also be viewed in terms of preventive programs addressed, inter alia, to children and adolescents, aimed at preventing aggression by learning about alternative ways of expressing negative feelings and practicing more effective ways of communication. In general, it could be said that the principles of Nonviolent Communication are especially useful and necessary where there are large differences in the needs (values) and personal experiences as well as the ways of expressing them between potential interlocutors.

The background of the differences is of little importance. Regardless of whether we are dealing with generational, cultural, personality or other differences, the consequence is the same - communication turns out to be a very difficult task then. In short, the concept of Nonviolent Communication is such a universal set of rules and postulates that anyone who has not learned them intuitively, through trial and error or by imitating the best models, needs its practical knowledge.

The ability to communicate without violence would probably also be useful for many parents and guardians who feel powerless in dealing with their own children who speak (and feel) differently. The four-stage model of communication allows for a calm, step-by-step approach to the essence of the problem, without losing sight of what is most important - the feelings and needs of both parties.

RECOMMENDED METHODS AND TOOLS

In the appendix to this module *M3. Efficient Communication in the Work of a Volunteer* the following exercises are presented:

1. Communication without violence - independent work – individual work
2. Assertiveness training – group work
3. You change my life – pair work

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