



Characteristics of Life-Alienated Communication

Denial of Responsibility

One example of this characteristic would be using the phrase “have to.”
e.g. “There are certain things you have to do, whether you like to or not.”

Other examples consist of attributing responsibility for our actions to:

⊗ Others’ actions:

“I hit my child because he/she ran into the street.”

⊗ Vague and impersonal forces:

“I cleaned the house because it was necessary.”

⊗ Our psychological condition or diagnosis, or our personal history:

“I drink because I am an alcoholic.”

⊗ Authority’s demands:

“I lied to the client because it was the boss’s orders.”

⊗ Group pressure:

“I started smoking because everyone else did.”

⊗ Institutional policies, rules, and regulations:

“I give my students grades because that’s the school system’s policy.”

⊗ Political, social, or age roles:

“I hate going to work, but I do it because I’m a husband and a father.”

⊗ Uncontrollable impulses:

“I ate the whole box of candy because I just couldn’t resist.”



Characteristics of Life-Alienated Communication, continued

Criticism

This characteristic points out that which is wrong or bad about others who act in ways that are not in harmony with our values. This type of communication includes insults, accusations, diagnoses, and judgments.

e.g.: “What’s wrong with you is that you’re too ego-centered/lazy/insensitive/etc.

Demands

Within Nonviolent Communication, a demand is a request which, implicitly or explicitly, threatens with some form of blame or punishment if the request is not complied with.

Justifying Reward and Punishment

This language implies that some actions deserve to be rewarded and others, punished.

e.g. “He deserves to be punished for what he did.”

Coercion

Motivations that, if acted with, will most likely result in resentment, disconnection, or conflict. If you do anything for someone, or someone does something for you, with any of the following energies, there is a high cost to the relationship:

- Fear
- Guilt
- Shame
- Duty/Obligation
- Reward
- Punishment
- “Should”
- “Have to”
- “Ought”



More Notes on Jackal Language

The Ways of the Jackal Voices (A Partial List)

The jackal voices may be aimed at yourself or other people. They can hurt us and hurt our relationships. If you listen, you can hear them in everyday exchanges between people. They all convey “you” messages that have obvious or hidden judgments.

1. Accusing
2. Blaming
3. Criticizing
4. Questioning, interrogating, probing-out of our needs, not receiver’s needs
5. Advising, giving solutions or suggestions when not requested
6. Moralizing, preaching, exhorting
e.g. “You should, ought...”
7. Explaining, lecturing, teaching, giving logical reasonable arguments
8. Name-calling, ridiculing, shaming, joking
9. Ordering, directing, commanding
10. Demanding
11. Reassuring, sympathizing, consoling, supporting – out of our own needs, not receiver’s needs
12. Warning, admonishing, threatening
13. Praising, agreeing, approving (especially when intention is manipulation or “getting our way”)
14. Ignoring
15. Labeling
e.g. “He’s just a weirdo,” “You are a good hostess.”
16. Categorizing, comparing, generalizing
e.g. “That’s just like...”
17. Withdrawing, distracting, humoring, diverting
e.g. Pouting, not responding to other’s requests, or words, or actions
“It’s not as bad as all that.” “Why don’t you just think about something nice.”
18. Interpreting, analyzing, diagnosing, psychologizing
e.g. “You’re saying that to bug me.” “You really don’t believe all that” “You feel that way because you’re not doing well in school.”

What To Do With Jackal Voices

1. Name them (Just recognize one when you hear it)
2. Claim them (Acknowledge as your own when you are jackaling)
3. Retain them (help the jackal quiet down)
4. Tame them (Give the jackals empathy so you can find out what you or other persons are really wanting and/or feeling)

This section inspired by Carrie Howley; adapted by Alan Seid

© Alan Seid - CascadiaWorkshops.com



“FIX-IT” LANGUAGE

Fix-It language is advice or help oriented around *my* ideas of what’s good for the listener, rather than tuned to what the listener wants.

It is advice given without *first* determining (a) if it is a form of help the listener wants right then, and (b) whether or not I am giving it because *I* want to give help or because they want it.

Even if the advice is sound or perceptive, such fixing is rarely healing or helpful because the listener usually needs empathy and understanding *first*, not advice, and can build their own solutions once they get empathy.

COMMON VARIATIONS OF FIX-IT LANGUAGE

- Things could be a lot worse.
- No pain, no gain.
- You’re absolutely right, those bureaucrats are impossible; you might as well forget it.
- Don’t worry, it’s going to be alright.
- Well, you could use up your savings to have your car’s motor rebuilt, and *then* apply for welfare.
- That happens to nearly everyone at one time or another.
- Why don’t you just quit! You deserve better than that and shouldn’t put up with it.
- Well, what can you expect with all those _____’s running the place?
- You should hang in there. After _____ things will change and improve.
- Look at the bright side, Sue, some people were allergic to your cat anyhow.
- What do you expect from him, he’s:
 - a businessman.
 - a knee-jerk Liberal.
 - a straight-shooter.
 - a family man.
 - from the wrong side of the tracks.
 - worrying about his own family.

(continued on next page)



“Fix-It” Language, continued

NEW-AGE VARIATIONS OF FIX-IT LANGUAGE

- You must have created that for some reason.
- This is just your karma and nothing to be ashamed of.
- Oh, you have to learn to let go of your fears.
- This is a wonderful opportunity to practice letting go of your judgments.
- Well, if you would meditate on that, I’m sure you would find a solution.
- You need to trust the universe more.
- You need to get out of that poverty consciousness.
- A star is best seen at night. (Said in response to a person saying, “*My days are dark with pain.*”)
- Look at what you have left, not at what you’ve lost.
- What do you expect from her, she’s:
 - a Capricorn.
 - a left-brained person.
 - a visual-learner.
 - an unenlightened being.
 - an adult-child-of-an-alcoholic.
 - a very old soul.
 - a devotee.
 - was abused as a child.
 - suffering from zinc, vitamin-C, spirulina, and ___ deficiency.
 - only reflecting your own consciousness back to you.

This section inspired by Alex and Meera Censor; adapted by Alan Seid