



Susanne Gaddis, PhD



Susanne Gaddis PhD  
**The Communications Doctor**

*"Prescriptions for Effective Communication"*  
www.CommunicationsDoctor.com  
Gaddis@CommunicationsDoctor.com

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## A Prescription for Getting What You Want

Are you getting what you want from others? Do people treat you with respect? Or, do you frequently find others behaving in a way that leaves you feeling disappointed, frustrated or angry?

If you frequently think, "I've asked her a million times to stop, and she still keeps doing the same thing," or "He knows what I want - after all we've been married for ten years!" or "Why me? He would never pull that behavior with anyone else," it may be time to examine your communication style and how it has an impact on how others treat you.

In his book *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Compassion*, Marshall B. Rosenberg provides communication tools geared to immediately improve the quality of your personal and professional relationships. Throughout Rosenberg's book he offers specific techniques for Nonviolent Communication (NVC). These techniques, according to Rosenberg, are ways of speaking that facilitate the flow of communication needed to exchange information and resolve differences peacefully. NVC helps us identify our shared values and needs, encourages us to use language that increases goodwill and helps us avoid language that contributes to resentment or lowers self-esteem.

Rosenberg supports the idea that through our words we can teach other people how to treat us. Therefore, by telling others exactly what we want and what we need, we have a better chance of getting it.

The following communication formula is one of the techniques that Rosenberg shares that could have a huge impact on the way that you communicate. The next time you find yourself in a conflict and you need something from someone, try this 4-part formula:

When you do (1)\_\_\_\_, I feel (2)\_\_\_\_, because I need (3)\_\_\_\_. Therefore, I would now like (4)\_\_\_\_\_.

For example, rather than saying, "You're yelling at me!" say "When you raise your voice it makes me feel uncomfortable because I want to be able to discuss things in a calm manner. Therefore I now would like for us to continue talking without either of us raising our voices."

Or, rather than saying "Where were you?" You can say, "When you said that you would be there and then you didn't show, I was disappointed and concerned. Therefore, the next time you say you'll meet me somewhere I would appreciate you showing up, or calling me ahead of time to let me know that you've made other plans."

After teaching this technique at a recent communication workshop, I received an E-mail from a participant entitled "It Worked!" In the E-mail the workshop participant shared how she had successfully implemented this technique with her husband of 28 years. "Since the kids had left for college my husband no longer joined me at the dinner table. No matter how much I asked, pleaded or cajoled him, he still refused to join me—choosing instead to sit in front of the television."

She continued, "Upon, learning the 4-part NVC model I was able to learn that I was feeling lonely and disconnected with him. Therefore what I needed was to feel connected and to know that I really mattered to him. When I shared these feelings with him and what my needs were, he was finally listening to me for the first time. I'm happy to say that he has joined me for dinner every night since."

While you're thinking of how to implement this process into your communication, consider that it is much like ordering at a restaurant. By giving the waiter your order you are more likely to get what you want.

*Susanne Gaddis, PhD, known as the Communications Doctor, is an acknowledged communications expert who has been speaking and teaching the art of effective and positive communication since 1989. Gaddis' workshops, seminars, and keynote presentations are packed with tips and techniques that can be immediately applied for successful results. Gaddis also provides quality training and executive coaching for organizations, corporations, and associations across the United States. For more information, call 919-933-3237 or visit [www.CommunicationsDoctor.com](http://www.CommunicationsDoctor.com).*