

Spiritually Guided and Peacefully Assertive Communication Model

COPE

By Dr. Ani Kalayjian

Communication is an integral part of our energetic, spiritual, physical, and emotional connection. Although we may have different values, assumptions, life experiences and emotions, COPE, the four steps below can enhance our connection and improve our communication so that we understand others first before trying to make others understand us. Communication is challenging because we often create our assumptions from our own centers: the center of your world is *you*, and the center of my world is *me*. Communication is also influenced by old unresolved traumatic/negative experiences, familial-cultural-religious-ecological-and spiritual values, current emotions, and awareness (Kalayjian, 2010).

*The COPE Model has four mindful steps towards spiritually guided and peacefully assertive communication: **Connect**, **Open to observations**, **Present your feelings**, and **Express your win-win recommendations**.*

1. **Connect with compassion, compliment, and gratitude:** Connect with the other by finding something positive in the other to be grateful about, to be reinforced, or a simple compliment to bring you on a horizontal level transformed from a top down, or me against you position. For instance, “Thank you for that thoughtful question...,” or “I am very grateful for your contribution to...,” or “I appreciate your passion and involvement...,” etc. Think of something positive to connect with your ‘adversary,’ or the one you are having difficulty communicating to or getting your thoughts across instead of reacting.
2. **Open your perspective and share what you see:** Issues involving human beings always have multiple perspectives. It is imperative to review all sides of an issue without judgment. Try to present your side as neutrally as possible much like journalists sharing what they have seen during a conflict or disaster. For example, 1. “I appreciate your passion and involvement.” 2. “From my perspective, I noticed that you missed the last two meetings, but we did not receive any notification....”
3. **Present your feelings:** Identify and describe your feelings clearly. How does the presenting story, picture or situation make you feel? Express your feelings in a clear but not accusatory manner with an “I” statement, such as: 1. “I appreciate

your passion and involvement.” 2. “From my perspective, I noticed that you missed the last two EC meetings without notifying us.” 3. “I feel disappointed when you miss meetings, as we missed your vital contribution, creative input and passion....” (Kalayjian, 2009 the Biopsychosocial, and Eco-spiritual Model, www.meaningfulworld.com)

4. **Express your recommendation:** Clearly state your recommendation to change and improve the situation at hand. State your point of view as to how this problem could be resolved? Relate to the other, the person you are having issues with, how this challenge could be transformed and how the situation could be improved? Stay on the issue (missing the meeting without notification) and not on the person or their character, nor globalize or generalize the issue at hand (i.e.: You are always absent).

Unless you have a lesson to share from the past, do not bring the past into your present. For instance, 1. “I appreciate your passion and involvement.” 2. “From my perspective, I noticed you missed the last two meetings without any notification....” 3. I feel disappointed as we are missing your vital contribution, & your creative input....” 4. “Therefore, I suggest calling us if you anticipate being absent so we can find alternate ways for you to connect with us, such as a teleconference....”

These four steps can create a way for you to cope (COPE) with the difficulty assertively, constructively, proactively, spiritually, and most of all peacefully. The best cure is prevention, and with these small steps we can transform conflicts peacefully.

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