



Attachment 5: Non-Judgmental Language - Helpful Phrases

Instead of saying/thinking:	Consider saying/thinking:
That's ridiculous That's unreasonable	I hadn't considered that, how will that work for both of us? I don't understand how that will work. What makes that a fair solution?
That doesn't make sense You're not making sense	I'm not following you... Help me understand... I don't understand, how will that work?
That's not workable That will never work	I'm not comfortable with that because... That's one option, here are my concerns... I'd like to hear your thinking on how this would work
You aren't doing this right You didn't do this right	This is different than what I expected Does this way of doing it still meet the requirements?
We're not going anywhere If only you would stop... We'll never agree	It seems as though ____ may be getting in our way I think we can find a solution Let's look at we have accomplished so far
Why do you want X?	How did you get to X? What makes you want X? What makes X a good solution/choice?
Why did you do that?	What motivated you to do that?
That has nothing to do with this	How does that relate to this?
The fact is...	Correct me if I'm wrong, I understand (state facts as you see them)
This is how it is:	The way I see it is...
I won't do X	I am not comfortable doing X X makes me nervous (etc.) because...
Yes, but...	Yes, and...
You haven't done X	I appreciate your willingness to do X...we are ___ with completing it?
You're wrong	My experience has been... I see this differently... I need to understand... better
Do X You should do X	I need help with X We need to get X done...what suggestions do you have? I'd like you to do X, will that work? Can you do X? Are you willing to do X?
I want X I must have X	One option I see is X...how does X work for you? One way I see to resolve this is X...what do you think of X? One option is X...X is important to me because...
We have nothing in common	We agree on...
You're lying. I don't believe that.	I'm confused about...
You said...	Let me see if I have this right, you are saying... I'm not clear about...
But you did...	Let's focus on the future
That's not fair	Let's find a solution that is fair for both of us





Instead of saying/thinking:	Consider saying/thinking:
You make me mad	I get upset when...
You're making me feel	I feel...
I...You...	We...

Remember – TONE and BODY LANGUAGE make all the difference in any communication.

U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution. 2010. *Non-Judgmental Language: Helpful Phrases* [Handout]. Training Workshop on Introduction to Managing Environmental Conflict, Washington, D.C. September 14-15.