

Communicating with **NANCY STERN**

COMMUNICATION PLUS

Three Little Words That Make a Big Difference

Inside this issue:

Little Words	1
Little Words (continued)	2
Q & A	3
Happy Musing Sally Huss	3
Why Nancy Stern	4
Program/Training Topics	4
Contact Information	4

Trying is just a noisy way of not doing.

—Ken Blanchard
Norman Vincent Peal

-TRY-

I sat in a dark movie theatre in 1977 watching a movie called Star Wars. I was fascinated by a character named Yoda. He said something that I will always remember — ***"Do or do not. There is no try."***



I dug in my purse for a pen so I could write these amazing words on my empty box of popcorn.

Thirty one years later, I am still haunted by these words every time I hear someone say, *"I'll try to get that report to you,"* or *"I'm going to try to call you back."*

When people say they will *try* to do something I get the message it may or may not get done. Trying is not a commitment to doing. Think about it. How many times have

you said you would try to do something only you didn't do it? I imagine, more times than you want to admit.

Here's an example: Stop reading and *try* to raise your hand in the air. You either do it or you don't do it. See, there is no try.

This little word makes a big difference when it comes to communication at work and at home. If coworkers tell you they will try to get something done probe a little further.

Ask when you can expect to see it or what do they mean by "try"? Don't let people get away with being non-committal when you need a firm answer.

Stop saying try. Just delete it from your vocabulary. Forget that old adage, *if at first you don't succeed, try try again*. Maybe you didn't succeed because you were too busy *trying*.

Nike got it right.
Just Do It!

Little Words Can Make a Big Difference (cont.)

-BUT-

Another little word that makes a big difference is the word **but**. "*Overall this year your performance was good, BUT...*" Or, "*I'd really like to it that way, BUT...*" When we use the word "*but*" we are usually saying "NO."

"Yes, but..." is negative. I'd rather hear two sentences without the but because it tends to erase everything that went before it. Hearing that my performance was good in one sentence is going to have a more positive effect when I hear, in the next sentence, what needs to be improved.

If you don't want to make two sentences, simply replace "*but*" with "**and**." When you do this it shows you are validating what you are saying and you are keeping things positive. Here's a test of the concept. Sit with someone and "try" to decide where to go on vacation. Everything has to be answered with "yes, but..." Did you get an itinerary planned? I bet not. Now, repeat the exercise, only this time, answer each other with "yes, and..." You'll get a lot farther with "and" than with "but."

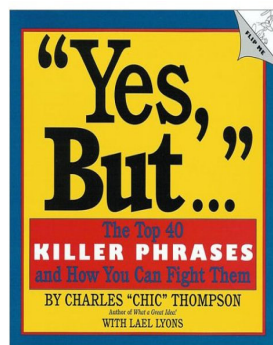
-YOU-

The third little word that makes a big difference is the word **you**. "*You didn't get that report done on time.*" Or, "*You don't hear what I'm saying.*" When the word "you" is used at the start of a sentence there is usually a defensive reaction from the person on the receiving end. It's better to use I-Statements. Start with "I" and then express how you're feeling or what you're thinking without using the word you. This is often called assertive communication. For example, "*I noticed the report came in late.*" Or, "*When we talk, I don't feel listened to.*"

Regardless of what you say, it's also important to pay attention to how you say it. With an attacking tone of voice, even an I-statement can cause a defensive reaction. Remember, *how you say what you say, matters.*™

Killer Phrase:
n. 1. A knee-jerk response that squelches new ideas; most commonly said by bosses, parents, and government officials. 2. A threat to innovation.

Charles Thompson
Lael Lyons



"Yes, But..." is a handbook of lighthearted cartoons and strategy tools to help you bulletproof your great ideas. It's written by Charles Thompson and Lael Lyons and shows you how to recognize and diffuse the Top 40 Killer Phrases, (made famous in their other book *What a Great Idea!*) before they destroy your creative potential. From the smallest quality improvements to the biggest product launch, learn to transform "Yes, but..." into "Yes, and..." and your ideas into reality!

Email Your Questions to Nancy@nancystern.com

Q

I have a coworker who continually yells at me and blames me for everything that goes wrong on our team. She raises her voice and berates me every chance she gets and I don't know what to do so I just yell back. Nothing gets resolved. I don't want to go to my supervisor for help because he'll just think we are being bitchy. What can I do?

A

Yelling back will simply add fuel to the fire. So, instead of becoming defensive, become compassionate. That's right, I said compassionate. You will have a better chance of defusing the behavior if you muster up as much compassion as you can. Look your coworker in the eye and tune into your own thoughts and self-talk. As soon as

anything negative starts to creep in, remind yourself to stay compassionate. Allow your coworker to moan, dump and complain while you maintain eye-contact and quiet compassion.

When the yelling stops, get ready to express yourself. Remember to keep your tone of voice free from sarcasm and anger. Simply acknowledge her statements (even though you may disagree with them) and respond using an I-statement such as *"I understand you're upset about this; let's see what we can do to resolve these issues."*

The idea is to shift the negative, angry energy to a more positive, peaceful energy. This can open the door to having a conversation. Once things are quiet, the two of you can calmly and compassionately explore what is really causing these outbursts and develop a strategy for resolution.

*Just when you
think all is lost,
the future
remains.*

Dr. Robert H. Goddard

Life Tools

*Life is one set of
circumstances after
the next. You can
suffer them or
you can find ways
to enjoy them.*



on the spot
media training & coaching

www.onthespotmediatraining.com



Because how you say what you say, matters.™

www.nancystern.com

Phone: 858-792-2768
Fax: 858-792-2745
Email: nancy@nancystern.com

Whether you're experiencing change, managing people, connecting with customers and co-workers, or making presentations, getting your message across effectively is vital to your success.

Nancy Stern custom designs keynotes, breakouts and educational programs to enhance communication effectiveness; to help increase productivity, profitability and peace of mind; and to impact the bottom line where it matters most—with results.

Programs & Topics Include:

- How You Say What You Say Matters™
- Leadership Dynamics™
- Connecting with Customers™
- Turn Conflict into Cooperative Conversations™
- Powerful Presentations
- Facilitate to Motivate and Manage Conflict™
- Maximize Meeting Results™
- Improv(e) Innovation at Work™
- You Can't Leave Home Without You™
- Communicate with Impact!™
- Gender Jive™
- Improv(e) Your Life™
- Facing the News Media
- Shift Happens: Managing the Dynamics of Change
- Team Building for Creativity, Productivity and Peace of Mind

Why Nancy Stern?

Nancy Stern, MA is the president/owner and senior consultant of Communication Plus, a consulting firm in San Diego specializing in leadership and employee development. Since 1972, she has taught thousands the art and science of effective communication. She is a former columnist with the *San Diego Daily Transcript* and has taught at the University of California San Diego and San Diego State University Management Development Center.

She inspires managers, employees and individuals of all ages through the

simple, yet powerful, lesson that *how you say what you say, matters™*. Personal experiences form the foundation of her programs, creating presentations that are personal, professional and practical. The result: Improvement of the "whole person" and therefore, the "whole organization."

She is an EMMY award-winner, who produced and appeared in the national PBS television series *Communicating With Nancy Stern* (1990-95) and she is the coauthor of *101 Stupid Things Trainers Do To Sabotage Success*.

Nancy holds a Master of Arts degree in Communication Education from Michigan State University and is a member of the American Society for Training and Development and the National Speakers Association.



Nancy Stern