

# NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION

## Exercise 5: Listening with empathy

Which of the following responses from person B are examples of listening with empathy (E) and which are not (N)?

E	N	Statement
		1. Person A: How could I do something so stupid? Person B: Nobody is perfect; you're too hard on yourself.
		2. Person A: If you ask me, we ought to ship all these immigrants back to where they came from. Person B: Do you really think that would solve anything?
		3. Person A: You aren't God! Person B: Are you feeling frustrated because you would like me to admit that there can be other ways of interpreting this matter?
		4. Person A: I think that you take me for granted. I wonder how you would manage without me. Person B: That's not true! I don't take you for granted.
		5. Person A: How could you say a thing like that to me? Person B: Are you feeling hurt because I said that?
		6. Person A: I'm furious with my husband. He's never around when I need him.? Person B: You think he should be around more than he is?
		7. Person A: I'm disgusted with how heavy I'm getting. Person B: Perhaps jogging would help.
		8. Person A: I've been a nervous wreck planning for my daughter's wedding. Her fiancé's family is not helping. About every day they change their minds about the kind of wedding they would like. Person B: So you're feeling nervous about how to make arrangements and would appreciate it if your future in-laws were more aware of how their indecision creates more work for you?
		9. Person A: When my relatives come without letting me know ahead of time, I feel invaded. It reminds me of how my parents used to disregard my needs and would plan things for me. Person B: I know how you feel. I used to feel that way too.
		10. Person A: I'm disappointed with your performance. I would have liked your department to double your production last month. Person B: I understand that you are disappointed, but we have had many absences due to illness.



## Answers:

E	N	Statement
	x	1. Person A: How could I do something so stupid? Person B: Nobody is perfect; you're too hard on yourself.
	x	2. Person A: If you ask me, we ought to ship all these immigrants back to where they came from. Person B: Do you really think that would solve anything?
x		3. Person A: You aren't God! Person B: Are you feeling frustrated because you would like me to admit that there can be other ways of interpreting this matter?
	x	4. Person A: I think that you take me for granted. I wonder how you would manage without me. Person B: That's not true! I don't take you for granted.
	x	5. Person A: How could you say a thing like that to me? Person B: Are you feeling hurt because I said that?
/		6. Person A: I'm furious with my husband. He's never around when I need him? Person B: You think he should be around more than he is?
	x	7. Person A: I'm disgusted with how heavy I'm getting. Person B: Perhaps jogging would help.
x		8. Person A: I've been a nervous wreck planning for my daughter's wedding. Her fiancé's family is not helping. About every day they change their minds about the kind of wedding they would like. Person B: So you're feeling nervous about how to make arrangements and would appreciate it if your future in-laws were more aware of how their indecision creates more work for you?
	x	9. Person A: When my relatives come without letting me know ahead of time, I feel invaded. It reminds me of how my parents used to disregard my needs and would plan things for me. Person B: I know how you feel. I used to feel that way too.
	x	10. Person A: I'm disappointed with your performance. I would have liked your department to double your production last month. Person B: I understand that you are disappointed, but we have had many absences due to illness.



## Explanation:

1. Person B is giving reassurance to Person A rather than empathetically receiving what they are saying.
2. Person B is attempting to educate Person A.
3. Person B is receiving what person a said with empathy.
4. Person B is disagreeing and defending rather than being empathetic with what is going on in person A.
5. Person B is taking responsibility for person A's feelings rather than empathetically receiving what is going on in Person A. An empathic response might be: "Are you feeling hurt because you would have liked me to agree to do what you requested?"
6. Person B is receiving Person A's thoughts. However, Person B would connect more deeply with Person A if they also received the feelings and needs being expressed rather than just the thoughts. Person B may have said, "So you're feeling furious because you would like him to be around more than he is?"
7. Person B is giving advice.
8. Person B is receiving what person a said with empathy.
9. Person B is assuming they understand and talking about their own feelings rather than listening with empathy to what is going on in Person A.
10. Person B starts by focusing on Person A's feelings but then shifts to explaining.

