



Communicate Better NOW

North On Woodward Communication Training

THIS ISSUE: Remaining present • Quiet Cracking • Communication is chemical • A better *script* for communicating while angry

FIGHTING GRAVITY: *What's making the rounds in internal communication right now, and what to do about it.*

I hate my life today vs I am unhappy at this moment



Paula L. Tutman
Founder/Lead Trainer

if we want to go to work.

The most important conversation you have today will be the one you have with yourself. Every moment of every day we are sending ourselves messages on how to feel, how to react, how to behave, and a host of other responses to various stimuli.

In fact, our very first conversation of the day is the one we have when we open our eyes from an overnight sleep. We decide how we're feeling. What we want and don't want. We ruminate over the argument we had with a loved one, that happened last night or two months ago. We decide

And that's why it's so critical to be mindful of what we're telling ourselves, about ourselves. What we communicate to ourselves is the same as punching navigation into your vehicle. You are mapping out your day with your first thoughts.

Everybody has a bad day. Some of us have more bad days than others. If you are fighting gravity that's pulling you down into the pits, here are a few things you might want to think about when you set your self-communication navigation in motion:

"I hate my life today" is a verdict. It's global, sweeping, and treats a bad stretch as evidence about your whole existence. It closes the door, locking in a singular flat judgement.

In reality, "I am unhappy at this moment" is a data point. It's local, specific, and leaves room for the next moment to be different. It's actually more honest, because feelings this intense often spike and pass.

1. **The linguistic trap:** How "today" quietly recruits every other bad day you've had into evidence for a life-verdict, while "this moment" keeps the claim contained to what's actually happening (a wave of frustration, an argument, a bad meeting).
2. **Presence as scale-shrinking:** Being present isn't about feeling good, it's about narrowing the aperture so you're only reacting to what's happening right now in front of you, not the accumulated narrative of "always" and "never."
3. **A small practice:** When you catch yourself thinking "I hate my life," try physically rephrasing it out loud: "I hate this moment." Notice if the intensity changes. It usually loosens something, because you're no longer defending a global claim.
4. **Why the moment passes and the day doesn't (in your head):** The moment is short by definition. "Today" as a category doesn't end until you decide it does, often not until you replay it in bed at 11pm. Presence interrupts that replay.
5. **Practice, Practice, Practice:** It takes practice to change how you speak to yourself. And it takes constant work. Think of it as taking your self-esteem to the gym. It's tough, exhausting work, but you have to keep repeating it to get the gains.

CRACKING UNDER PRESSURE: A workplace productivity trend worth knowing

Employees aren't quitting or even quietly disengaging on purpose, they are simply just wearing down silently, without the energy left to set a boundary. Where quiet quitting was a boundary an employee chose to set, *quiet cracking* is what happens when someone doesn't even have the energy left to set one. They are not withdrawing on purpose, they're chronically wearing down.



TUTS TAKE: Address local complaints out loud instead of allowing them to fester and accumulate into a global, silent one.

This is a communication failure at its root. Managers

aren't checking in with enough specificity to catch it before it becomes a resignation or a breakdown.

The real danger is that this kind of malaise is catchy. Even if employees don't have the quiet cracking state-of-mind, they are less productive when engaging with those employees who do. That means this is something worth paying attention to and addressing.

ANGER FUELED COMMUNICATIONS AND HOW TO COMBAT THEM.

Communication isn't just an exchange of words, it's a chemical event happening in real time inside the bodies of both the sender and the receiver. When someone feels criticized, dismissed, or threatened, the brain treats it like a physical danger and releases cortisol, the stress hormone that narrows attention, sharpens defensiveness, and pushes people toward fight, flight, or shutdown. This is why arguments escalate so fast: once cortisol is flowing, people stop listening to understand and start listening to defend.

That means the conversation becomes a chemical loop instead of a rational one.

On the other side, warmth, validation, and genuine attention trigger oxytocin, often called the bonding hormone, which lowers defensiveness, builds trust, and makes people more open to influence and connection. The tone, pace, and body language someone uses can quite literally shift another person's hormonal state before a single argument has even been made.

Two people can deliver the exact same feedback, and one triggers a cortisol spike while the other triggers an oxytocin response, purely based on tone, timing, and whether the listener feels safe or attacked.

TUTS TAKE: Skilled communicators are, in effect, managing brain chemistry, not just information. Slowing down, softening tone, and signaling safety early in a conversation can interrupt a cortisol spiral before it takes hold, which is why de-escalation almost always starts with regulating tone and pace rather than winning the point.

DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS: What the research says about how we talk to each other and how to do it better.

Avoiding a difficult conversation doesn't make the problem disappear, it just moves it underground, where it grows quietly instead of getting resolved. Unaddressed tension tends to leak out sideways, through passive aggression, resentment, or a slow erosion of trust, all of which do more damage over time than the discomfort of one honest exchange would have.

Grappling with hard conversations head on, even imperfectly, signals respect for the other person and for the relationship itself, because it says the issue matters enough to face rather than sidestep.

Tut's Take: Lower the perceived threat by removing blame language, it signals safety by stating intent out loud, and it creates a pause that gives both nervous systems a chance to come down from a cortisol spike before the conversation continues.

Suggested Script:

BEHAVIOR	WHAT YOU WANT TO SAY	WHAT YOU COULD SAY, INSTEAD
Addressing someone who doesn't feel heard.	"You never listen to me, you always do this."	"I want to understand what happened here. Can we slow down for a second? I'm not trying to attack you, I just want to get on the same page."

**Creating a positive communication culture is not a sprint, it's a triathlon .
My team and I can help you build productivity through intentional communication.**

PLT@NorthOnWoodward.com • 888-626-5513 • NorthOnWoodward.com

Paula L. Tutman - 7-time Emmy Award-winning, MAB Hall of Fame journalist | Harvard
Certified in Leadership Excellence | WBENC Certified