Title: Observation or evaluation?

Exercise Code: SLINTEGRA035

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| Modules: | Group size: | Duration: |
| 5. Conflict Solving Strategies6. Problem Solving Strategies11. Reflection & Evaluation  | IndividualSmall groupLarge group | 60 min |

**Purpose:**

* To determine your proficiency at discerning between observations and evaluations
* To improve communication

**Description:**

Participants circle the numbers in front of each statement where they think that this is an observation, with no evaluation mixed in.

1. John was angry with me yesterday for no reason.
2. Yesterday evening Nancy bit her fingernails while watching television.
3. Sam did not ask for my opinion during the meeting.
4. My father is a good man.
5. Janice works too much.
6. Henry is aggressive.
7. Pam was first in line every day this week.
8. My son often doesn’t brush his teeth.
9. Luke told me I didn’t look good in yellow.
10. My aunt complains when I talk with her.

The trainer discusses the answers based on the following responses:

1. In this sentence there is an element of evaluation, namely in the words “for no reason”. Even the statement ˝That John was angry˝ is a form of evaluation, because John wasn’t necessarily angry, but hurt, afraid, sad or something else. An observation without evaluation might be: “John pounded his fist on the table.”
2. If you circled this number, you are right. Observation was expressed without being mixed together with an evaluation.
3. If you circled this number, you are right. Observation was expressed without being mixed together with an evaluation.
4. This sentence is also an example of evaluation. The words “good man« mean evaluation. An observation without evaluation might be: “For the last twenty-five years, my father has given one-tenth of his salary to charity.”
5. In this sentence the example of evaluation is in the words “too much”. An observation without evaluation might be: “Janice spent more than sixty hours at the office this week.”
6. This example contains another case of evaluation, namely the word “aggressive”. An observation without evaluation might be: Henry hit his sister when she switched the television channel.”
7. If you circled this number, you are right. Observation was expressed without being mixed together with an evaluation.
8. The sentence contains a word with an element of evaluation, specifically “often”. An observation without evaluation might be: Twice this week my son did not brush his teeth before going to bed.”
9. If you circled this number, you are right. Observation was expressed without being mixed together with an evaluation.
10. The word “complains” contains elements of evaluation. An observation without evaluation might be: “My aunt called me three times this week, and each time talked about people who treated her in ways she did not like.”

The group talks about which of the sentences the participants circled and thought that they were merely sentences of observation.

**Methods:**

Discussion

The exercise can be a good starting point for developing a debate in the group.

**Advice for Trainer:**

The trainer should encourage a debate about why they circled the aforementioned sentences and what is, in their opinion, the difference between observation and evaluation. The trainer should also give a clear definition and difference between these two terms, and try to establish a conversation why it is important to differentiate between the two.

**Source/Literature:**

Adapted from “Nonviolent communication: a language of life “, B. Rosenberg, 2003

**Handouts:**

Observation or evaluation