




The Lukaszewski Group

A Division of  Crisdall

America's Crisis Guru®
Crisis Management, Leadership
and Organizational Recovery

Compassion: Use with Caution

By James E. Lukaszewski, *ABC, Fellow IABC; APR, Fellow PRSA
PRSA BEPS Emeritus*

1. ***Control your language, control your own emotions:*** Avoid taking inflammatory language and emotionally charged words, such as “ashamed,” “embarrassed,” “humiliated,” “bad,” “ugly,” “weird,” “worried,” and “scum,” personally. They are just words. Instead, move to answer the question and counteract your emotional reaction by focusing on a positive declarative response. (See Color Words)
2. ***Compassion and empathy sometimes use Color*** Words to emphasize that we understand the damage we’ve done, or that others have suffered, such as:
 - Ashamed
 - Concerned
 - Disappointed
 - Embarrassed
 - Failed
 - Humiliated
 - Mortified
 - Regrettable
 - Shocked
 - Tragic
 - Unfortunate
 - Unhappy
 - Unintended
 - Unnecessary
 - Unsatisfied

CAUTION: Be very careful how and whether you express empathy. Empathetic sentiments can cause very negative reactions from victims.

THE VOCABULARY OF COMPASSION

- Alarmed
- Appalled
- Ashamed
- Concerned
- Disappointed
- Embarrassed
- Empathize
- Failed / Failure
- Humiliated
- Let you down
- Mortified
- Regret / Regrettable
- Sad / Saddened
- Shocked / Surprised
- Sorrowful / Sorry
- Sympathy / Sympathetic
- Tragic
- Unfortunate
- Unhappy
- Unintended / Unintentional
- Unnecessary
- Unsatisfied