

EPISODE 128: HOW TO KILL WITH WORDS

1. POISON THE SOIL

- “Salting the earth:” In ancient times, a traitor would have his house leveled and his land salted so that nothing would grow anymore.
- Sometimes we create a toxic environment where people do not feel safe or free to relax.

2. CHILL THE AIR

- The silent treatment: saying nothing at all.
- Silence creates an atmosphere of assumed criticism.

3. DAMN WITH FAINT PRAISE

- Meaning: to praise so sparingly that you communicate criticism.
- Why are we so stingy in our praise of others?
 - We never received praise ourselves.
 - We fear turning the spotlight on others.
 - Pride: We like to be the authority, the one who can always find a flaw, the one who can always suggest an improvement.
- It takes humility and self-confidence to praise others.

4. INFLAME WITH BLAME

- When something goes wrong, our immediate instinct is to assign blame. But blame generates anger, defensiveness, and blame-sharing.
- Blame rarely accomplishes anything.
- What’s the difference between *assigning responsibility* and *blame*? One seeks a solution, the other just points the finger.

5. POUR ON CONTEMPT

- Contempt is an attack on character; it cuts deeply.
- It makes poor performance a matter of personal identity.
- In business, contempt destroys dignity and creates resentment.
- In a relationship, contempt can be fatal.

Sources mentioned in this episode:

[Communication Guys, Episode 30 “Never Rain on Your Own Parade: Understanding Communication Climates”](#)

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