

Thriving in Relationships

Five Tools for Success

*An online course presented by Steve Torma
&
The School of Integrated Living*



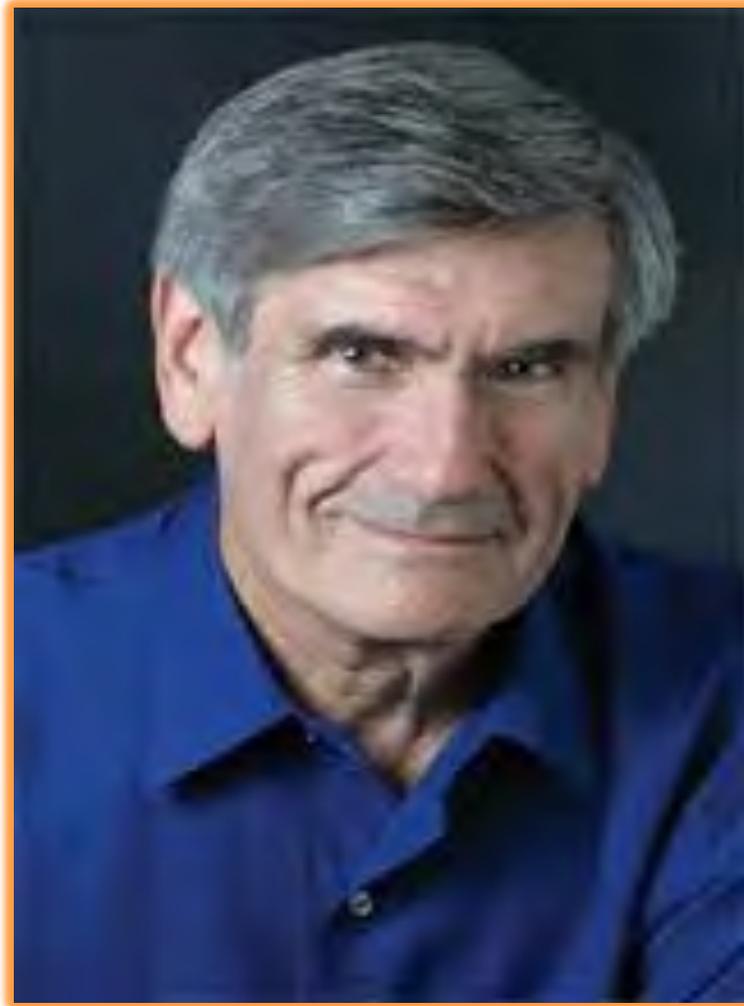
**Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing
there is a field. I'll meet you there.**

**When the soul lies down in that grass the world is too full
to talk about.**

**Ideas, language, even the phrase “each other” doesn’t
make any sense.**

-Rumi

“Gratitude, given and received with a certain energy, is the best fuel I know of to live a compassionate life.”



Marshall Rosenberg
Founder of NVC 1934-2015

“Conventional compliments often take the form of judgments however positive, and are sometimes offered to manipulate the behavior of others. NVC encourages the expression of appreciation solely for celebration.”

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Homework

In preparation for Session 1:

- Read the pages for Session 1: Gratitude and Appreciation (pages 6-34)
- Bring a list of 10 things you are grateful for right now.

Session 1 Homework to be discussed Session 2

- Choose three people in your life and express appreciation to them in the NVC format of Observations, Feelings, and Needs.
- At least once this week, do the gratitude exercises on page 20.
- Start a gratitude jar practice (page 24).
- Choose one of the 30 Daily Practice Ideas for Living Gratefully (page 27) and do it at least once this week.
- Read the material for Session 2: Empathy (pages 35-71)

Session 2 Homework to be discussed Session 3

- At least once a day, intentionally practice giving empathy to someone in the NVC format of guessing their feelings and needs.
- At least once this week, use the “Our Four Basic Choices of Response in Any Given Situation” (page 43) to think about a jackal statement that you heard somebody say.
- Once a day, translate a self judgment into a self-empathy response as described in the Self-Empathy Worksheet (page 46-47).
- Choose any five of the 100 Empathy Practice statements (page 52-57) and write an empathetic response in feelings and needs.
- Read the material for Session 3: Honest Expression (pages 72-91)

Session 3 Homework to be discussed in Session 4

- Once a day, choose a non-feeling word (page 85) that you sometimes use and translate it into your feelings and your needs.
- Once a day, translate a self judgment into a self-empathy response as described in the Self-Empathy Worksheet (page 81-92).
- Once a day, translate my judgment of someone else into my feelings and needs (page 92-94).
- Read the material for Session 4: Needs-Based Negotiation (pages 99-116)

Session 4 Homework to be discussed in Session 5

- At least once this week, practice saying “no” in NVC as described on page 111.
- At least once this week, practice responding empathetically to someone else’s “no” as described on page 113.
- Read the material for Session 5: Relationship Repair (pages 117-146).

Session 5 Homework invitation

- At least once this week, do the NVC mourning process with yourself as described in page 123.
- At least once this week, do the NVC mourning process with someone else described in pages 133-135
- Once a day, practice giving feedback NVC style as described on page 139.

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SESSION 1: GRATITUDE and APPRECIATION

What we mean by “Gratitude and Appreciation” in NVC

Gratitude is an internal state of thankfulness. **Appreciation** is the art and practice of expressing that gratitude.

Marshall Rosenberg’s nickname for gratitude is “Giraffe Fuel for Life” because he understood that giving and receiving of gratitude with a certain quality of presence was the greatest source of energy for living a compassionate life.

When gratitude and appreciation are abundant in our lives, we experience more aliveness, fulfillment, and resilience in our relationships.

One of the most common misconceptions about NVC is that its primary purpose is to work with conflict. While this is certainly one of the most useful applications of NVC, what often gets lost is that building relationships on gratitude and celebration are as important, if not more important, than the skill of working with conflict. When we build we build our relationships on gratitude and celebration, we create a nourishing flow of energy that helps to meet so many precious needs. And as our needs are more richly met, we have less tendency toward creating conflict and choosing behaviors that violate ours and other people's needs.

NVC, like many other schools of thought, believes that one of the most important functions of being human is to celebrate and care for all of life. That when we take things for granted, we tend to create more suffering and miss opportunities for happiness and fulfillment.

This practice of gratitude and celebration is particularly important in our family and community life. By expressing our appreciation for each other and reminding each other to be appreciative for all of the blessings in our life is one of the most powerful ways to create inner peace, loving relationships, and service to the world.

Ohbeeb was an elder and former resident of Earthaven Ecovillage. I experienced her as a beacon of inspiration, delight, humor, and gratitude.

She created this alphabet love practice and encouraged us to use the alphabet as a fun tool to generate gratitude.

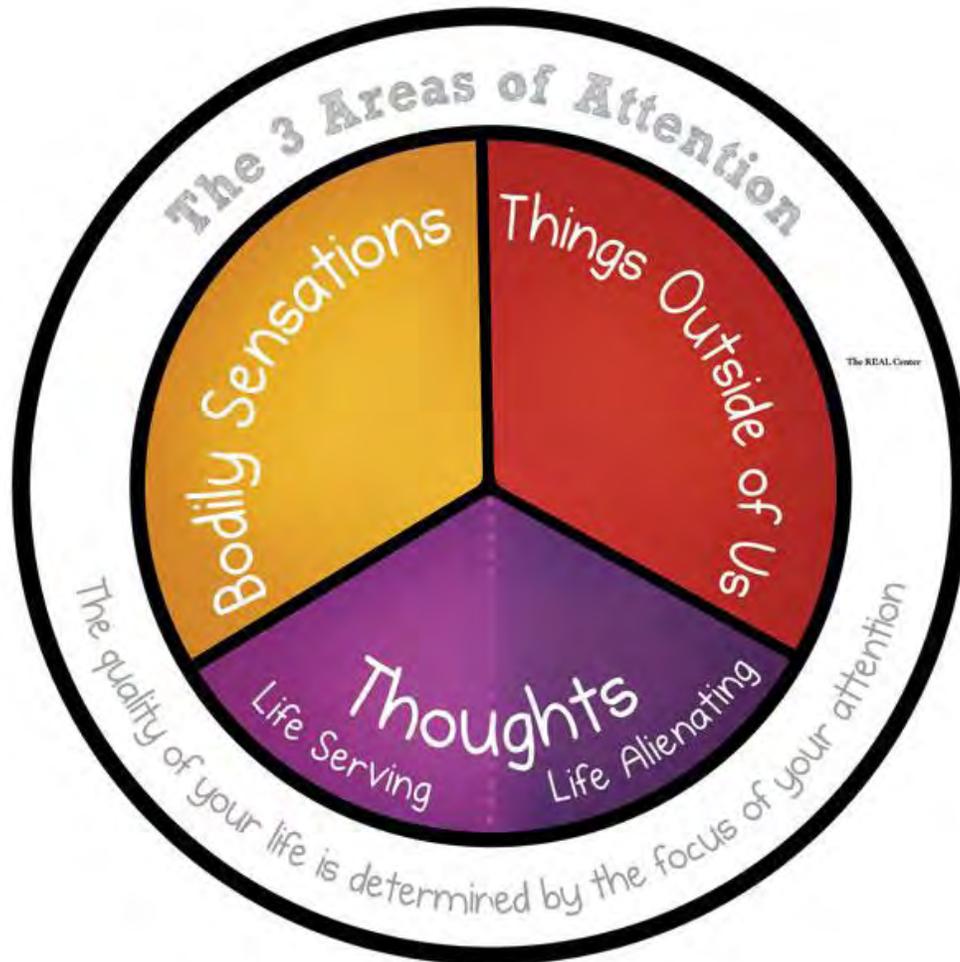
Use this alphabet list to energize yourself any time you want more aliveness and celebration. You could use it for yourself, a friend, the whole world, etc.

Please remember, do not use complements like "My beautiful friend" but instead use pure observations. My friends who helped me in my garden.

A ctive L O V E	A
B old L O V E	B
C aring L O V E	C
D aring L O V E	D
E veryday L O V E	E
F earless L O V E	F
G enerous L O V E	G
H appy L O V E	H
I nspired L O V E	I
J uicy L O V E	J
K ind L O V E	K
L uscious L O V E	L
M agical L O V E	M
N oble L O V E	N
O rgasmic L O V E	O
P assionate L O V E	P
Q uiet L O V E	Q
R everent L O V E	R
S acred L O V E	S
T rusting L O V E	T
U nabashed L O V E	U
V ibrant L O V E	V
W ondrous L O V E	W
X mystery L O V E	X
Y ippee L O V E	Y
Z esty L O V E	Z

The Three Areas of Attention

These three areas comprise the totality of what we can experience.
We are only capable of focusing on one at a time.

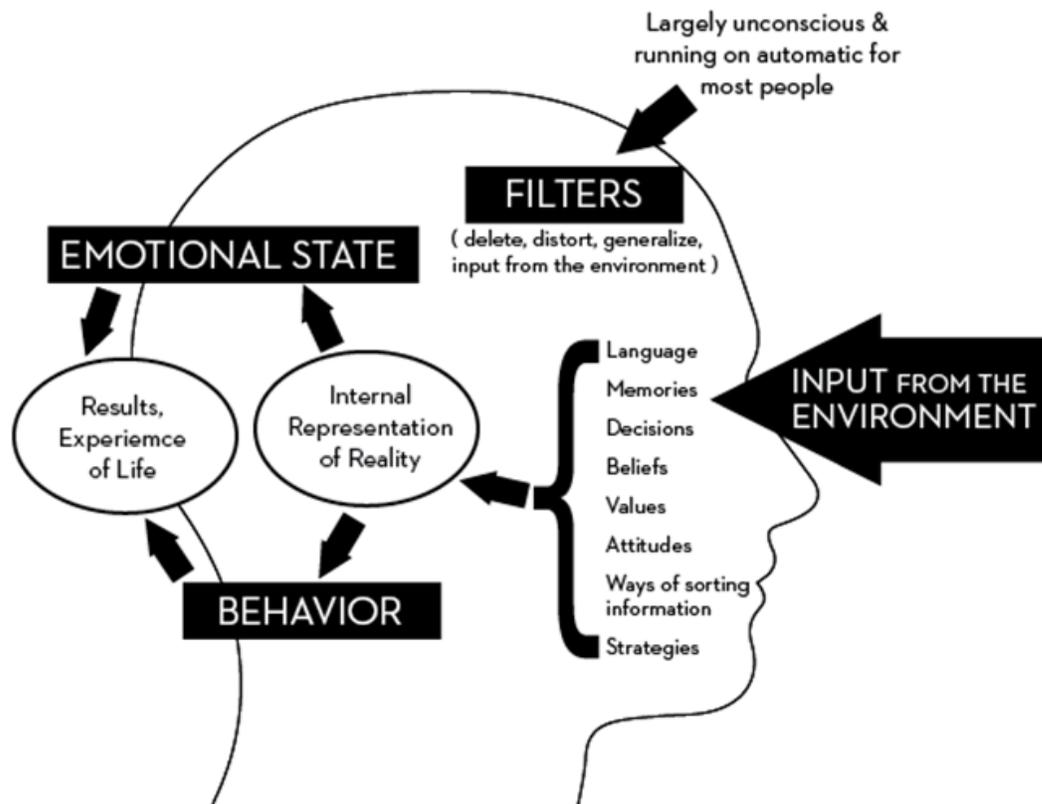


What we experience is determined by the interrelationship of these three areas. For example, things can happen *outside of us* that create *physical sensations* to which we then connect a *thought*. Say fire touches my skin. I experience pain and the thought emerges that “fire is dangerous.” I might also experience a pleasant rush of energy and think, “fire is exciting!”

This process is called “conditioning.” The thoughts we create become *filters* that condition or “color” our subsequent experiences. Just *thinking* of fire, then, can create a bodily sensation, just as you can make your arms tingle just by thinking about it.

The point is that what we think can have a profound effect on what we experience. So can the act of taking your attention *off* of thinking. You don’t have to listen to everything you think!

Our Internal Map of Reality



The **Internal Map of Reality** works like this. You receive some kind of **input from the environment**. You see, hear, touch, smell, or taste something. This sensory input, as it comes in, is filtered. These **filters** include your beliefs; values; memories; decisions; the language you speak; how you sort, store, and retrieve information; and your strategies for making decisions.

Filters delete, distort, and generalize the input as it comes in, based on the way your Internal Map of Reality has been set up to filter, all of which happens in a split second.

With what's left, after the filtering process, you make what are called **internal representations**. These include internal pictures, hearing internal sounds, feeling internal kinesthetic (or touch) sensations, smelling internal smells, tasting internal tastes, and having internal dialog—talking to yourself. Internal representations are what we call “thinking.” Internal representations in turn generate **emotional states**, and **behaviors**. And though you're aware of some of this, almost all of it—is going on outside your conscious awareness for your whole life.

Internal states, behaviors, and internal representations are an interconnected system, where a change in any one changes the other two. If you can learn to consciously generate your internal representations, you can be in charge of your internal states, your behavior, and the people and situations that come into your life.

Train Your Brain: The Five Essential Skills

© Rick Hanson, Ph.D., 2005 - 415/491-4900

TAKING IN THE GOOD: *Key Points*

"At the banquets of life, bring a big spoon."

What Is Taking In?

- In a profound sense, we are what we remember - the slow accumulation of the registration of lived experience. That's what we have "taken in" to become a part of ourselves. Just as food becomes woven into the body, memory becomes woven into the self.
- Two kinds of memory: Explicit and Implicit.
 - Explicit: Recollections of specific events.
 - Implicit: Emotions, body sensations, relationship paradigms, sense of the world.
- Implicit memory - emotional/somatic memory - is different from remembering ideas or concepts: this kind of memory is in your "gut." It's visceral, felt, powerful, and rooted in the most ancient and fundamental structures of your brain.
- The sense of self, of what it feels like to be you, is rooted in emotional/somatic memory. That's why it's crucial to take real good care of what's contained in those memory banks.

The Importance of Taking In Positive Experiences

- Negative experience is registered immediately: helps survival.
- Positive experiences generally have to be held in awareness for 5 - 10 - 20 seconds for them to register in emotional memory.
- Negative experiences trump positive ones: A single bad event with a dog is more memorable than a 1000 good times.
- Experiments with learned helplessness: great illustration of the enduring power of negative experiences compared to positive ones.
- Therefore, it is SO IMPORTANT to consciously, deliberately help the brain register positive experiences so they sink into the deepest layers of your mind. The benefits:
 - Generally positive internal emotional landscape, atmosphere, climate.
 - The fundamental foundation of self-soothing, emotional self-regulation, resilience.
 - Positive expectations about oneself, others, and the future. This is the legitimate basis of "verified optimism."
 - It's also the basis of true faith or confidence in your spiritual path.
 - "Evoked others," the sense of others inside who are nurturing, encouraging.
 - In psychological terms, this is the mechanism of what's understood as the internalization of positive resources.
 - A crucial resource inside and pathway for healing from trauma.
- All this is about being in reality, not wearing rose-colored glasses:
 - It's about proportionality, about our sense of the world being consistent with the nature of the world. For example, if the "mosaic" of life is mainly good, shouldn't our sense of living itself be mainly good?!
 - It's about learning from new positive experiences - having them make a difference. It's about using new positive experiences to counterbalance old negative ones.

- From a spiritual perspective, you are helping yourself really sense and then register good experiences on the path, or that come with skillful practice (e.g., the sukha, or deep happiness of peaceful meditation). This has many benefits:
 - Highlight the milestones along the way, so you can know what they feel like and find your way back to them.
 - Build faith and confidence in the fruits of the path.
 - Reward yourself for doing something that's noble but not always easy, and thus support your ongoing motivation.
 - More easily tap into the peace, contentment, and basic well-being that are the preconditions for deep states of concentration and insight.

How to Take in the Good

The Science

Since you are building up records of experiences in your most visceral memory banks, you need to focus on the emotional and body sensation aspects of your positive experiences. Through the mindfulness skills you've already learned, really tune into the embodied sense of the good experience. For example, relax your breathing and extend your awareness into the felt sense of the experience in your body.

General Attitudes

- Being in reality. You are just being fair, seeing the truth of things. You are not being vain or arrogant - which distort the truth of things.
- You've earned the good times: the meal is set before you, it's already paid for, and you might as well dig in!
- Recognize the value to yourself and others of taking in positive experiences. It is a good, a moral, a virtuous thing to soak in good experiences. Even from a spiritual perspective, positive emotional states support practice through freeing up attention, building confidence and faith in the path, and fueling heartfelt caring and kindness for others.

Try to be aware of any attitudes that say it's vain, selfish, sinful, or somehow unfair to feel good -- especially about yourself. Explore those attitudes -- and then let them go by relaxing your body, releasing the emotions embedded in the attitude, and disputing in your mind the illogical beliefs in the attitude.

Specific Actions Inside Yourself

- #1 Help positive events to become positive experiences for you. You can do this by:
- Paying attention to the good things in your world, and inside yourself. This includes pretty sunsets, nice songs on the radio, chocolate!, people being nice to you, the smell of a baby's hair, getting something done at work, finishing the dishes, holding your temper, getting yourself to the gym, feeling your natural goodheartedness, etc., etc. You could set a goal each day to actively look for beauty in your world, or signs of caring for you by others, or good qualities within yourself, etc.
 - Maintaining a relaxed, accepting, spacious awareness.

- Setting aside for the moment any concerns or irritations, or at least nudging them to the background of your attention.
- Sometimes doing things deliberately to create positive experiences for yourself. For example, you could take on a challenge, or do something nice for others, or bring to mind feelings of compassion and caring, or call up the sense or memory of feeling contented, peaceful, and happy.

#2 Extend the experience in time and space:

- Keep your attention on it so it lingers; don't just jump onto something else.
 - Let it fill your body with positive sensations and emotions.
- Savor, relish the positive experience. It's delicious!

#3 Sense that the positive experience is soaking into your brain and body - registering deeply in emotional memory. Perhaps imagine that it's sinking into your chest and back and brainstem. Maybe imagine a treasure chest in your heart.

Take the time to do this: 5 or 10 or 20 seconds. Keep relaxing your body and absorbing the positive experience.

#4 For bonus points: Sense that the positive experience is going down into old hollows and wounds within you and filling them up and replacing them with new positive feelings and views.

These are typically places where the new positive experience is the opposite of, the antidote to the old one.

Like current experiences of worth replacing old feelings of shame or inadequacy. Or current feelings of being cared about and loved replacing old feelings of rejection, abandonment, loneliness. Or a current sense of one's own strength replacing old feelings of weakness, smallness.

The "replaced" experience may be from adulthood. But usually the most valuable experiences to replace are from our youngest years. They are the "tip of the root of the dandelion," the ones we need to pull to prevent the dandelion of upsets from growing back.

The way to do this is to have the new positive experience be prominent and in the foreground of your awareness at the same time that the old pain or unmet needs are dimly sensed in the background.

The new experiences will gradually replace the old ones. You will not forget events that happened, but they will lose their charge and their hold on you.

THIS IS A PROFOUND, FAR-REACHING, AND GENUINE WAY TO HELP YOURSELF GROW. YOU ARE LITERALLY CHANGING YOUR OWN BRAIN.

Important Kinds of Experiences to Take In

Introduction

Everybody has vulnerabilities, particular soft spots or "holes in the heart" which we yearn to be filled to make up for missing experiences (mainly from childhood). Reflect on yourself or ask a trusted friend what those might be for you. Then look specifically for experiences that would address your needs - or even take appropriate steps to evoke such experiences in yourself (e.g., ask a friend to explain a little what led her to say something nice about you). Then, once the experience arrives, you know what to do with it!

Common Key Experiences - and Potential Sources

→ For all of these, look for opportunities to feel them in the moment, and reflect on the past for signs of them as well.

- Safety, security - Settings that feel protected; being with someone who is completely accepting; (for many people) being in nature; if this speaks to you, feeling cradled in God's love.
- Gratitude, appreciation - Even the smallest bit of good fortune; appreciating simple things like a sunset, a smile, or a spoon; reflecting on the good things in your life today or in the past.
- Strength, "I'm a survivor," tenacity, grit, resilience - Any time in a day when you were determined, or moved forward in the face of fear, "spoke truth to power," used your will, pushed back, asserted yourself, etc.
- Feeling loved, cared about, liked, included, attended to, empathized with - Notice when people give you their interested attention, or are warm, or touch you kindly, or are loving, or join with you in any way. Notice when you are included, fit in, are part of the gang. Look for the sense of community, of belonging. Especially look for implicit goodwill toward you within others that may not be actively expressed but is truly present inside their hearts.
- Worth, value, competence, capability, "good enough" - Look both for acknowledgement from others that you matter and have value as well as for signs of this on your own. Like times when you learned something new or did something hard. Any ways that you have contributed to others, like raising a child, volunteering in your community, helped a friend feel better, accomplished something at work, clarified something in a meeting, were kind to a stranger, helped a family member, held back your hand on tongue when you were angry, etc. Simply the sense of validity in existing, in being here - like the Buddha touching the ground when challenged by the forces of darkness to say "I get to be here, as part of this earth" - in having rights as a being to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.
- Your innate goodness - It's a remarkable fact that the people who have gone the very deepest into the human mind and heart - in others words, the sages and saints of every religious tradition - all say the same thing: the fundamental nature of every human being is pure, conscious, peaceful, radiant, kind, and wise . . . and is joined in mysterious ways with the ultimate underpinnings of reality, by whatever name we give That.

Just look inside. When you are calm and don't feel threatened, what sort of person are you? Of course, like everyone else, you wish the best for other people (and yourself). You can sense your own deepest qualities, even if they're sometimes veiled by the worries and sorrows we all feel. As an inherent property of the nervous system, there's a deep down essence or core in each of us that is awake, present, interested, and quietly happy. And if this sort of language speaks to you, you could also reflect on and deepen your sense of your own soul, innermost being, or Buddhature.

As you access a growing feeling of your innate goodness, let that sink in like any other beautiful experience.

The Practice of Gratitude

Accessing the “Giraffe Fuel for Life”

Adapted by Jerry Koch-Gonzalez from Marshall Rosenberg workshops on 11/6/03 & 11/20/04.

Excerpted from www.newenglandnvc.org

When we express gratitude we celebrate how our life has been enriched by other people’s specific actions.

When we express gratitude we reinforce our orientation to that which is life-giving.

One of our universal needs is to contribute to meeting other people’s needs. A universal need is intrinsic - it comes from inside us. To offer others an opportunity to contribute to meeting our needs is a precious gift we can give to others.

When we express gratitude we offer a gift to the giver - the knowledge that they have contributed to our needs being met.

The natural process of gratitude is often undermined by using praise and compliments as rewards intended to manipulate behavior: the child learns to sit quietly in class not because that behavior will contribute to their intrinsic need for learning, but because of the expectation of a gold star next to their name (read Alfie Kohn’s book Punished by Rewards).

Our domination culture trains us to contribute for extrinsic reasons - reasons that are outside of us: rewards, approval from others, tax deductions, name recognition. The motivation behind praise is often pure appreciation, but the language undermines the intent by enabling a dependency on external approval. When we say “Good job!” we leave the other person dependent on our judgment of what a good job is. When we say to another person “This specific thing that you did helped me relax/play/focus, etc” then we contribute to their knowledge base and their capacity to contribute effectively.

The gratitude learning loop starts with the intention to enrich life, is realized with actions and is confirmed with feedback.

In offering gratitude, include the basic components of NVC honest expression:

- what we witnessed the other person do
- what needs of ours were met by their action
- how we feel as a result
- check to see that our expression of gratitude was received

In receiving gratitude, we can continue the celebration by saying to the other
 - "I am glad I was able to share something I was given that is useful to you." (or
 silently to yourself:

- "I am grateful for what I have received that allows me to give.").

If instead, after receiving gratitude feedback, we say "oh, it's nothing," we
 break the feedback loop and the positive energy that was generated dies out. If
 we want to be brief, instead of "it's nothing," try "joyfully given" or "my
 pleasure." And though the choice of words is meaningful, remember that it is
 not the words but the intent and the connection that matter.

Our need is to contribute to life. Contributing to life is not about ego ('See
 what a good person I am!'). Approval and reassurance are strategies to tell us
 whether we have contributed to life but they are based in someone else
 judging our behavior (good/bad, smart/stupid, etc). Replace approval and
 reassurance with empathic connection and honest reaction.

Gratitude, or appreciation, is a universal need. Appreciation from a
 particular person is a strategy. Appreciation is telling other people (or
 ourselves) how their behavior has contributed to meeting our needs.

Try these practices:

Keep a gratitude journal. Make daily entries:

- to celebrate what you did
- to celebrate what someone else did
- to reflect on if and how you expressed gratitude to that person as fully as you
 would have liked to
- to set intentions to express gratitude
- before dinner, make it a family practice for all to share something they did
 and something that was done for them that enriched life

In the words of Mark Twain: "I have been complimented myself a great many
 times, and they always embarrass me—I always feel that they have not said
 enough."

Expressing Gratitude & Appreciation

- Gratitude is a celebration of life. It is letting other people know when they have helped make your life more wonderful.
- Expressing gratitude in an NVC format (observation, feeling, and need met) helps create this celebration of life.
- Gratitude is sometimes used to manipulate others to continue demonstrating a desired behavior rather than being a celebration.
- Sometimes we express gratitude by sitting in judgment of what the person has done as being good, kind, special, the best, etc. This expression of gratitude focuses more on the speaker's judgments of the person rather than what the person has done, and how it has helped make the speaker's life more wonderful.
- Positive judgments (compliments) can be just as harmful as negative judgments (criticisms) because they reinforce doing things to appease other's definitions of what is right and good, as opposed to encouraging us to focus on our own feelings and needs.

Exercise 1

For each of the following, decide whether the speaker is expressing gratitude in the language of Compassionate Communication or giving a compliment. If it is a compliment, rewrite it be expressing gratitude by stating the observations, feelings, and needs.

Example:

You are such a great partner.

When I think about our relationship, I feel incredibly happy because you help meet my need for love, connection, trust, and respect..

1. You are a wonderful community member.

2. When I see your intelligence, I feel happy because I have a need for your well being.

3. I noticed that you put your coat on the hanger and I feel grateful because I have a need for order and cleanliness in the house.

4. You are such a giving person.

5. When I see that you do a good job in school, I feel like I'm the luckiest mom in the world because I need you to be happy in life.

6. When you smiled at me this morning I felt so much joy because I have a need for connection.

7. I appreciate that you didn't yell at me.

8. Thank you for always being there for me.

9. I don't know what I would do if you were not in my life.

10. You are one of the best students in the class.

Exercise 4

Think of a gratitude you could express to each person below and write it out in the language of Compassionate Communication using the first three components—observation, feeling, and need.

Example:

My partner

1. When I see how much time you spend taking care of our children and our home, I feel so happy and grateful because it creates possibilities for me to pursue my career and helps meet my need for stability and belonging.

1. Your mother or motherly figure:

2. Your father or fatherly figure:

3. Yourself:

4. Your romantic partner or close friend:

5. Your boss, coworker or friend:

6. A community member:

7. A service worker who repairs something on your property:

8. A teacher of yourself or a child of yours:

9. A political leader:

10. A social justice activist:

Gratitude Exercises

Daily Gratitude Journal

EXERCISE 1:

- 1- Each night before going to sleep (or as often as you desire) write down one thing that you did that enriched your life or someone else's life. Record the specific action you did, the feeling that you had, and need that was met.

Examples of things that I did that enriched my life:

- *When I took a break from my computer work this afternoon to go for a hike, I felt enlivened and happy because I met my needs for self care and exercise.*
- *When I bought the newest book from my favorite author, I felt excited because it met my need for learning and recreation.*

Examples of things that I did that enriched someone else's life:

- *When I brought home a basket of fruit from the farmers' market for my children, I felt delighted and joyful because it met my need for contribution and their wellbeing.*
- *When I helped my neighbor harvest their tomatoes, I felt satisfied and warm hearted because it met my need for community and nature.*

- 2- Then SAVOR it. Spend 30-60 seconds feeling the good feelings in your body. Let it sink into your nervous system

- 3- Give a flower to yourself (draw it on your paper) or some other gift of appreciation.

EXERCISE 2:

1. Think of something someone else did to enrich your life. Write down the specific action, the feeling that you had, and the needs that were met.

Examples of things that someone else did to enrich my life:

- *When my co-workers organized a birthday party for me, I felt warm and tender, because it met my need for celebration and to be seen.*
- *When my partner took time off from work to go to my family reunion, I felt relieved and appreciative because it met my need for companionship and support.*

2. Then SAVOR it. Spend 30-60 seconds feeling the good feelings in your body. Let it sink into your nervous system

3. Recall if you expressed to them your appreciation. If not, ask yourself if you want to express your appreciation to them.

Examples of an appreciation:

- *When you organized a birthday party for me, I felt warm and tender, because it met my need for celebration and to be seen.*
- *When you took time off from work to go to my family reunion, I felt relieved and appreciative because it met my need for companionship and support.*

Exercise to reduce the “Fuel for Life” Shortage

Part 1- Think of a gratitude you would have liked to have heard. Make it about a specific person and a specific instance.

Write in NVC language (observation, feeling, need) exactly what you would have liked to have heard.

Example of what I would have liked to have heard:

- *When I brought you meals the day you were sick and couldn't get out of bed, I would like to have heard "When you brought food over the day I was sick, I felt so tender and grateful because it really met my need for nurturing and belonging."*

Part 2- Imagine going to the person and saying “I was just in a workshop and we were asked to think of a gratitude we would have liked to have heard.” Read it to the person and ask them why they did not say it. Then imagine what their response would be.

Examples of responses I imagine they might have said:

- *I did not say "Thank you" because I was in a lot of pain and was embarrassed about how I looked.*
- *I was hesitant to say "Thank you" because you help me so often and I'm afraid that I could never repay your kindness.*

What can you learn from their response?

Do you not express gratitude sometimes for reasons similar to theirs?

Part 3- Then ask yourself if there is any gratitude you would like to share with anyone. Do you want to do it? If so, set a specific time to do it.

Example of a gratitude that I would like to share with someone:

- *I was just thinking about how I helped my friend when they were sick and it reminded me that I wanted to thank you for the time that you took my children on a day trip so I could work on a big project. (Needs met: support, friendship)*
- *I was just thinking about how I helped my friend when they were sick and it reminded me that I wanted to thank you for the time you sat with me and my partner to help us work through a difficult situation. (Needs met: emotional safety, learning, community)*

Giving and receiving gratitude is the primary source of energy for creating satisfying and sustainable relationships, and cultivating compassionate consciousness. For this energy to flow, it is important that both the giver and receiver are aware of the observations, feelings, and needs that are connected to the gratitude. Like looking at pictures after a vacation, this process is a way to tap into the feeling of gratitude again. Of course, you would only say a gratitude if it was authentic.

This exercise uses classic NVC to communicate gratitude. A more street giraffe version could work as well or better, depending on the situation.

1- PRACTICE: Expressing gratitude for how I made my own life more wonderful.

FORMAT: When I think about how I _____, I feel _____, because my need(s) for _____ are met.

EXAMPLE: When I think about how I took the day off from work and went hiking, I feel delighted because that really met my need for self-care and personal growth.

2- PRACTICE: Expressing gratitude for how I contributed to someone else's life.

FORMAT: When I think about how I _____, I feel _____, because my need(s) for _____ are met.

EXAMPLE: When I think about how I spent a couple hours with my friend empathizing with their life struggles, I feel happy and openhearted, because I really met my need for intimacy and contribution.

3- PRACTICE: Expressing gratitude for how someone else contributed to my life.

FORMAT: When I think about how _____ said or did _____, I feel _____, because my need(s) for _____ are met.

EXAMPLE: When I think about how you came over to read poetry to me, I feel so delighted and grateful, because that really met my need for friendship and to matter.

4- PRACTICE: Asking someone to share a gratitude with you about how you contributed to their life (if it is authentic for them).

FORMAT: Would you be willing to tell me what's alive for you about when I said or did _____?

EXAMPLE: Would you be willing to share what's alive for you about the time I made dinner for you when you were sick?

5- PRACTICE: Asking someone to share a gratitude with you about how their life was made more wonderful by someone or something else.

FORMAT: Would you be willing to share with me your feelings and needs met about how someone or something made your life more wonderful?

EXAMPLE: Would you be willing to share with me your feelings and needs met about the reconciliation you recently had with your father?

6- PRACTICE: Asking someone if there is anything that they have done to make your life more wonderful for which you have not expressed gratitude to them.

FORMAT: Is there anything that you have said or done that has made my life more wonderful that I have not expressed to you my gratitude?
If so, offer gratitude to them if that would feel good to you.

EXAMPLE: Is there anything that you have said or did that made my life more wonderful for which I have not expressed gratitude to you?

7- PRACTICE: Asking someone to share in your celebration of how your life has been made more wonderful by you, by someone else, or something outside of you.

FORMAT: Would you be willing to share in my celebration about how someone else made my life more wonderful?

EXAMPLE 1: Would you be willing to share in my celebration about how my women's group made my life more wonderful by helping me clean my house?

EXAMPLE 2: Would you be willing to share in my celebration about how my partner made my life more wonderful by taking a day off of work to spend it with me?

EXAMPLE 3: Would you be willing to share in my celebration about how I got a raise at work?

How to Start a Gratitude Jar and Why it Will Change Your Life

By Josie Robinson, Author of The Gratitude Jar: A Simple Guide to Creating Miracles

Be content with what you have; rejoice in the way things are. When you realize there is nothing lacking, the whole world belongs to you. —Lao Tzu

Starting a Gratitude Jar is one of the most powerful things you can do to create huge positive changes within your life.

Focusing on what you have to be grateful for forces you to not only become a more positive person—but also lowers your stress, gives you more energy and helps you sleep better.

Gratitude is like a miracle vitamin for your mind, body, and soul and is one of the easiest self-care habits to practice each day.

It's also completely free, so there's no excuse not to do it.

How to Use a Gratitude Jar: Give **THANKS**

I created a formula called Give **THANKS** based on my own life changing experience using a Gratitude Jar so you can gain the maximum benefits from this practice.

All you need to do is set aside a few minutes each day and use the Give **THANKS** formula to add a ton of positive energy to your day.

Give **THANKS** Instructions

Think about what you're grateful for.

Have an open mind.

Allow yourself to feel gratitude.

Note your gratitude.

Keep it in a jar, or other special place.

Share it with someone else.

1. THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE GRATEFUL FOR.

The first step is as simple as it sounds: think about everything in your life and choose what comes to mind as your gratitude.

Reflect on the people you know, your day-to-day life, where you live and work...is something special standing out?

That's your gratitude.

2. HAVE AN OPEN MIND.

Don't judge whatever comes up.

Giving gratitude for anything, no matter how silly or small you think it may be, is powerful.

3. ALLOW YOURSELF TO FEEL GRATITUDE.

Once you've come up with your main gratitude for the day, go a bit deeper into why you chose it.

Feel the emotion of gratitude come into your heart, and let it nourish your mind, body, and soul.

Gratitude is a powerful emotion that instantly washes away stress and tension. Allow yourself to be healed by it.

4. NOTE YOUR GRATITUDE.

Write down on a slip of paper what you're grateful for and why.

Write "I'm thankful for _____ today because..." and fill it in as completely as possible.

There's power from writing something down and making it physical.

5. KEEP IT IN YOUR JAR, OR OTHER SPECIAL PLACE.

Your jar can be whatever container you happen to have lying around your house.

You could also buy a special container from an antique shop or home décor store if you want something a little more special. If you're crafty, you could make your own decorative jar.

Seeing your gratitude jar with all your slips of gratitude in it is a great visual reminder of all the good things you have in your life.

6. **S**HARE IT WITH SOMEONE ELSE.

Sharing your gratitude practice with another person is amazingly powerful and I sincerely believe it will greatly enhance your results.

Will Give **THANKS** still be effective if you do it on your own?

Of course.

You'll definitely see transformation if you Give **THANKS** every day for the next thirty days by yourself.

But, if you really want to move mountains—share your gratitude practice with someone else.

I shared this practice with my four year old son and it changed BOTH of our lives for the better. Plus, it deepened our relationship by providing a positive way to connect with each other every day.

There's all kinds of variations on how to use a gratitude jar, but it really all boils down to this simple formula.

Practicing gratitude is one of those tiny little changes that will bring incredible gifts time and again: happiness, inner peace, better relationships, prosperity, good health.

Gratitude is the ultimate form of self-care, and something that will transform your life when you use it daily!

30 Daily Practice Ideas for Living Gratefully

NVC is equally interested in conflict resolution as well as celebration. In fact, in some respects celebration is the most important part because it's where we get the fuel to stay in our compassionate consciousness. Where does this fuel come? We generate this fuel by giving and receiving gratitude in compassionate consciousness. –Marshall Rosenberg

1. Every night before you go to sleep, take an inventory of the things for which you are grateful. Let them percolate through your mind and calm your body. Write down at least five things that matter to you.
2. At any point during the day, reflect upon one important thing that you have learned that day. Write down what you have learned.
3. Send a card or an e-card, letting someone know that you are thinking of them today. Expect nothing in return. Just share your appreciation and acknowledgement.
4. Sit quietly and allow a sense of peace to enter your heart. From this place, light a candle in your space. Create a grateful intention and settle into the peace of residing in gratefulness for a few, precious moments.
5. Start your day with an intention to show up absolutely, wholeheartedly to everything you do today. Notice at the end of the day if anything changed because of this intention.
6. Make the decision to see your most challenging moments today as opportunities. What might be making itself known or available to you in hard times? How can you cultivate even small sentiments of gratefulness for the gifts that come from struggle? Reflect on this at the beginning and the end of the day.
7. Turn all of the “waiting” moments of the day into moments of heightened awareness. Try to be fully present in these moments to what might be blessings in disguise. Notice that the time “between” things is a huge gift. Enjoy the gift.
8. If you share a meal with others today, before or while you eat, ask each person to share something for which they are grateful. If you are eating alone, bring to mind something for which you are grateful and dedicate your meal to

that “great fullness.”

9. Notice your hands. Think of all they do for you. Can you imagine what it would be like to offer them your true appreciation at a host of moments each day? Notice how much they help to facilitate what you love in life. Take care of them.

10. Reach out to someone you know is going through a difficult time. You do not have to have the right things to say, just connect in a meaningful way.

11. Before you eat, take a moment to feel grateful to all those who contributed to creating your meal: the farmer who grew the vegetables, the hens that laid the eggs, the workers who harvested the wheat and stocked the food, etc.

12. Make a list of grateful poems, and share them with a friend.

13. Make a playlist of grateful songs. Listen to it when you wake up in the morning. Have a dance party with a friend.

14. While racing somewhere, take 30 seconds to stop, take a breath, and look at the sky or at the environment around you. What was begging for your attention?

15. Do something truly generous for someone else today. Expand into your most full-blown expression of generosity. Give as if your life depended on it, and then try giving a little more. Stretch into your capacity. Seek nothing in return.

16. Tell someone whom you love that you love them — and offer that comment a larger context by spelling out some of the reasons why you are grateful for them.

17. Ask someone a sincere question. There is hardly a more precious gift than true inquiry and deep listening.

18. Make a financial contribution to a non-profit organization engaged in work that you value. Accompany that gift with a note of appreciation for how hard they are working to advance missions in which you believe. Feel interconnected.

19. Support the arts by purchasing a book; downloading music and paying for it; buying a painting, drawing, or sculpture; getting a ticket for a live performance; or otherwise contributing to an artist you enjoy.
20. Ask yourself: “What is the opportunity for gratefulness in this moment?” Try this when things are not going as you had planned.
21. Give someone a grateful hug. Actually give the hug — don’t take a hug. Ask first.
22. Pick out five things that you do not need anymore, and give them away with joy.
23. Put a bag in your pocket, go for a walk, and make a corner of the world more beautiful by picking up the litter along the way. Your appreciation of the earth will be contagious to others.
24. Quick! Without too much thinking, make a list of ten things you love about yourself.
25. Watch Brother David Steindl-Rast’s video, “A Good Day.” (on YouTube) Share it with a friend.
26. Incorporate gratitude into your exercise routine.
27. Bring to mind someone for whom you are grateful. Savor this image or memory. Try to allow the image to be held by all the cells of your body, not just in your mind. Notice what happens in your emotions and body when you do this.
28. Ask yourself, “What has surpassed my expectations in life?”
29. Have a potluck “Gratefulness party.” Invite each of your friends to share something he or she is grateful for.
30. Worldwide, 775 million people are illiterate. Feel your good fortune as you read this sentence, and as you read anything today.

(These practices are from www.gratefulness.org, See other great resources there)

150 OFTEN OVERLOOKED BLESSINGS
SARAH BAN BREATHNACH

FAITH!. Faith in a Spirit possessing greater strength, wisdom, power, and love than you do.
Faith in the ultimate goodness of Life.
Faith in yourself.
Faith that as you seek, you will find.
The dream that will not die because you were born to love it into full being.
Answered prayers.
The kindness of strangers.
The warmth and security of home. Crossing the threshold and closing the door after a hard day.
Expressions of unconditional love and support.
Your health. The health of those you love.
That moment of relief when you realize that the pain has subsided.
A job that provides steady income while you pursue your dreams.
Feeling the presence of Spirit in your life.
Sinking into a warm, softly scented bath after a stressful day.
The aroma of something delicious wafting from the kitchen.
Not having to cook tonight.
Your boundless imagination.
When hope is restored.
Following your intuition and being delighted that you did.
Daydreams. Reveries. Textured, technicolor nightscapes of happiness and good fortune that have you awakening with a smile.
Twelve hours uninterrupted sleep.
Breakfast in bed.
Serenity as you pay bills.
Acceptance after struggle.
Seeing him or her and having your heart skip a beat.
Seeing him or her and finally feeling nothing.
Completely and utterly surrendering to what is and then waiting expectantly for the good that is to come.
An afternoon to do as you please.
Doing a great job and having it and your efforts appreciated.
Holding your child in your arms.
Delighting in other people's children.
Witnessing the birth of new life.
The times when your ideas "clicked" with others.
The fragrance of a vacation day.
The beach. The feel of the sand beneath your feet. the salty breeze, the warming rays of the sun.
A walk in the woods and becoming aware of life all around you.

Trying something new and loving it.
The desire for knowledge.
Two hours in a wonderful bookstore.
Waking up early enough to watch the sun rise with a cup of tea or coffee.
Watching the sunset.
Meeting a kindred spirit.
Meeting your soul mate(s) and recognizing that you have known each other before.
The moment when the veil is lifted from both your eyes and you know that you know.
Hearing a piece of music that instantly touches your soul.
Being able to add that music to your collection immediately.
Reading a passage in a book or a poem that expresses exactly how you feel.
Memorizing a beautiful piece of poetry and sharing it with another in conversation.
Holding hands.
Having a congenial conversation with a stranger on a plane, train, or bus.
Successfully hailing a cab in rush hour.
A nap.
Realizing that there are no coincidences.
Nailing the punch line in a favorite joke. Hearing their laughter.
Relishing a wonderful movie. Liking it so much you want to see it again as the credits roll.
Seeing it again.
Laughing so hard you can't catch your breath and your sides ache.
The sacred release of a good cry.
Bringing joy, happiness, and comfort to another person or creature.
The loyal, loving companionship of pets.
Feeling you're part of a loving and supportive community or church.
Finding a parking space exactly when you need one.
Summoning up the courage to surmount a challenge.
Taking tiny and big risks and having them pay off.
Investing time, creative energy, and emotion in yourself then reaping the rich harvest of authentic success sown by Love.
Coming in after being caught in a soaking thunderstorm, getting out of wet clothes and becoming warm and dry.
Meeting a deadline.
Making it to the game just in time to see her hit her first home run.
Friendship that endures and thrives despite the obstacles of time and distance.
Being able to trust another human being.
The experience of a pleasant déjà vu. The moment you realize it doesn't have to be déjà vu all over again unless you want it to.
Wisdom gleaned through life experiences (both yours and others). Knowing how to use it.
Speaking another language.
Reading a book that changes your life.
Receiving flowers.
Moving on.
Letting go gracefully without regrets.

The first morsel of your favorite comfort food.
 Savoring the scents of life (flowers, food, your lover, the earth, your child's hair).
 The fresh feeling that immediately comes after a shower and washing your hair.
 Being able to travel: the adventure of new places.
 Room service.
 The support and loving presence of sisters and/or brothers.
 Achieving a long sought after goal. The moment when your accomplishment emotionally registers.
 Feeling a sense of pride in yourself.
 Wishing upon a star. Having your wish come true.
 Finding your perfect scent.
 Making eye contact and smiling with a gorgeous stranger.
 A dance partner who makes you feel like Ginger Rogers (or Fred Astaire).
 That person who takes your breath away when you are near or feel him or her next to you.
 The first kiss.
 Being with a person with whom you can communicate with- out words.
 The moment you realize you'd marry your spouse all over again.
 Sharing the holidays with people you really want to be with.
 Easily switching carpool days.
 Finding, having and wearing something that makes you feel special.
 Saying "no" to the bake sale without guilt.
 A miracle.
 Bargains at thrift shops. flea markets, garage sales.
 The sense of relief throwing stuff out brings.
 Your mentor.
 The individual who inspired your career and made you be- lieve that there is nothing as real as a dream.
 The person who believed in you when you weren't able to believe in yourself.
 A fortune cookie with just the right message.
 The precious lingering memory of your mother's sweet scent. The comforting memory of your father's hand.
 Being able to provide for the needs and wants of your loved ones.
 The moment you are able to distinguish between your needs and your wants.
 Watching others enjoy your creations. whether it's a meal, flowers from your garden, or a pair of pants you just ironed.
 Being able to make clear, conscious, creative choices.
 Air-conditioning on an excruciatingly hot and humid day.
 Being upgraded to first class.
 The contentment of sitting before a roaring fire on a winter's evening.
 Receiving a love letter, Writing one.
 All of the tragedy you and yours have escaped.
 Becoming fascinated in a subject and learning more about it.
 Hearing the words "I love you."

The awareness of innocence.
The long awaited phone call with good news.
When the repair bill is less than you'd expected.
A sense of humor during good and rough patches.
Not losing your temper.
Giving and receiving forgiveness after a painful estrangement.
Perfect timing.
Fitting into last year's clothes.
Knowing a favorite book awaits you at the end of a day.
Sleeping on the perfect pillow. The contentment of being wrapped in a favorite blanket, quilt, or goose-down comforter.
Sharing your aspirations for the future with a close friend.
Reawakening an old passion; discovering a new one.
The haven of a comforting shoulder to cry on: the warming embrace of a loved one.
Pampering yourself.
Listening to the whispers of your authentic self and taking her or his advice.
The generosity and hospitality of good neighbor
Family and friends who remember funny or uplifting stories about your past that you've forgotten and share them with you.
Finding a lost pet.
Rediscovering old family photos.
Playing hooky.
The intimate bond of friendship that protects, nurtures, inspires, and comforts.
The man or woman in your life who is neither a past nor present love but simply a precious friend who adores you.
Waking up to a perfectly beautiful day for a planned out- door event.
Working with people you enjoy being around. Working with people who are pleasant, kind, funny, considerate, and who honor your contribution.
An opportunity to interview for the dream job. Getting it.
Receiving the perfect gift. Finding one for someone else,
Catching a glimpse of yourself in the mirror and delighting in what you see.
Having your child appreciate your sense of humor.
An unexpected compliment that makes your day.
Enjoying the company of smart, witty, savvy people. delighting in stimulating conversation and holding your own,
Completing the crossword puzzle without help.
Looking fabulous at your class reunion.
Listening to the oldies and recalling happy moments.
A rare, relaxing break with your co-worker during a hectic day.
Paying off your credit card balance.
Coming up with the perfect retort at the moment you need it and not two hours later.
The sound of raindrops on your roof at night.
Friends and family who can both truly rejoice with you and console in times of sorrow.

Gratitude Bracelets for More, Happiness, Fun and Love in Our Lives! **34**

Gratitude Bracelets are a fun, beautiful, and helpful way to assist us in remembering to focus on the many blessings our our life. Research has shown that because of the human tendency to the “Negativity Bias,” the tendency to notice what is wrong instead of what is right, we have to compensate for this tragic handicap by intentionally noticing needs met. As Rick Hanson says, “The human mind is like Velcro for negative experiences and Teflon for positive experiences. It seems that the average person needs to create a positive to negative ratio of 5 to 1 noticing what is right in order to maintain satisfying long term relationships.

The gratitude bracelets are arranged in a pattern of 5 to 1 as a reminder to shift our consciousness toward gratitude and away from complaining, taking things for granted, and just not noticing.

Below are some pictures of gratitude bracelets I and others have made to use and give away.

Try making some of your own for yourself, your family, and your community.



Thriving in Relationships: Five Tools for Success

An Online course presented by Steve Torma & The School of Integrated Living

SESSION 2: EMPATHY

What we mean by "Empathy" in NVC

Marshall Rosenberg said repeatedly that he developed NVC to answer two of the most important questions that human beings ever ask.

Question One: "What's alive in you?" Which is just the NVC way of saying "how are you?" He used to say that this was the most asked question on the planet. As pack animals, we instinctively know that our wellbeing is directly related to the wellbeing of others. We also instinctively want to contribute to those around us so that they can thrive. So that we all can thrive.

Question Two: "How can we make life more wonderful together?" Which is just another way of saying "what ideas do we have of how to joyfully meet our needs together?" or "what requests do we have of each other that would contribute to both of our lives?"

One of the most important ways that we contribute to ourself and each other is through the practice of empathy.

In NVC, empathy is the practice of putting attention on feelings and needs. Self-empathy is putting our attention on our own feelings and needs. Empathy for another person is putting our attention on their feelings and needs.

Empathy isn't what we say, it is more a quality of presence. Empathy can be spoken or be silent, and is primarily an energy that comes through the eyes. Empathy is commonly misunderstood as sympathy, fixing, or consoling. When we are truly empathizing, we can connect deeply with another person, even if we disagree with the person's perspective. It allows us to show our care for the other person without taking on their struggles as our own.

One of the most powerful quotes about empathy that I ever heard Marshall say is "I never met anyone who, once they got all of the empathy they needed, still wanted revenge or an apology." It is also commonly said in NVC that "empathy heals and honesty brings growth."

Nonviolent Communication: Statements and Questions

Communicating in the NVC Dance of Honesty and Empathy

Expressing honestly



Listening empathetically

Expressing myself honestly through statements without blaming or criticizing

Observation (free from my evaluation):

“When I observe (see, hear, remember, imagine) ...”
(Reflecting my observations of what I see, hear, etc. that does or does not contribute to my well-being)

Feeling:

“I feel...”
(My emotions or bodily sensations related to what I observe rather than my thoughts)

Need:

“Because I need/value...”
(What I need or value that causes my feelings. Needs are distinct from preferences or specific actions.)

Request:

“Would you be willing to...”
(Clearly requesting that which would enrich **my** life without demanding. The concrete actions I would like taken.)

Empathically understanding you through asking, and receiving without hearing blame or criticism

Observation (free from your evaluation):

“When you observe (see, hear, remember, imagine)”
(Reflecting what I think you observe: see, hear, etc. that does or does not contribute to your well-being)

Feeling

“Do you feel...?”
(What I think may be your emotions or bodily sensations related to what you observe rather than your thoughts)

Need:

“Because you need/value...”
(What I think you need or value that causes your feelings. Needs are distinct from preferences or specific actions.)

Request:

“Would you like...?”
(Empathically receiving that which would enrich **your** life without hearing any demands. The concrete actions you would like taken. Sometimes unspoken when offering empathy.)

NVC OFNR Practice Sheet

Expressing myself honestly through statements

Observation: (What I see, hear, etc.)
“When...”

Feeling: (My inner emotions or bodily sensations)
“I feel...”

Need: (Reflecting my needs and values)
“Because I need...”

Request: (Specific desired behavior I can see, hear, etc.)
“Would you be willing to...”

Empathically understanding you through asking

Observation: (Reflecting what I think you see, hear, etc.)
“When...”

Feeling (Guessing your inner emotions/bodily sensations)
“Do you feel...?”

Need: (What I think may be your needs and values)
“Because you need...”

Request: (What I think may be your specific desire)
“Would you like...?”

The 9 Basic Human Needs

By Manfred Max-Neef, Chilean economist and environmentalist

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Sustenance | 4. Empathy | 7. Creativity |
| 2. Safety | 5. Rest, recreation, & play | 8. Autonomy |
| 3. Love | 6. Community | 9. Meaning or Purpose in life |

Sustenance

air
food
health & healing
pleasure
shelter
touch
water

Safety

order
consistency
predictability
reassurance
security
safety (emotional)
safety (physical)
stability
structure

Love

acceptance
affection
attention
belonging
care
closeness
companionship
connection
friendship
harmony
honesty
intimacy
nurturing
to hear & be heard
to trust & be trusted
warmth

Empathy

authenticity
compassion
integrity
presence
to understand
to be understood

Rest Recreation

& Play

beauty
exercise
humor
joy
leisure
movement
relaxation
rest/sleep
sexual expression
sleep
solitude

Community

appreciation
belonging
cooperation
communication
communion
consideration
inclusion
communion
ease
equality

ease

equality
fairness
inclusion
mutuality
respect
self-respect
shared reality
sharing
support
to know & be known
to see & be seen

Creativity

clarity
inspiration
discovery
effectiveness
efficiency
exploration
flow
focus
information
integration
self-expression
stimulation
power in your world

Autonomy

choice
freedom
independence
space
spontaneity

Meaning or Purpose in Life

aliveness
awareness
celebration of life
challenge
competence
consciousness
contribution
growth
hope
learning
making sense of life
mourning
nature
participation
peace (external)
peace (internal)
self-acceptance
self-care
self-connection
self-knowledge
self-love
self-realization
self-responsibility
to matter
to understand
to be understood
transcendence
well-being of
someone else

FEELINGS WHEN YOUR NEEDS ARE SATISFIEDFEELINGS WHEN YOUR NEEDS ARE NOT SATISFIED**AFFECTIONATE**

compassionate
friendly
loving
open hearted
sympathetic
tender
warm

CONFIDENT

empowered
open
proud
safe
secure

ENGAGED

absorbed
alert
curious
fascinated
interested
intrigued
stimulated

INSPIRED

amazed
awed
wonder

EXCITED

amazed
astonished
eager
energetic
enthusiastic
invigorated
lively
passionate
surprised

EXHILARATED

blissful
ecstatic
elated
exuberant
radiant
thrilled

GRATEFUL

appreciative
moved
thankful
touched

HOPEFUL

expectant
encouraged
optimistic

JOYFUL

amused
delighted
glad
happy
pleased
tickled

PEACEFUL

calm
clear headed
comfortable
centered
content
fulfilled
mellow
quiet
relaxed
relieved
satisfied
serene
still
tranquil
trusting

REFRESHED

enlivened
rejuvenated
renewed
rested
restored
revived

AFRAID

panicked
scared
suspicious
terrified
worried

ANNOYED

aggravated
frustrated
impatient
irritated

ANGRY

furious
outraged
resentful

AVERSION

disgusted
horrified
repulsed

CONFUSED

ambivalent
hesitant
lost
torn

DISCONNECTED

alienated
apathetic
bored
distant
distracted
numb
withdrawn

DISQUIET

agitated
alarmed
disturbed
restless
shocked
startled
surprised
uncomfortable
upset

EMBARRASSED

ashamed
guilty
self-conscious

FATIGUE

exhausted
tired
weary
worn out

PAIN

grief
heartbroken
hurt
lonely
miserable
regretful

SAD

depressed
despair
disappointed
discouraged
heavy hearted
hopeless
unhappy

TENSE

anxious
fidgety
irritable
nervous
overwhelmed
restless
stressed out

VULNERABLE

fragile
guarded
helpless
insecure
sensitive
shaky

YEARNING

envious
jealous
longing

Guidelines for Giving Empathy

When people are expressing emotions of any kind:

1- whether in words or actions,
 2- whether they speak directly about their feelings or not,
 they are almost always wanting empathy first. That is, they want us to hear and acknowledge their feelings and needs. They want someone to connect with them either in silence or in words.

Empathy is giving your full attention to feelings and needs, whether in yourself or another.

Empathy can be silent or spoken.

Empathy is not what you say.

Empathy is where you put your attention.

Empathy contributes to deep healing and “feels real good.”

The intention to give empathy is primarily to meet your own need for connection not to “help” the other person. That may be an additional benefit.

When empathizing it is not important to be right but to be sincere. The other person will see in your eyes and hear in your voice your genuine desire to connect with their feelings and needs.

Empathy is NOT

- 1- **Agreement.** You may disagree completely with someone while still giving them empathy.
- 2- **Sympathy.** Sympathy brings the focus of the conversation back to yourself. Sympathy will usually be much more appreciated after sufficient empathy is given.
- 3- **Advice.** Information might be helpful later but usually empathy is needed first

- 4- **Explaining or analyzing.** Telling someone why you think something happened or why they are the way they are is usually not helpful to their healing process.
- 5- **Correcting/educating.** Pointing out something you think is wrong about someone's interpretation of the situation.
- 6- **Consoling.** "It will be okay. You're okay, everything will work out."

In general it is best to phrase your empathy as a question so as to elicit clarity and deeper responses from the listener.

Are you feeling _____
because you need _____?

Sounds like you are feeling _____
because you need _____.
Is that right?

Yes, you are feeling very _____
because you really value _____.
Is that right?

Sometimes it is very clear what a person is feeling and needing so at those times it would probably work better to use a declarative statement like "Yes, you're really hurt and sad right now." Or "Yes, that really stimulated a lot of pain for you." Often an empathy statement can be conveyed as a question by the tone of voice as well as the words used.

Empathizing in "Classic NVC" may sound awkward or strange but as a person learns and integrates compassionate consciousness the way they speak slowly changes to sound more natural. This is often called speaking in "Street Giraffe." It takes time to develop this skill and in the meantime it can be helpful to let people know that you are experimenting with new ways of communicating because you value your relationships and want to find more effective ways of speaking and listening.

EMPATHY: *Ways We Stay Connected to Feelings & Needs*

- Give your full attention to another by either silently or verbally connecting to their feelings and needs.
- Be willing to set yourself aside and completely enter the other's world with acceptance and respect.

NOT EMPATHY: *Ways We Disconnect with Feelings & Needs*

- **SYMPATHY:** Bring attention back to yourself. "Oh, I am so sorry, I feel terrible for you."
- **ADVICE:** We assume the person needs information. "Well, what you could do is. . ."
- **EXPLAIN / ANALYZE:** We believe we know why someone feels the way we do and think knowing why will change their feeling state. "You're just feeling bad because . . ."
- **CORRECT:** We try to point out someone's mistake in interpreting. "He didn't do that to hurt you, he was just in a hurry."
- **CONSOLE:** "It will be okay. You're okay, everything will work out."
- **TELL A STORY:** "The same thing happened to me. This one time . . ."
- **PUSH AWAY FEELINGS:** We might be uncomfortable so we tell others not to feel what they feel. "Come on smile, don't be sad." "Just calm down and take a deep breath."
- **INVESTIGATE / INTERROGATE:** "Why did you do that? What made you feel that way?"
- **EVALUATE:** We decide if another's emotional response is appropriate or not. "You are overreacting. This is no big deal."
- **EDUCATE:** "What I see about the situation is . . ." "The reason you feel like that is. . ."
- **ONE-UP:** "That's awful, but something even worse happened to me and I was devastated."
- **DIAGNOSE:** "Sounds like you had a panic attack. I know some good herbs for anxiety."
- **DEMAND:** "If you don't get control of your emotions, I'm leaving!"
- **DENIAL OF CHOICE:** "It's a hard thing, but we all have to do it."
- **NOD & SMILE:** You feel uncomfortable and just want to get out of the situation.

Our 4 Basic Choices of Response in Any Given Situation

Choice #1
HEAR BLAME
BLAME BACK



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Choice #2
HEAR BLAME
BLAME SELF



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Choice #3
HEAR MY OWN
FEELINGS & NEEDS



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Choice #4
HEAR SPEAKER'S
FEELINGS & NEEDS



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Self-Empathy Fundamentals

LaShelle Charde's Connection Gem of the Week

Have you ever attempted self-empathy and found that you just end up getting stuck in unpleasant feelings and a swirl of repetitive thoughts? A number of people have reported this experience to me. Let's define self-empathy and break it down a bit more into it's fundamental elements.

Self-empathy is meant to allow space for you to experience all that is alive in you with acceptance and honor for that experience.

Self-empathy isn't meant to be an elixir that removes unpleasant feelings.

I often think of feelings as energy entities that want to be known – experienced fully and acknowledged. Sometimes this takes a few minutes, sometimes a few hours or days or weeks.

What I call "being a big container" means allowing feelings to be there. You notice a feeling as it arises and say something like, "Okay, I notice I am feeling hurt right now. That's okay to feel. I don't have to do something about it nor push it away." Then you get to know the feeling by paying attention to it in specific ways. You can ask yourself questions like this:

Where in my body do I feel this feeling?

How much space does this feelings take up in my body?

What's the texture of this feeling - sharp, dull, rough, slick...?

Does this feeling move or stay still?

What's the energetic quality of the feeling - heavy, light, expansive, contracted, busy, scattered, dense...?

Asking questions like these not only brings you into mindful awareness of your experience, it also interrupts the mental habit of weaving interpretation and stories. If you have the resources to read this email, than it's likely that you are not fighting for your physical safety and survival every day. Most of your suffering comes from mental habits that run themselves when you're not looking.

When you interrupt mental habit energy by mindfully attending to what is alive in you, you create a spaciousness in your consciousness. This means that unpleasant feelings can arise and be there without a reaction from you. When you are not in reaction to your own internal experience, you can continue to function and be attentive to others, your work, bicycle ride, etc.

A simple mindfulness practice to begin with involves cultivating an "acceptance voice". Find a short phrase that helps you accept your internal experience. Mine is simply, "That's okay". I have practiced this voice so much that it now arises of its own accord when needed.

Meditation is an ideal situation for this practice. When you sit quietly with the intention to stay in the present, your mind invariably wanders off and a variety of sensations and feelings arise. Each time you notice your mind wandering or a sensation or feeling arises, repeat your acceptance phrase and return to your practice noticing your experience in the detailed way described above. If you continue this practice over time, you will find yourself less reactive and more able to flow with whatever experiences and situations you encounter.

When you have begun to settle your body, heart, and mind with the practices above, you can do the next two steps in self-empathy. First, name the needs that are alive for you in the present moment. As I was sitting in mindful meditation this morning, my consciousness revealed a need for creative expression by offering a simple art idea that I could do in the moment. Our waking consciousness communicates needs in the same way our dreams do at night, through tone, images, color, quality of light, energy, characters, memories, words, sensations, emotions, etc. Your role is simply to pay attention and translate what your consciousness tells you into a need you can act on.

And acting on your needs is the next step in self-empathy. When you have a specific concrete do-able plan for meeting your needs, your body, heart, and mind relaxes into a relationship of self-trust. The important thing here is that the actions you decide on are ones that you can easily follow through on within a day. Putting your needs off until summer vacation doesn't create a relationship of self-trust.

Practice

Take a moment to scan through this article and choose one of the practices mentioned. Decide when and where you will practice that element of self-empathy today.

Self-Empathy Worksheet

Every judgment is a tragic expression of an unmet need. When we have self-judgments, aka “inner jackals,” about ourselves or others, they are always connected to our unmet needs. By practicing self-empathy we can translate these judgments into awareness of feelings and needs. Then we are more likely to be able to choose strategies that meet those needs. Choose an “inner jackal” and explore what feelings and needs are beneath it. There may be many feelings and many needs. Take your time.

Judgment (inner voice)	Feelings	Need
I'm such a mess!	Hopeless, confused	Competence, direction
No wonder nobody likes me	Sad, lonely	Friendship, community
I'm a lousy parent	Scared, worried	Competence, connection, child's wellbeing

Judgment (inner voice)

Feelings

Need

What is empathy?

- Empathy is the focusing of your attention onto the feelings and needs of others or your own.

Why is empathy important?

- Empathy is a key ingredient to create the quality of connection designed to help people get their needs met through compassionate giving.

What is important to remember about empathy:

- Empathy is not sympathy, fixing, consoling, and educating,
- Empathy can be given silently or out loud.
- When giving empathy, it is far more important to be sincere than to be accurate.

Exercise 1: Empathetic Responses to Statements That Others Might Say to Us

Imagine hearing these responses from somebody. How might you respond empathetically? Fill in the blanks with feelings and needs.

Example:

Why don't you ever listen to me?

Are you feeling frustrated because you need to be heard and understood?

1. My partner always gives me this fake respect. I can't stand it!

Are you feeling _____ because you need _____ ?

2. You always exaggerate.

Are you feeling _____ because you need _____ ?

3. Those people don't really care about me.

Are you feeling _____ because you need _____ ?

4. This past week has been a complete nightmare.

Are you feeling _____ because you need _____ ?

5. I'm not sure what to do anymore.

Are you feeling _____ because you need _____ ?

6. I can't believe that she left me.

Are you feeling _____ because you need _____ ?

7. I just know that I'm going to get this job.

Are you feeling _____ because you need _____ ?

8. I have been working all day, and then I have to come home to this mess.

Are you feeling _____ because you need _____ ?

9. I thought that you were going to be here at 5:00. It's 5:45!

Are you feeling _____ because you need _____ ?

10. Oh my god! My ex just walked in the restaurant.

Are you feeling _____ because you need _____ ?

11. I just screwed up the whole speech in front of everyone.

Are you feeling _____ because you need _____ ?

12. Our system is so oppressive. It just wants to ruin everyone's lives except for rich people.

Are you feeling _____ because you need _____ ?

13. I can't believe I managed to watch the entire Lord of the Rings trilogy in one day.

Are you feeling _____ because you need _____ ?

14. We almost got mauled by that huge dog over there.

Are you feeling _____ because you need _____ ?

15. My boss is such a bully.

Are you feeling _____ because you need _____ ?

Exercise 2: Empathizing with Others

Write statements you heard people say recently and then create possible empathetic responses to those statements.

Example:

I heard a neighbor say to his child, "That was stupid of you. You could have been hurt!"

My response to him could have been "Are you feeling scared because you are very concerned about your child's safety?"

1. _____

Are you feeling _____ because you need _____ ?

2. _____

Are you feeling _____ because you value _____ ?

3. _____

Are you feeling _____ because you need _____ ?

4. _____

Are you feeling _____ because you need _____ ?

Exercise 3

This is a **four-part** exercise. **First**, write down something someone said or did (stimulus) that really triggered you. **Second**, write down the judgments/thoughts you had about that person. **Third**, translate those judgments into what you are feeling and needing. And **fourth**, go back and empathize with the original stimulus. The purpose of this exercise is to connect with your feelings and needs that occur and translate the judgments that get in the way of an empathetic response.

Example:

- 1. **Stimulus:** My partner, in a loud voice, told me that he didn't care what I thought because I didn't know what I was talking about.
- 2. **Internal judgment:** He's a jerk. He doesn't care about me. He doesn't know what's best for me.
- 3. **Translation to Self Empathy:** I feel miserable because I need respect and to matter. I also need to be understood and to have acknowledgment of the intense pain that I'm feeling.
- 4. **Empathize with other:** Are you feeling frustrated because you need respect and cooperation?

1. Stimulus: _____

Internal Judgments: _____

Translation to Self Empathy: I feel _____ because I need _____

Empathize: Are you feeling _____ because you need _____

_____ ?

2. Stimulus: _____

Internal Judgments: _____

Translation to Self Empathy: I feel _____ because I need _____

Empathize: Are you feeling _____ because you need _____

_____ ?

3. Stimulus: _____

Internal Judgments: _____

Translation to Self Empathy: I feel _____ because I need _____

Empathize: Are you feeling _____ because you need _____

_____ ?

Possible Answers

Exercise 1

1. My partner always gives me this fake respect. I can't stand it!
Are you feeling annoyed because you need authenticity ?
2. You always exaggerate.
Are you feeling hurt because you need understanding ?
3. Those people don't really care about me.
Are you feeling lonely because you need belonging ?
4. This past week has been a complete nightmare.
Are you feeling burnt out because you need rest and relaxation ?
5. I'm not sure what to do anymore.
Are you feeling ambivalent because you need clarity and purpose in your life ?
6. I can't believe that she left me.
Are you feeling sad because you need intimacy ?
7. I just know that I'm going to get this job.
Are you feeling confident because you need to contribute to life ?
8. I have been working all day, then I have to come home to this mess.
Are you feeling overwhelmed because you need ease and peace ?
9. I thought that you were going to be here at 5:00. It's 5:45!
Are you feeling irritated because you need consideration ?
10. Oh my god! My ex just walked in the restaurant.
Are you feeling uneasy because you need harmony ?
11. I just screwed up the whole speech in front of everyone.
Are you feeling self-conscious because you need acceptance ?
12. Our system is so oppressive. It just wants to ruin everyone's lives except for rich people.
Are you feeling afraid because you need support ?
13. I can't believe I managed to watch the entire Lord of the Rings trilogy in one day.
Are you feeling happy because you need play ?
14. We almost got mauled by that huge dog over there.
Are you feeling panicked because you need safety ?
15. My boss is such a bully.
Are you feeling agitated because you need respect ?

Empathy Practice Statements “JACKAL” Statements Followed by Empathic Responses

In NVC, empathy is putting your attention on feelings and needs. If you put them on your own feelings and needs, it is self-empathy. If your attention is on someone else's feelings and needs, it is empathy for that person.

These jackal statements and accompanying empathic responses are a way to learn how to be empathetic when someone has not expressed their feelings and needs clearly. It is also a way to learn more about speaking “street giraffe,” that is, giving empathy without using the classic NVC model of speaking.

Practice creating your own empathic response to the statements below using both classic NVC and “street giraffe.”

THE FOLLOWING 100 “JACKAL STATEMENTS” ARE REPEATED A SECOND TIME ACCOMPANIED BY TWO POSSIBLE EMPATHETIC RESPONSES. THE FIRST RESPONSE TENDS TO BE STATED IN A “CLASSIC NVC” STYLE AND THE SECOND TENDS TO BE STATED IN A MORE “STREET GIRAFFE” STYLE.

#1 “I can't stand your sarcasm.”

#2 “This is the third time you're asking to take off sick. If all my workers did that, I'd be in big trouble.”

#3 “Quit being so wishy- washy. Can't you just make a decision?”

#4 “You never call me. I'm always the one to call you.”

#5 “I can't stand all these e-mails. I must have gotten 50 forwarded messages from you in three days.”

#6 “I wish you wouldn't just waste your life away.”

#7 “I just don't think I'll ever be able to learn this stuff and say it right.”

#8 “Nobody ever bothers to stop and help clean up around here.”

#9 “You promised you'd show up, and you didn't!”

#10 “Ever since that NVC workshop, all you ever think about is your needs, what you want, what you would like....”

#11 “Come on, don't be stupid! Do you really think he cares about you? He's just manipulating you.”

#12 “You bet I’m in favor of any law that helps to put and keep criminals where they belong — behind bars!”

#13 “The supervisor is a pain — the type that throws their weight around, and makes sure you know who’s boss.”

#14 “I know you have good intentions but I feel like you are constantly bossing me around.”

#15 “So, what’s wrong with gold and purple hair, Dad? It’s sure as hell less boring than your gray!”

#16 “I’m not going back to that group. They’re real aloof — nobody even says hi when you show up.”

#17 “It’s not what you did. It’s the fact that you lied about what you did!”

#18 “Quit trying to psychoanalyze me!”

#19 “This is the third time you’ve been late for this meeting. You act like we are on your schedule or something.”

#20 “The Olympics are rigged. A small country without money doesn’t stand a chance.”

#21 “Every time I see you at the office you’re on the internet. How do you ever get any work done?”

#22 “This is not a hotel. There is no room service. And I am not the maid.”

#23 “I don’t want to talk about this now.”

#24 “Why are you dropping out of school? That is such a dumb thing to do!”

#25 “Whenever I tell you what’s bothering me, you’re always trying to fix me. Won’t you just listen to me? Please?”

#26 “I hate it that people are always gossiping around here.”

#27 “I tell you, I’m getting nowhere with these workshops. I’m still the same old person I was before I started.”

#28 “I can’t believe it! I bought this can opener from this store yesterday and it already broke.”

#29 “Ann is horrible to work with. One minute she’s nice and the next minute she verbally attacks you without any warning!”

- #30 "I'm just taken for granted around here. I do all this work, and don't even get a thank you."
- #31 "How come everyone got an extra serving except me?"
- #32 "You are so jealous of my success; you were even hoping I'd fail."
- #33 "I used to steal money, lie to my mom, and get my brother in trouble. I was a really bad kid."
- #34 "I can't stand these workshops. People are yacking away and the teacher does nothing."
- #35 "Let's outlaw all these damned SUVs!"
- #36 "Don't blame me; you're the one that doesn't know enough NVC to be teaching it!"
- #37 "Just leave me alone. I'll figure this out on my own."
- #38 "My sister said she'd lend me the money, but who knows if she's going to come through."
- #39 "There's a lot of backbiting in this community. Don't you notice?"
- #40 "Don't tell me you've signed up for another one of those 10-day retreats! I feel like I have to make an appointment just to see you these days."
- #41 "I lied to my mom that it was my brother who broke the lamp and now he's being punished. I hate myself."
- #42 "All I hear all day at work is what's wrong with this, what's wrong with that. Now that I'm home, I don't want to hear a single complaint from anyone!"
- #43 "Beauty contests for six-year-olds? That is sick!"
- #44 "You protesters talk about peace while our soldiers are putting their lives on the line. What are you willing to sacrifice for your people?"
- #45 "You don't need to follow me around the office. I'm perfectly capable of working on my own."
- #46 "If you want to drop out of school, go ahead. I don't give a damn anymore!"
- #47 "I'm getting nowhere with this meditation practice. I just keep falling asleep...."
- #48 "I'm such a failure. Every time I get a new house plant, it dies within a month. Look at this poor thing...."
- #49 "Mom, you never let me do anything!"

#50 “Yours is the only house on the block that doesn’t fly a national flag. Do you even own one?”

#51 “What’s wrong with eating meat? God put animals on the earth and gave us dominion over them.”

#52 “I will not invite your family for another Thanksgiving dinner where your brother gets drunk and starts fighting with everyone!”

#53 “I don’t care if he is a Zen master. The man is totally insensitive.”

#54 “You are driving like a maniac!”

#55 “This teacher is such a Babylonian— you know, babble-on-and-on....”

#56 “Oh, (sigh), I really should be nicer to those telephone solicitors. I get so mean with people like that!”

#57 “Nobody ever wants my help around here!”

#58 “We both work so much, and never have time for each other, so what’s the point of going on together?”

#59 “You want to know where the romance went? Well, I’ll tell you—just look at how you’re dressed!”

#60 “Uh, yes, we do have a room for rent, but ... um...it’s our private home and we want someone who... er...fits in with, you know, our...our... lifestyle....”

#61 “Listen, kid, if every 18-year-old in the country got a car, where do you think we’d be?”

#62 “I can’t stand waiting till Monday to hear from the doctor about the diagnosis.”

#63 “You just live in an idealist dream world! This is war! People die in war, and that’s the price we have to pay.”

#64 “How did they get away with plopping that revolting piece of architecture right smack in the middle of our city?”

#65 “This little playground used to be so nice, but since that new family moved in, it’s gotten so trashy.”

#66 “We have to relocate again? We just moved here a year ago, and the kids have finally made some good friends.”

#67 “After all those psych courses you took, you’d think you’d know what I am going through.

But you don't have a clue, do you?"

#68 "I know you'll think I'm a racist, but I have proof that this country's high unemployment rate is caused by immigrants."

#69 "I don't think I'll ever meet someone who is attractive, shares my interests, and is willing to commit to a relationship."

#70 "There seems to be no end to it! First it was my dad's heart attack, then my husband's pneumonia, and now the twins are home with the flu. I haven't had a moment to breathe!"

#71 "Mad Cow disease, hormones in chicken, mercury in fish; the fruit's been sprayed, avoid sugar...Do you want me to starve?"

#72 "Stop whining about walking to school because the car broke down. When I was your age, we walked three miles every day to and from school."

#73 "You're a Buddhist? Hey, I've seen you at McDonald's downing those cowburgers. What's up with that?"

#74 "You're committed to practicing NVC, but I hear you offering unsolicited advice whenever someone has a problem. That's not NVC, is it?"

#75 "These...uh...people from minority groups. First, they tell me to treat them like individuals. Then when I do, they tell me I'm ignoring their ethnic background."

#76 "Why vote? What's the point? All those politicians are bought by the corporations."

#77 "Why do you always buy more food than three families could eat? You said you were just going to the market to pick up a bottle of fish sauce!"

#78 "Hey, don't criticize competition. We need competition to keep the idiots out of this workplace."

#79 "What? Another four hundred pages of this stupid math homework?"

#80 "Look at this! We're here 45 minutes early. Why did you have to rush me?"

#81 "I've had it with all this group process. It's a waste of time."

#82 "I'm sick of doing all the work on this team. I wish you'd follow through with what you say you'll do."

#83 "Don't! She'll never learn how to tie her own shoes if you keep doing it for her like that!"

#84 "You never join the team when we do a project. You are always wanting to do things on your own."

#85 "I hate having to attend this meeting every week"

#86 "You always listen to her, but nobody here cares what I think."

#87 "The only healthy food they know how to cook here is this bland, tasteless mush."

#88 "It seems that I am constantly the one picking up after you. Does it seem that way to you?"

#89 "I can't stand him. He thinks he's just perfect."

#90 "I am so bad at writing and it takes me so long. I just can't stand it!"

#91 "Look at this traffic jam! I wish we could send all these out-of-towners back to where they came from."

#92 "Mothers have children over there dying in that war! Have you thought of that?"

#93 "Stop telling me what 'WE' will be doing on Saturday. I don't want to be part of your Ken & Barbie doll fantasy."

#94 "Get off your politically correct soapbox for a minute. What's wrong with men opening doors for women?"

#95 "Those greedy developers are destroying our neighborhood. None of us who grew up here can possibly afford these townhouses."

#96 "Bills, bills, bills. I keep going further into the hole."

#97 "What makes you think you can help me sort out my finances when you can't even manage your own?"

#98 "Why do I even bother cleaning up this place? No one even notices the work I do."

#99 "I hate it when homeless people ask me for money. Why don't they just get jobs like the rest of us?"

#100 "That's just another meaningless campaign slogan that he'll forget as soon as he's elected."

THE ABOVE 100 "JACKAL STATEMENTS" ARE REPEATED BELOW WITH TWO POSSIBLE EMPATHETIC RESPONSES. THE FIRST TENDS TO BE STATED IN A "CLASSIC NVC" STYLE AND THE SECOND TENDS TO BE MORE OF A "STREET GIRAFFE" STYLE.

#1 “I can’t stand your sarcasm.”

- a. Are you feeling discouraged because you value genuine connection?
- b. Are you frustrated and wanting to be understood?

#2 “This is the third time you’re asking to take off sick. If all my workers did that, I’d be in big trouble.”

- a. Are you feeling anxious because you have a need for reliability?
- b. Am I hearing right that you’re worried and wish you could count on more support?

#3 “Quit being so wishy- washy. Can’t you just make a decision?”

- a. Are you feeling agitated because you value effectiveness in decision-making?
- b. Yes, I’m guessing you would really enjoy effective decision- making and it is irritating when that is not happening? Is this true?

#4 “You never call me. I’m always the one to call you.”

- a. Are you feeling lonely because you are needing connection?
- b. Are you disappointed and need to know that our friendship matters? (*Universal need: I matter. I count.*)

#5 “I can’t stand all these e-mails. I must have gotten 50 forwarded messages from you in three days.”

- a. Are you feeling frazzled because you need more balance in your life?
- b. Sounds like you’re overwhelmed and could use a bit more ease?

#6 “I wish you wouldn’t just waste your life away.”

- a. Are you feeling concerned because you value purpose and direction?
- b. Sounds like you’re disappointed and want to see people living life fully?

#7 “I just don’t think I’ll ever be able to learn this stuff and say it right.”

- a. Are you feeling discouraged because you need to trust your ability to learn this?
- b. Are you disheartened because you need some reassurance that you’ll be able to master this? (*universal needs: trust, competence, mastery, growth and learning*)

#8 “Nobody ever bothers to stop and help clean up around here.”

- a. Are you feeling disappointed because you value cooperation?
- b. Are you vexed and would like to see more of us contributing to keep this space clean?

#9 “You promised you’d show up, and you didn’t!”

- a. Are you feeling disappointed because you need reliability?
- b. Are you dismayed and wanting to be able to count on what you hear me say?

#10 “Ever since that NVC workshop, all you ever think about is your needs, what you want, what you would like....”

- a. Are you feeling exasperated because you value consideration for everyone’s needs?
- b. Sounds like you’re kind of agitated and want to know that this training will actually help us connect better rather than the opposite? (universal needs: contribution, connection)

#11 “Come on, don’t be stupid! Do you really think he cares about you? He’s just manipulating you.”

- a. Are you feeling guarded because you value people protecting themselves? (universal need: safety from harm)
- b. Are you concerned because you want me to be safe?

#12 “You bet I’m in favor of any law that helps to put and keep criminals where they belong — behind bars!”

- a. Are you feeling alarmed because you need safety for our community?
- b. Sounds like you feel determined to do everything possible to protect people from getting hurt?

#13 “The supervisor is a pain — the type that throws their weight around, and makes sure you know who’s boss.”

- a. Are you feeling irritated because you value respect?
- b. Sounds to me like you’re kind of vexed and would appreciate more consideration for the employees?

#14 “I know you have good intentions but I feel like you are constantly bossing me around.”

- a. Are you feeling resentful because you have a need for autonomy?
- b. Sounds like you may be feeling conflicted? Like you both appreciate my support, but also want more space to make your own decisions? (universal needs: appreciation, support, space, choice)

#15 “So what’s wrong with gold and purple hair, Dad? It’s sure as hell less boring than your gray!”

- a. Are you feeling irritated because you value self-expression?
- b. Sounds like you’re peeved and would like more respect for the choices your generation is making? (universal needs: respect for choices, autonomy)

#16 “I’m not going back to that group. They’re real aloof — nobody even says hi when you

show up.”

- a. Are you feeling disappointed because you value warmth and inclusion?
- b. Sounds like you're discouraged and have some need for acceptance and community?

#17 “It's not what you did. It's the fact that you lied about what you did!”

- a. Are you feeling distressed because you value honesty?
- b. Are you troubled because you need to trust you're being told the truth?

#18 “Quit trying to psychoanalyze me!”

- a. Are you feeling annoyed because you value respect?
- b. Are you leery and wanting to make sure you're being seen for who you are?

#19 “This is the third time you've been late for this meeting. You act like we are on your schedule or something.”

- a. Are you perturbed because you value reliability?
- b. Sounds like you're frustrated and want to make sure that we take each other into consideration.

#20 “The Olympics are rigged. A small country without money doesn't stand a chance.”

- a. Are you feeling outraged because you value integrity?
- b. Yeah, you're pissed, huh? You'd like to see a bit more honesty here?

#21 “Every time I see you at the office you're on the internet. How do you ever get any work done?”

- a. Are you feeling concerned because you value productive use of time (universal need = efficacy)
- b. Sounds like you're peeved because you want to count on the job getting done? (universal needs = trust, efficacy)

#22 “This is not a hotel. There is no room service. And I am not the maid.”

- a. Are you feeling tired because you need more support?
- b. Sounds like you feel disgruntled and want everyone contributing to keep this place tidy? (universal need: contribution, order)

#23 “I don't want to talk about this now.”

- a. Are you feeling exhausted because you need some relief?
- b. Sounds like you're depleted and could really use a break? (universal need: rest, relief)

#24 “Why are you dropping out of school? That is such a dumb thing to do!”

- a. Are you feeling concerned because you value learning and also well-being for the sake of the future?
- b. Are you worried because you want to know that I'll be able to take care of myself?
(universal need: self-reliance, independence, well-being)

#25 "Whenever I tell you what's bothering me, you're always trying to fix me. Won't you just listen to me? Please?"

- a. Are you feeling exasperated because you need to be understood rather than fixed?
- b. Are you desperately wanting just to be heard?

#26 "I hate it that people are always gossiping around here."

- a. Are you feeling troubled because you value trust and respect?
- b. Sounds like you're uncomfortable and want more integrity and awareness when talking about people who are not in the room?

#27 "I tell you, I'm getting nowhere with these workshops. I'm still the same old person I was before I started."

- a. Are you feeling discouraged because you value growth and progress?
- b. Sounds like you're dubious and need some reassurance these workshops are actually contributing to your life?

#28 "I can't believe it! I bought this can opener from this store yesterday and it already broke."

- a. Are you feeling frustrated because you value dependability?
- b. Sound like you're incredulous and want to be able to count on quality.

#29 "Ann is horrible to work with. One minute she's nice and the next minute she verbally attacks you without any warning!"

- a. Are you feeling aggravated because you need more consistency?
- b. Sounds like you're on edge and would like to be able to relax more?

#30 "I'm just taken for granted around here. I do all this work, and don't even get a thank you."

- a. Are you feeling hurt because you're needing some appreciation?
- b. Are you disconcerted and wanting to be seen — wanting your efforts to be recognized?

#31 "How come everyone got an extra serving except me?"

- a. Are you feeling resentful because you value equal treatment for everyone?
- b. Sounds like you're irritated and want to understand how that happened?

#32 “You are so jealous of my success; you were even hoping I’d fail.”

- a. Are you feeling distressed and need more support?
- b. Sounds as if you’re discouraged because you want to celebrate your achievements and would enjoy having the support of your friends?

#33 “I used to steal money, lie to my mom, and get my brother in trouble. I was a really bad kid.”

- a. Are you feeling remorse because you value behaving with integrity?
- b. Are you feeling sad because you wish you had cared more about your mom and brother and had chosen to get your needs met in a different way? (universal needs; compassion, contributing to well-being)

#34 “I can’t stand these workshops. People are yacking away and the teacher does nothing.”

- a. Are you feeling frustrated because you need more order and focus?
- b. Sounds like you’re kind of confused and would like to understand what the teacher’s needs might be here?

#35 “Let’s outlaw all these damned SUVs!”

- a. Are you feeling exasperated because you value safety?
- b. Sounds like you’re dismayed and want more awareness of the consequences of our appetite for oil?

#36 “Don’t blame me; you’re the one that doesn’t know enough NVC to be teaching it!”

- a. Are you disappointed because you value integrity?
- b. I’m guessing that you are dissatisfied and would enjoy competence in NVC.

#37 “Just leave me alone. I’ll figure this out on my own.”

- a. Are you exasperated because you need space to make your own choices?
- b. I’m guessing you’re irritated and want to work through problems yourself?”

#38 “My sister said she’d lend me the money, but who knows if she’s going to come through.”

- a. Are you feeling nervous because you need reliability?
- b. Sounds like you’re kind of edgy and wanting to be

#39 “There’s a lot of backbiting in this community. Don’t you notice?”

- a. Are you feeling worried because you value safety and respect?
- b. Sounds like you feel concerned and would like there to be more integrity in how we relate to each other?

#40 “Don’t tell me you’ve signed up for another one of those 10-day retreats! I feel like I

have to make an appointment just to see you these days.”

- a. Are you feeling dismayed because you value closeness and connection?
- b. Sounds like you're agitated and needing more consideration for how you might be affected?

#41 “I lied to my mom that it was my brother who broke the lamp and now he's being punished. I hate myself.”

- a. Are you feeling regret because you value honesty and being trusted?
- b. Sounds like you're feeling miserable because you want to protect people from being harmed by your behavior? (need = compassion)

#42 “All I hear all day at work is what's wrong with this, what's wrong with that. Now that I'm home, I don't want to hear a single complaint from anyone!”

- a. Are you feeling impatient because you are needing some relief?
- b. Sounds like you are worn out and could use a break. Maybe you'd appreciate hearing what people do like rather than what they don't?

#43 “Beauty contests for six-year-olds? That is sick!”

- a. Are you feeling appalled because you value safety and consideration for the needs of the children?
- b. Sounds like you're angry and may be wondering about the integrity of the intentions behind the contests?

#44 “You protesters talk about peace while our soldiers are putting their lives on the line. What are you willing to sacrifice for your people?”

- a. Are you feeling indignant because you value service and integrity?
- b. Are you disgusted because you want people to walk their talk, to contribute rather than complain?

#45 “You don't need to follow me around the office. I'm perfectly capable of working on my own.”

- a. Are you feeling irked because you are needing to be trusted?
- b. Sounds like you're annoyed because you'd like to work independently and be self-reliant?

#46 “If you want to drop out of school, go ahead. I don't give a damn anymore!”

- a. Are you feeling distressed because you value education, growth and learning?
- b. Sounds like you are feeling exasperated and needing some understanding for your point of view?

#47 “I'm getting nowhere with this meditation practice. I just keep falling asleep....”

- a. Are you feeling discouraged because you need growth and progress?
- b. Sounds like you're dubious and need some reassurance that it's contributing to your life?

#48 "I'm such a failure. Every time I get a new house plant, it dies within a month. Look at this poor thing...."

- a. Are you feeling dismayed because you value nurturing life?
- b. Sounds like you're distressed because you want to help life flourish?

#49 "Mom, you never let me do anything!"

- a. Are you feeling exasperated because you want to make your own choices?
- b. Sounds like you're aggravated and wanting to be understood?

#50 "Yours is the only house on the block that doesn't fly a national flag. Do you even own one?"

- a. Are you feeling agitated because you value support and unity?
- b. Sounds like you're perturbed and needing to trust that people who live in this country care about it?

#51 "What's wrong with eating meat? God put animals on the earth and gave us dominion over them."

- a. Are you feeling irate and needing respect for your choices?
- b. Sounds like you're upset and wanting some consideration for your beliefs and eating habits?

#52 "I will not invite your family for another Thanksgiving dinner where your brother gets drunk and starts fighting with everyone!"

- a. Are you feeling anxious because you value peace and harmony?
- b. Sounds like you are leery and want to see us all get along at this reunion?

#53 "I don't care if he is a Zen master. The man is totally insensitive."

- a. Are you feeling irritated because you value respect and personal space?
- b. Sounds like you are disconcerted and would like to see more consideration for what you might be feeling?

#54 "You are driving like a maniac!"

- a. Are you feeling frightened because you have a need for safety?
- b. Sounds like you are jittery and want to know that we'll arrive there in one piece? (universal need = safety)

#55 “This teacher is such a Babylonian— you know, babble-on-and-on....”

- a. Are you feeling discouraged because you are needing more connection?
- b. Uh huh, so you’d appreciate fewer words and more opportunity to participate—more of a dialogue?

#56 “Oh, (sigh), I really should be nicer to those telephone solicitors. I get so mean with people like that!”

- a. Are you feeling guilty because you value compassion.
- b. Sounds like you feel torn between wanting to be kind to others and wanting to protect your own space?

#57 “Nobody ever wants my help around here!”

- a. Are you feeling disappointed because you have a need to contribute?
- b. Sounds like you’re a bit dejected because you want to be included and to see your help being appreciated?

#58 “We both work so much, and never have time for each other, so what’s the point of going on together?”

- a. Are you feeling despondent because you value heart connection?
- b. Sounds like you’re dubious about us being able to share a meaningful relationship?

#59 “You want to know where the romance went? Well, I’ll tell you—just look at how you’re dressed!”

- a. Are you feeling dejected because you have a need for intimacy?
- b. Sounds like you’re feeling hopeless and would like to trust that we both still cherish our connection?

#60 “Uh, yes, we do have a room for rent, but ... um...it’s our private home and we want someone who... er...fits in with, you know, our...our... lifestyle....”

- a. Are you feeling apprehensive because you have a need for shared values and community?
- b. Sounds like you are feeling dubious because you want to live with people whose ways are familiar to you? (need = security, community, ease)

#61 “Listen, kid, if every 18-year-old in the country got a car, where do you think we’d be?”

- a. Are you feeling worried because you value safety?
- b. Sounds like you are concerned about resources being used with awareness?

#62 “I can’t stand waiting till Monday to hear from the doctor about the diagnosis.”

- a. Are you feeling anxious because you need clarity and understanding of your situation?
- b. Sounds like you are experiencing real urgency and wanting to know as soon as possible so you can have some peace of mind?

#63 “You just live in an idealist dream world! This is war! People die in war, and that’s the price we have to pay.”

- a. Are you feeling exasperated because you need to be understood?
- b. Sounds like you’re alarmed because you really want it to be understood how much freedom costs?

#64 “How did they get away with plopping that revolting piece of architecture right smack in the middle of our city?”

- a. Are you feeling disappointed because you value beauty?
- b. Sounds like you’re astonished and would like more community input into our surroundings?

#65 “This little playground used to be so nice, but since that new family moved in, it’s gotten so trashy.”

- a. Are you feeling disappointed because you value community and cooperation?
- b. Sounds like you’re feeling sad because you want support in keeping the playground nice for all the kids?

#66 “We have to relocate again? We just moved here a year ago, and the kids have finally made some good friends.”

- a. Are you feeling worried because you value stability?
- b. Sounds like you are distressed because you appreciate steady relationships and community?

#67 “After all those psych courses you took, you’d think you’d know what I am going through. But you don’t have a clue, do you?”

- a. Are you feeling disappointed because you need to be understood?
- b. Sounds like you’re annoyed because you want more competence?

#68 “I know you’ll think I’m a racist, but I have proof that this country’s high unemployment rate is caused by immigrants.”

- a. Are you feeling indignant because you have a need to be trusted?
- b. Sounds like you’re frustrated because you’d like to be heard accurately without judgment?

#69 “I don’t think I’ll ever meet someone who is attractive, shares my interests, and is willing to commit to a relationship.”

- a. Are you feeling wistful because you value meaningful intimate connections?
- b. Sounds like you're disheartened and could use some hope that your dream may still come true?

#70 "There seems to be no end to it! First it was my dad's heart attack, then my husband's pneumonia, and now the twins are home with the flu. I haven't had a moment to breathe!"

- a. Are you feeling depleted and needing some relief?
- b. Sounds like you're exhausted and could really use a break? (need = rest, relief)

#71 "Mad Cow disease, hormones in chicken, mercury in fish; the fruit's been sprayed, avoid sugar...Do you want me to starve?"

- a. Are you feeling exasperated because you are needing to make your own choices about what to eat?
- b. Sounds like you're impatient and just want some peace to eat what you want to eat?

#72 "Stop whining about walking to school because the car broke down. When I was your age, we walked three miles every day to and from school."

- a. Are you disappointed because you really need more cooperation?
- b. Sounds like you're irritated because you're wanting more support right now?

#73 "You're a Buddhist? Hey, I've seen you at McDonald's downing those cowburgers. What's up with that?"

- a. Are you feeling perplexed because you need some clarification?
- b. Sounds like you're baffled and wanting to understand why a Buddhist would choose to eat meat?

#74 "You're committed to practicing NVC, but I hear you offering unsolicited advice whenever someone has a problem. That's not NVC, is it?"

- a. Are you feeling puzzled because you value clarity and integrity?
- b. Sounds like you're baffled and would like to understand how to be consistent in practicing NVC?

#75 "These...uh...people from minority groups. First they tell me to treat them like individuals. Then when I do, they tell me I'm ignoring their ethnic background."

- a. Are you feeling bewildered because you need more clarity?
- b. Sounds like you're discouraged and want some understanding for how hard you are trying?

#76 "Why vote? What's the point? All those politicians are bought by the corporations."

- a. Are you feeling disheartened because you value integrity?

b. Sounds like you're really disappointed because you'd like to be part of a system that reflects democracy? (universal need = inclusion, to be heard)

#77 "Why do you always buy more food than three families could eat? You said you were just going to the market to pick up a bottle of fish sauce!"

- a. Are you feeling distressed because you value conservation of resources?
- b. Sounds like you're aggravated? Are you concerned about preventing waste?

#78 "Hey, don't criticize competition. We need competition to keep the idiots out of this workplace."

- a. Are you feeling irritated because you value competence?
- b. Sounds like you're concerned and want this business to run effectively?

#79 "What? Another four hundred pages of this stupid math homework?"

- a. Are you feeling annoyed because you have a need for more purposeful activity?
- b. Sounds like you feel overwhelmed and would like some understanding of what's going on for you?

#80 "Look at this! We're here 45 minutes early. Why did you have to rush me?"

- a. Are you feeling annoyed because you value ease?
- b. Sounds like you're disappointed that we didn't take more time to relax and get here peacefully?

#81 "I've had it with all this group process. It's a waste of time."

- a. Are you frustrated because you value effective use of time?
- b. Are you feeling discouraged and want to be able to trust we'll get to some resolution and unity in the group?

#82 "I'm sick of doing all the work on this team. I wish you'd follow through with what you say you'll do."

- a. Are you feeling exasperated because you need some cooperation?
- b. Sounds like you're kind of disgusted and want to be able to rely on my word?

#83 "Don't! She'll never learn how to tie her own shoes if you keep doing it for her like that!"

- a. Are you feeling concerned because you value learning and self-reliance?
- b. Sounds like you're anxious because you really care about children learning skills so they can take care of themselves?

#84 "You never join the team when we do a project. You are always wanting to do things on your own."

- a. Are you feeling annoyed because you value cooperation and community?
- b. Sounds like you'd enjoy more mutual support and feel disappointed when you see me choose to work alone?

#85 "I hate having to attend this meeting every week"

- a. Are you feeling resentful because you value autonomy?
- b. Sounds like you're irked and would like more choice in how you spend your time?

#86 "You always listen to her, but nobody here cares what I think."

- a. Are you feeling resentful because you need respect?
- b. I wonder if you're a bit aggravated because you'd like to know that your presence is valued?

#87 "The only healthy food they know how to cook here is this bland, tasteless mush."

- a. Are you feeling annoyed because you need choice in what to eat?
- b. Do you feel discouraged because you want to be healthy AND enjoy life?

#88 "It seems that I am constantly the one picking up after you. Does it seem that way to you?"

- a. Are you feeling tired because you need more support?
- b. Sounds like you're disappointed because you'd like everyone contributing to keep the place tidy? (universal needs = mutuality, order)

#89 "I can't stand him. He thinks he's just perfect."

- a. Are you feeling annoyed because you value respect for everyone?
- b. Are you disgusted because you want everyone to be accepted, with all their strengths and weaknesses?

#90 "I am so bad at writing and it takes me so long. I just can't stand it!"

- a. Are you feeling discouraged because you value competence?
- b. Sounds like you feel disappointed because you'd like more ease and mastery in what you do?

#91 "Look at this traffic jam! I wish we could send all these out-of-towners back to where they came from."

- a. Are you feeling cranky because you are needing more ease?
- b. Sounds like you're feeling stressed and would really enjoy a more relaxed drive home.

#92 "Mothers have children over there dying in that war! Have you thought of that?"

- a. Are you feeling anxious because you value care and support?
- b. Are you troubled and want to see more compassionate understanding?

#93 “Stop telling me what ‘WE’ will be doing on Saturday. I don’t want to be part of your Ken & Barbie doll fantasy.”

- a. Are you feeling uneasy because you value mutual respect?
- b. Sounds like you’re upset because you need to trust that your needs matter in this relationship?

#94 “Get off your politically correct soapbox for a minute. What’s wrong with men opening doors for women?”

- a. Are you feeling aggravated because you value kindness and consideration?
- b. Sounds like you feel peeved and would like some understanding for how you see things?

#95 “Those greedy developers are destroying our neighborhood. None of us who grew up here can possibly afford these townhouses.”

- a. Are you feeling disgusted because you value community?
- b. Sounds like you’re exasperated and wanting some cultural respect for our neighborhood’s history?

#96 “Bills, bills, bills. I keep going further into the hole.”

- a. Are you feeling frustrated because you need more ease?
- b. Are you overwhelmed and long for more peace of mind?

#97 “What makes you think you can help me sort out my finances when you can’t even manage your own?”

- a. Are you feeling irritated because you value integrity?
- b. Are you feeling a little dubious about the effectiveness of help that comes from someone who hasn’t mastered something themselves?

#98 “Why do I even bother cleaning up this place? No one even notices the work I do.”

- a. Are you feeling discouraged because you need some appreciation for your efforts?
- b. Sounds like you’re disappointed and would really like to be seen for the contribution you make to our home?

#99 “I hate it when homeless people ask me for money. Why don’t they just get jobs like the rest of us?”

- a. Are you feeling irritated because you value self-reliance?
- b. Sounds like you’re uneasy and long for a world where we all take care of ourselves?

#100 “That’s just another meaningless campaign slogan that he’ll forget as soon as he’s elected.”

- a. Are you feeling resentful because you value honesty?
- b. Sound like you’re doubtful and want to be able to count on people being true to their word? (need = integrity)

Excerpted from the book: NVC TOOLKIT FOR FACILITATORS by Raj Gill, Lucy Leu, Judi Morin

Thriving in Relationships: Five Tools for Success

An Online course presented by Steve Torma & The School of Integrated Living

SESSION 3: HONEST EXPRESSION

What we mean by “Honest Expression” in NVC

NVC is built on the belief that the most precious thing that one human being can give another is that which is in their heart, which in NVC is often referred to as feelings, needs, and requests.

Expressing ourselves honestly is how we share what is precious inside of us. It is one of the most satisfying experiences of being human. We feel so happy and satisfied when we have the experience of, "Wow, he really gets me!" And we can feel so miserable when we have the experience of, "Ugh, she just doesn't get me!"

So the ability to express ourselves honestly is one of the most foundational skills for creating deeply satisfying relationships of mutuality and collaboration, while maintaining autonomy and integrity.

Expressing ourselves honestly requires awareness of our intentions, the ability to make pure observations, expression of genuine feelings, awareness of our needs, and skillful requests. Most of us were never taught these skills growing up so it can be a challenging skill to develop.

Here are some of the most common obstacles to honest expression.

First, most of us were given messages to some degree or another, that feelings were not acceptable. They should be "appropriately expressed" or "kept under wraps." They are certainly not something precious to be shared with the people in our lives.

Similarly, most of us grew up with the explicit understanding that we "should not be needy." To be "needy" was one of the most common criticisms we heard and led most of us to be vigilant about "not wanting to appear needy." Needs were the opposite of a precious gift to be shared with the people in our lives.

So as human beings we have the deep desire to share our feelings and needs with each other, most of us do not even know what they are, how to access them, or what is in the way of conscious connection with them.

Another common challenge is that when we do express feelings and needs, the people around us assume that they are supposed to do something about it. They are supposed to try to fix the situation. So the speaker will often feel frustration and resentment because they did not get the empathy that they needed. Or they may end up feeling guilty because they think they have been a burden to the people around them.

Another pattern of disconnection is that we might choose to preserve harmony at the cost of intimacy and honesty. We have had so many painful experiences of conflict that it just seems easier to remain quietly disconnected by keeping our feelings and needs to ourselves. When we withhold we are usually trying to prevent something from happening that we think is undesirable. But often we create that very thing we are afraid of or something worse.

Lastly, while direct communication about feelings and needs is not present in most cultures some people do claim that they are very honest and direct. But in most of those cases it is usually just sharing thoughts and judgments rather than vulnerable feelings and needs and clear requests.

So for most of us learning to be in touch with our feelings and needs, sharing them with others, and creating deep and satisfying relationships requires undoing a lot of conditioning and putting in places new and powerful skills.

Practice: Marshall Rosenberg suggested that one of the most important questions for people to ask each other, on a regular basis, is “What are you afraid to tell me?” And it is very important to make this request and offer the honest response with the realization that we are giving each other a great gift. The energy with which we express our needs is as important as the words we use. He encouraged people to share this kind of vulnerability with “Santa Claus energy” not “kick me energy”. We are not a bother. We are a blessing. He encouraged people to make requests “with the joy of a young child feeding a hungry duck.”

Connection Roadmap: The 3 Levels of Conversation: Informational, Personal/Emotional, and Relational

By getting clear about what level of conversation we're operating at, and being aware of other types of conversations we COULD be having, new possibilities open up, and we can see other places that we could go, other adventures to explore.

Level 1: Informational – simply a data exchange– no real intimacy, though you may find coincidences or overlapping circles of friends, interests, or background.

Level 2: Emotional/Personal — sharing about our thoughts, feelings, desires — our internal experience (a “deep connection”).

Level 3: Relational — engaging about what's happening *right now*, in the moment, between us – it's the most dynamic, rarest, my favorite, and the main focus of this guide...

Practices That Can Take You to the Relational Level

Speak the Moment: Say what is real for you right now, in this moment. What are you feeling? What are you thinking? Especially in relationship to others. Example: “I'm really nervous talking to you right now.”

Own a Desire: Usually, in every moment there is something we want. Name it and if you think someone could give it to you, then ask for it without demand energy. “Would you be willing to sit next to me?”

Share Impact: Reveal how you feel or think related to what someone said or did. Be specific about what someone said or did and what it triggered in you. “When I saw you smile I felt curious and excited.”

Offer Reflection: Mirror or reflect back what you are seeing or hearing. Tell them what you are seeing, imagining. “When you look away it seems like you are really afraid and nervous.”

Set Context: Share about the circumstances behind what you said or did. What is the background information that reveals more of who you are. “It's a big deal for me to come to this party because my ex is here.”

The quality of relating we are seeking is to:

- 1- pay exquisite attention to what it's like to be with each other,
- 2- share and explore any patterns we co-discover in a way that encourages growth towards more of what we want while
- 3- totally honor each other exactly as we are...

(from The Circling Workshop, Boulder, CO)

Four Powerful Honesty Exercises

The purpose of these exercises is to feel closer to people and have more satisfying relationships. Sometimes that requires removing the obstacles we and others have built to experiencing our natural state of love with them. In doing these exercises, choose people with whom you would like have a more intimate relationship.

1- **The Intimacy Questions** (page 96)

Ask someone to spend 5 to 15 minutes, or more with you sharing about one or more of the intimacy questions. If they agree, choose a question that you will answer and share with them. Please consider choosing a question that pushes your edge, that you have some resistance to being honest about. Next, ask the other person if they are willing to answer a question that is edgy for them. Remember, the purpose of this exercise is to feel closer to the other person. This is not a contest to see who can be more shocking but rather to notice where our blockages to intimacy are and move past them to deeper relationships. Remember also that you can make up your own questions and are not limited to those on the handout.

2- **Revealing Your Attractions**

There are almost always people in our lives that we would like to feel closer to but are afraid to try to make that happen because we are afraid of their reactions and how we will feel as a result. This is one of the primary obstacles to intimacy.

So in this exercise choose someone that you would like to feel closer to and think of a request for a shared activity that you would like to do with them. Then share with them how you are feeling about them and ask them if they would be willing to join you in the requested activity. You may want to have several ideas in mind to increase the likelihood of them agreeing to one of them.

3- **Sharing Your Hurts**

Most, if not all of us, have hurt feelings that we have not shared with those people who triggered those feelings. For example, someone may make a joke about you and it hurt but you just laughed and pretended to be OK with it. These hurt feelings are obstacles to feeling our natural closeness with people and often accumulate to the

point where we minimize or end relationships rather than deal with the uncomfortable feelings.

Choose someone with whom you have had such an experience and have never cleared it. Ask them if they are willing to talk to you about it, and if so, share with them what you felt then, how you feel now, and how it has affected you and your relationship with them since then. Use the NVC process of making clear observations, sharing your feelings not judgments, and what needs of yours were not met. Then you may want to ask them if they would like to share their feelings with you. Remember, focus on observations, feelings, and needs not judgments, criticisms, or blame. Sharing judgments rarely, if ever, creates more closeness between people.

4- Soliciting feedback

To foster thriving relationships it helps to secure an accurate picture of how others perceive the effects of our actions. One of the best ways to do this is to outright ask those so affected—but to do so in a way that is more likely to feel safe for everybody involved. This week ask questions of those with whom you are in a personal relationship, to find out what their experiences are relating to you. It could sound like this:

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the quality of our relationship?

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the conversation we just had?

-me as a friend? -me as a parent? - me as a co-worker?

- me as a listener? -this meal? -my cooking? -our sex life?

For any response that is less than a 10, ask this follow-up question:

What would it take to make it a 10?

You are not asking for criticism. You are looking for ***POSITIVE SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT.*** Do not challenge or debate your respondent's assessments. You can think about their validity at a later time. Right now, the *only* thing you are doing is seeking out the data. You may choose to omit the numbering part of this process.

Ask this set of questions on a regular basis with all the important people in your life. Eventually, people will begin to trust that they can be honest with you — that they can say what they really think and feel without your reacting harshly, incredulously, or in some way requiring them to justify their responses. This exercise will give you lots of good information you need to improve your relationships and grow internally.

(Thanks to Jack Canfield and Michael Dowd for exercise #4)

When Honest Expression Loses its Way
LaShelle Charde's Connection Gem of the Week

One of the most empowering aspects of Nonviolent Communication (NVC) is discovering that you have needs and learning how to make requests regarding them. Unfortunately, a new found enthusiasm to say what is true for you can sometimes overshadow the purpose of NVC. When the purpose of NVC is lost, your "Honest Expression" can slide into a platform for expressing judgments and reactivity.

The purpose of NVC is to create a quality of connection in which there is a natural giving from the heart. To cultivate this quality of connection both you and the other person are working to be mindful of speech and intention as you express and listen. Much to our benefit the very structure of NVC requires mindfulness. Separating a neutral observation from your own interpretations and possibly reactive thoughts and projections is a very refined skill and is very difficult to do when reactivity has taken over.

This step of articulating a neutral observation gives you a simple way to check in with yourself about whether your honest expression is likely to create connection or not. If you cannot or will not articulate a specific neutral observation and specific doable request along with your feelings and needs, there's a high probability that reactivity has taken over and your expression will not contribute to connection with yourself or others. This is, perhaps, most obvious in the case of giving another person feedback in which the observation and request are essential for making your feedback a contribution rather than simply a complaint or list of judgments.

When you are expressing from reactivity, there is typically a painful impact on others. Your expression is not meeting needs for safety, consideration, and kindness. Expressing an unmet need doesn't require a warm fuzzy tone of voice, but if the intention is to connect, then consideration for the other person is a natural part of that expression.

Thus, if the other person opts not to continue a conversation when you cannot or will not name a neutral observation, this is a call for mindfulness and a return to the intention to connect. Ideally, the other person can call for a pause in the conversation from a place of caring about the connection. Of course, sometimes reactivity spreads and they may have moved into a protective state, and so their request may sound like NVC policing to you. With any call to return to the structure of NVC there is, hopefully, clear honest expression, perhaps something like: "When I hear you say that, I feel disconnected and I want to connect. It would help me connect if you could offer a neutral observation. Would you be willing?" OR "I want to hear you, but I feel disconnected. I am willing to try again after dinner."

If you cannot find a neutral observation or specific doable request, then it's important to make use of other resources before beginning a dialogue. For example, you might spend time journaling, receive empathy from a friend, or do something fun to help you shift out of reactivity.

Of course, even when you have become centered and can offer a specific neutral observation, a feeling, a need, and specific doable request it doesn't mean the other person won't become reactive. You can't control another's reaction. You can only do your best to speak skillfully with the intention to create a quality of connection that inspires giving from the heart.

Practice

In the coming week, watch for a time in which you want to speak in generalities about a situation or another person. Ask yourself to find one moment in that situation or with that person that bothered you or that you are celebrating, as the case may be, and articulate a specific neutral observation.

The 9 Basic Human Needs

By Manfred Max-Neef, Chilean economist and environmentalist

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Sustenance | 4. Empathy | 7. Creativity |
| 2. Safety | 5. Rest, recreation, & play | 8. Autonomy |
| 3. Love | 6. Community | 9. Meaning or Purpose in life |

Sustenance

air
food
health & healing
pleasure
shelter
touch
water

Safety

order
consistency
predictability
reassurance
security
safety (emotional)
safety (physical)
stability
structure

Love

acceptance
affection
attention
belonging
care
closeness
companionship
connection
friendship
harmony
honesty
intimacy
nurturing
to hear & be heard
to trust & be trusted
warmth

Empathy

authenticity
compassion
integrity
presence
to understand
to be understood

Rest Recreation

& Play
beauty
exercise
humor
joy
leisure
movement
relaxation
rest/sleep
sexual expression
sleep
solitude

Community

appreciation
belonging
cooperation
communication
communion
consideration
inclusion
communion
ease
equality

ease

equality
fairness
inclusion
mutuality
respect
self-respect
shared reality
sharing
support
to know & be known
to see & be seen

Creativity

clarity
inspiration
discovery
effectiveness
efficiency
exploration
flow
focus
information
integration
self-expression
stimulation
power in your world

Autonomy

choice
freedom
independence
space
spontaneity

Meaning or Purpose in Life

aliveness
awareness
celebration of life
challenge
competence
consciousness
contribution
growth
hope
learning
making sense of life
mourning
nature
participation
peace (external)
peace (internal)
self-acceptance
self-care
self-connection
self-knowledge
self-love
self-realization
self-responsibility
to matter
to understand
to be understood
transcendence
well-being of
someone else

FEELINGS WHEN YOUR NEEDS ARE SATISFIEDFEELINGS WHEN YOUR NEEDS ARE NOT SATISFIED**AFFECTIONATE**

compassionate
friendly
loving
open hearted
sympathetic
tender
warm

CONFIDENT

empowered
open
proud
safe
secure

ENGAGED

absorbed
alert
curious
fascinated
interested
intrigued
stimulated

INSPIRED

amazed
awed
wonder

EXCITED

amazed
astonished
eager
energetic
enthusiastic
invigorated
lively
passionate
surprised

EXHILARATED

blissful
ecstatic
elated
exuberant
radiant
thrilled

GRATEFUL

appreciative
moved
thankful
touched

HOPEFUL

expectant
encouraged
optimistic

JOYFUL

amused
delighted
glad
happy
pleased
tickled

PEACEFUL

calm
clear headed
comfortable
centered
content
fulfilled
mellow
quiet
relaxed
relieved
satisfied
serene
still
tranquil
trusting

REFRESHED

enlivened
rejuvenated
renewed
rested
restored
revived

AFRAID

panicked
scared
suspicious
terrified
worried

ANNOYED

aggravated
frustrated
impatient
irritated

ANGRY

furious
outraged
resentful

AVERSION

disgusted
horrified
repulsed

CONFUSED

ambivalent
hesitant
lost
torn

DISCONNECTED

alienated
apathetic
bored
distant
distracted
numb
withdrawn

DISQUIET

agitated
alarmed
disturbed
restless
shocked
startled
surprised
uncomfortable
upset

EMBARRASSED

ashamed
guilty
self-conscious

FATIGUE

exhausted
tired
weary
worn out

PAIN

grief
heartbroken
hurt
lonely
miserable
regretful

SAD

depressed
despair
disappointed
discouraged
heavy hearted
hopeless
unhappy

TENSE

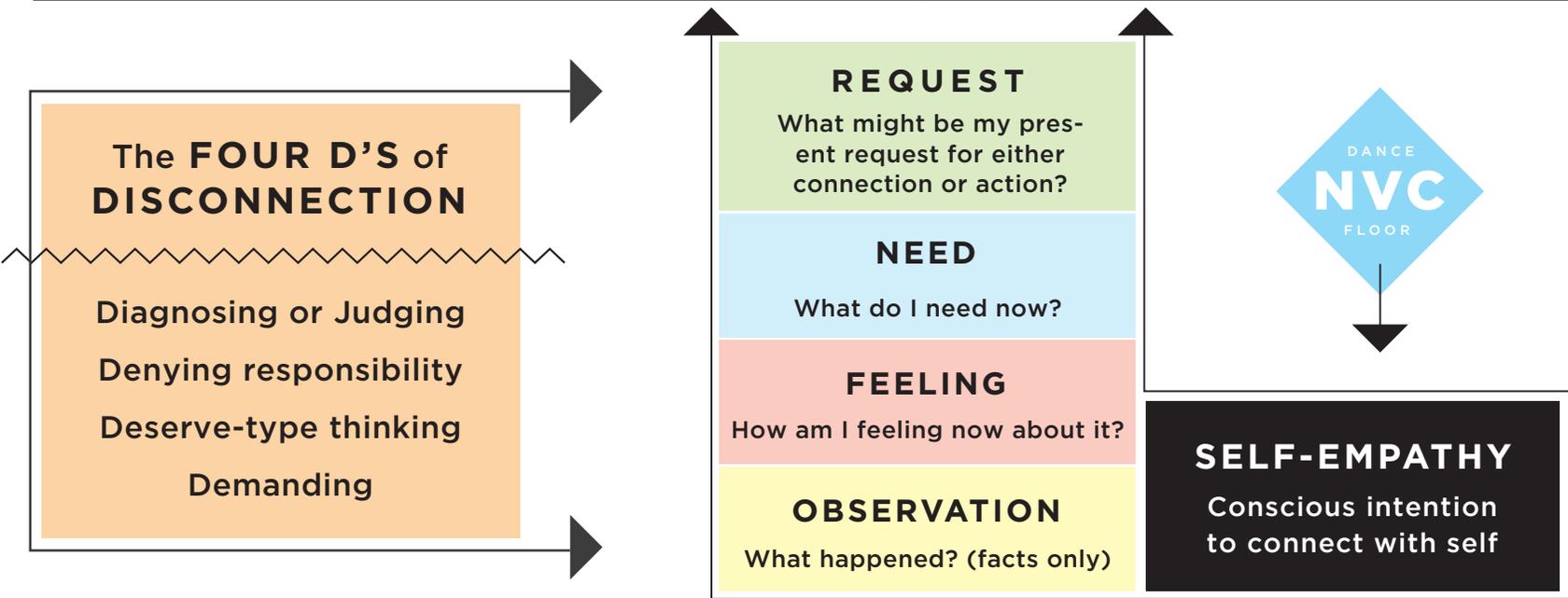
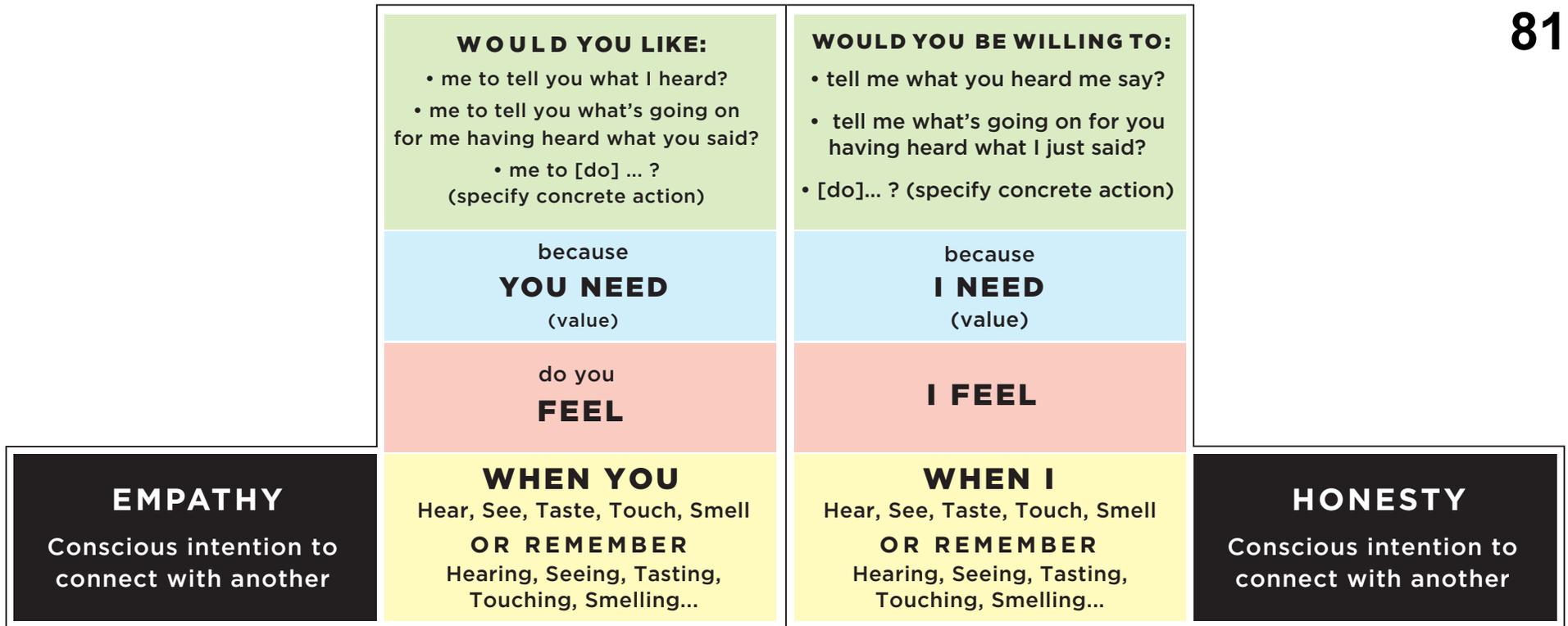
anxious
fidgety
irritable
nervous
overwhelmed
restless
stressed out

VULNERABLE

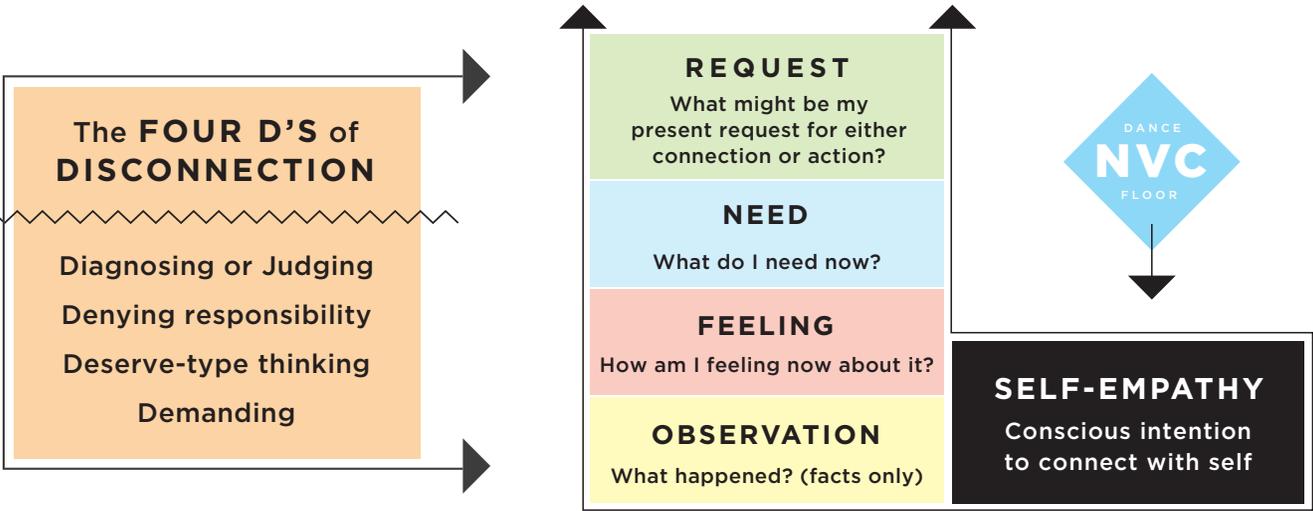
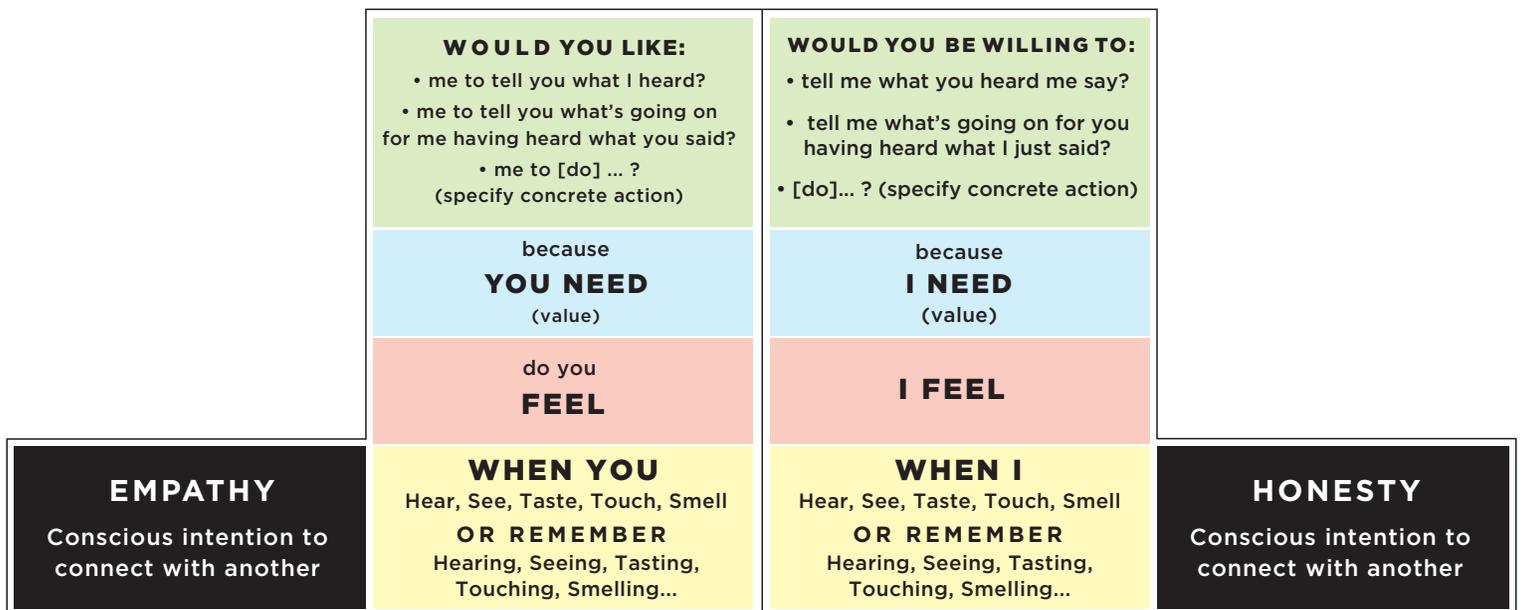
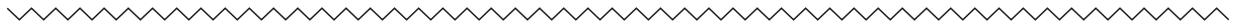
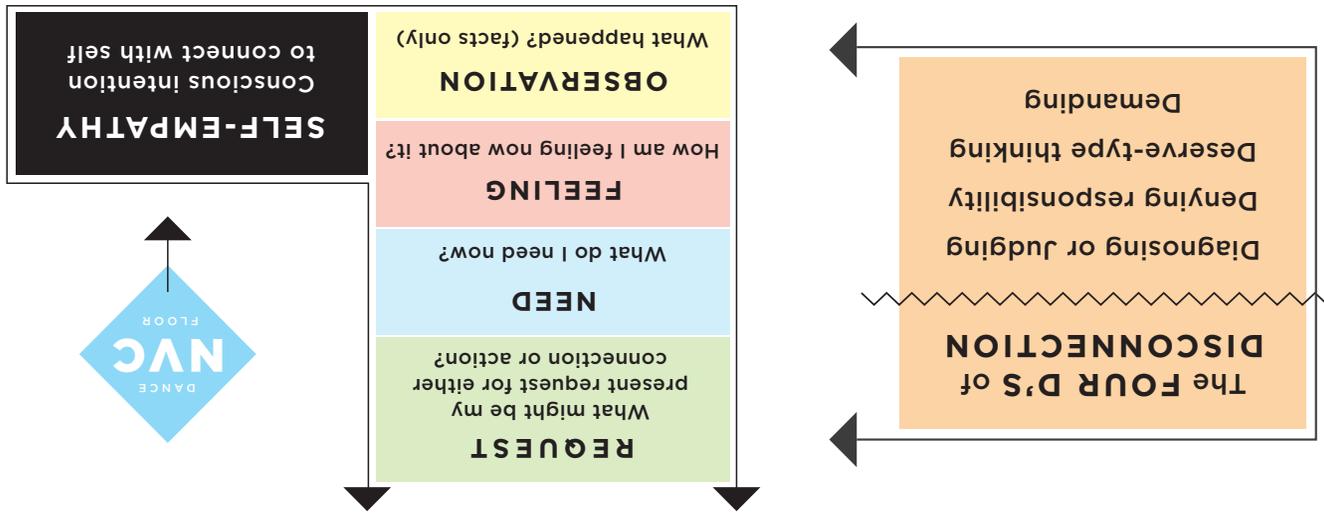
fragile
guarded
helpless
insecure
sensitive
shaky

YEARNING

envious
jealous
longing



NVC Dance Floors Communication Process



The Four D's of Disconnection

Each of the 4 D's is a tragic expression of an unmet need.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Behavior/Example</u>	<u>Form</u>
DIAGNOSIS <i>Who is what?</i>	Judging, labeling criticizing	"You are lazy and only care about yourself!"	You are _____.
DENIAL OF RESPONSIBILITY <i>Who is to blame?</i>	Denial of choice, blaming	"I have to do what the boss says!"	You have to _____.
DEMAND <i>Who has power?</i>	Implies threat of punishment	"Get that proposal out by 5 pm! (or else you will be suspended)"	Do _____ or else!
DESERVE <i>Who deserves what?</i>	Links behavior with punishment and/or reward	"If you don't get that project done, don't bother coming in tomorrow!"	If _____, then _____.

Exercise

- 1- Write down at least one example of each of the 4 D's of Disconnection that you have heard recently.
- 2- Write down how you feel right now in response to each example. Link your feeling to your need.
- 3- Write down an empathic guess of what the person might have been feeling and needing when they said what you heard.

Example:

- 1- *You are lazy and only care about yourself!*
- 2- *I feel sad and frustrated because I have a need to be seen as a caring person.*
- 3- *Are you feeling frustrated because you value cooperation?*

The Three Areas of Attention

These three areas comprise the totality of what we can experience.
We are only capable of focusing on one at a time.



What we experience is determined by the interrelationship of these three areas. For example, things can happen *outside of us* that create *physical sensations* to which we then connect a *thought*. Say fire touches my skin. I experience pain and the thought emerges that “fire is dangerous.” I might also experience a pleasant rush of energy and think, “fire is exciting!”

This process is called “conditioning.” The thoughts we create become *filters* that condition or “color” our subsequent experiences. Just *thinking* of fire, then, can create a bodily sensation, just as you can make your arms tingle just by thinking about it.

The point is that what we think can have a profound effect on what we experience. So can the act of taking your attention *off* of thinking. You don’t have to listen to everything you think!

NON-FEELING WORDS**A Translation of Words Frequently Confused with Feeling**

The feelings and needs listed below are suggestions only; this list is neither complete nor definitive. It is intended to assist you when translating evaluative words which are often confused with feelings. These words imply that someone is doing something to you and generally connote wrongness or blame. When somebody says, "I'm feeling rejected," in nonviolent communication you might empathically translate this as: "Are you feeling scared because you would really like to be included?"

Non-Feelings	Possible Feeling(s)	Possible Need(s)
Abandoned	terrified, hurt, bewildered, sad, frightened, lonely	nurturing, connection, belonging, support, caring
Abused	angry, frustrated, frightened	caring, nurturing, support, emotional or physical well-being, consideration, need for all living things to flourish
(not) Accepted	scared, lonely, hurt, anxiety	inclusion, connection, community, belonging, contribution, peer respect
Attacked	scared, angry, defiant, hostile	safety, consideration
Belittled	angry, frustrated, tense, distressed	respect, autonomy, to be seen, acknowledgement, appreciation
Betrayed	angry, hurt, disappoint, enraged	trust, dependability, honesty, honor, commitment, clarity
Blamed	angry, scared, confused, antagonistic, hostile, bewildered, hurt	accountability, causality, fairness, justice
Bullied	angry, scared	autonomy, choice, safety, consideration
Caged/boxed in	angry, thwarted, scared, anxious, stuck	autonomy, choice, freedom
Cheated	resentful, hurt, angry	honesty, fairness, justice, trust, reliability
Coerced	angry, frustrated, frightened, thwarted, scared	choice, autonomy, freedom, act freely, choose freely
Cornered	angry, scared, anxious, thwarted	autonomy, freedom
Criticized	sad, scared, anxious, frustrated, humiliated, angry, embarrassed	understanding, acknowledgment, recognition, accountability, respect, communication
Discounted Diminished	hurt, angry, embarrassed, frustrated	to matter, acknowledgment, inclusion, friendship, inclusion
Distrust	sad, frustrated	trust, honesty
Dumped on	angry, overwhelmed	respect, consideration
Harassed	angry, frustrated, frightened	respect, space, consideration, peace
Ignored	lonely, scared, hurt, sad, embarrassed	connection, belonging, inclusion, community, participation
Insulted	angry, embarrassed	respect, consideration, acknowledgment
Interrupted	angry frustrated, resentful	respect, to be heard, consideration
Intimidated	scared, anxiety	safety, equality, empowerment
Invalidated	angry, hurt, resentful	appreciation, respect, acknowledgment, recognition
Invisible	sad, angry, lonely, scared	to be seen and heard, inclusion, belonging, community
Isolated	lonely, afraid, scared	community, inclusion, belonging, contribution
Left out	sad, lonely, anxious	inclusion, belonging, community, connection
Let down	sad, disappointed, frightened	consistency, trust, dependability
Manipulated	angry, scared, powerless, thwarted, frustrated	autonomy, empowerment, trust, equality, freedom, free choice, connection, genuineness

Mistrusted	sad, angry	trust
Misunderstood	upset, angry, frustrated	to be heard, understanding, clarity
Neglected	lonely, scared	connection, inclusion, participation, contribution, community, to matter
Overpowered	angry, impotent, helpless, confused	equality, justice, autonomy, freedom, safety
Overworked	angry, tired, frustrated	rest, respect, consideration, creativity
Patronized	angry, frustrated, resentful	recognition, equality, respect, mutuality
Pressured	anxious, resentful, overwhelmed	relaxation, clarity, consideration, space
Provoked	angry, frustrated, hostile, antagonistic, resentful	respect, consideration
Put down	angry, sad, embarrassed	respect, acknowledgment, understanding
Rejected	hurt, scared, sad, angry, defiant	belonging, love, inclusion, connection, to be seen, acknowledgment
Ripped off/screwed	anger, resentment, disappointment	consideration, justice, acknowledgment, trust
Smothered/suffocated	frustrated, desperate, fearful	space, freedom, autonomy, authenticity, self expression
Taken for granted	sad, angry, hurt, disappointed	appreciation, acknowledgment, recognition, consideration
Threatened	scared, frightened, alarmed, agitated, defiant	safety, autonomy
Trampled	angry, frustrated, overwhelmed	empowerment, connection, community, being seen, consideration, equality, respect, acknowledgment
Tricked	embarrassed, angry, resentful	integrity, trust, honesty
Unappreciated	sad, angry, hurt, frustrated	appreciation, respect, acknowledgment, consideration
Unheard	sad, hostile, frustrated	love, appreciation, empathy, connection, community
Unseen	sad, anxious, frustrated	acknowledgment, appreciation, to be heard
Unsupported	sad, hurt, resentful	support, understanding, love, community
Unwanted	sad, anxious, frustrated	belonging, inclusion, caring, community
Used	sad, angry, resentful	autonomy, equality, consideration, mutuality
Victimized	frightened, helpless	empowerment, mutuality, safety, justice,

Compassionate Communication Checklist

Things to consider in order to maximize the quality of connection with someone I am speaking with, especially if we are having a conflict.

Before speaking with the other person

- 1- Have I translated all my jackal thoughts into self empathy?
- 2- Have I mourned my unmet needs?
- 3- Have I taken time to consider what might be the feelings and needs of the other person?

While speaking with the other person:

- 1- Am I making a pure observation or is it an evaluation?
- 2- Am I stating a feeling or is it a thought?
- 3- Am I stating a need or is it a request?
- 4- Am I making a request or is it a demand?
- 5- Is the rate at which I am talking conducive to
 - a- the quality of connection that I am wanting?
 - b- getting my needs met in this moment?
 - c- caring about the needs of the person I am talking with?
- 6- Is the number of words that I am using at one time conducive to
 - a- the quality of connection that I am wanting?
 - b- getting my needs met in this moment?
 - c- caring about the needs of the person I am talking with?
- 7- Is the rate at which we are alternating taking turns speaking and listening conducive to:
 - a- the quality of connection that I am wanting?
 - b- getting my needs met in this moment?
 - c- caring about the needs of the person I am talking with?
- 8- Have I connected with and expressed the gratitude I feel for my ability to express myself honestly and to receive the other person empathetically?

What is an Observation?

- * An observation is what you notice, independent of any evaluation.
- * An observation is what you could videotape or audio record.

Why say the Observation?

- * The purpose is to invite the listener's attention to the event, behavior, or words we are speaking about. If we simply said, "I'm upset because I need caring" it may not supply the listener with enough information to identify what we are talking about, which may increase confusion.

Things to remember about the Observation

- * Clearly separate your observation from any judgments, diagnoses, labels, analyses... to be clear with what you are talking about and to increase likelihood that the listener will hear your message without blame, criticism, guilt-tripping, etc.
- * If you are making a pure, judgment-free observation, the listener is less likely to dispute it (except in cases where she/he remembers things differently).
- * Observations are most often confused with evaluations or judgements

Why is the Observation so hard?

- * Most of us have been conditioned since birth to avoid feeling our feelings by focusing on external factors, mainly other people and situations. A pattern that commonly occurs begins when someone says or does something that we don't like. We then have an evaluation about what this person has done, which leads to us feeling something that we don't like and therefore try not to feel (the evaluation and feeling parts may be completely unconscious). We avoid this feeling by judging the other person by labeling them, usually as something that we define as "bad."
- * Here's an example: My partner says, "You're selfish" while looking at me. I immediately consider whether a part of me believes that I am selfish or not. I find that there is a part of me that sometimes thinks that I am selfish and I don't like that discovery. I then have various bodily sensations as well as feelings of sadness. I don't like these sensations and feelings, so I avoid feeling them. I accomplish this by judging/blaming/criticizing/diagnosing the other person as "bad" or "wrong" so I discredit what I believe to be the source of my pain- the other person. I then verbally label them by saying something like, "Well, you're no saint," and I continue to avoid feeling my feelings and avoid noticing my thoughts that produce my own suffering.
- * Most often, this pattern occurs in a few seconds or less, most of which we are entirely unaware.
- * With rare exception, we have been trained to believe that others are the cause of our suffering, which makes it very difficult to have a pure, evaluation-free observation or an effective conversation.

Exercise 1

Please determine whether the following is a pure observation or evaluation. If it is an evaluation, rewrite it as an observation. (Make up an observation that might stimulate these responses). Hint: think about what the person says or does as seen through a video camera.

Example:

When you got really mad at me...

When your voice was louder than I usually hear it...

1. When you manipulated me yesterday...

2. You are not a very good listener.

3. My dad abandoned me and now I can't even think about him without becoming so angry.

4. When I heard her say, "John is so boring," I felt...

5. When my partner tries to control me, I feel like he has a lot of anger issues.

6. You're depressed.

7. When I noticed that the garbage was still inside after I asked you to take it out, I felt...

8. When I see that you don't try as hard as you can, I feel...

9. You don't seem to be having a good time.

10. You are so beautiful.

11. My girlfriend doesn't care about me.

12. That was so sweet of you to say that.

Exercise 2

Write **evaluations** (positive or negative) that you have about someone close to you, like a partner, parent, best friend, sibling, or boss and then translate each one into a pure **observation**: What does the person say or do?

Example 1:

Evaluation: My son never listens to me.

Observation: Today, I asked my son to take out the garbage three times and he didn't do it.

Example 2:

Evaluation: My son is so kind.

Observation: Today, I saw my son help a neighbor child who fell off his bike.

1. Evaluation: _____

Observation: _____

2. Evaluation: _____

Observation: _____

3. Evaluation: _____

Observation: _____

4. Evaluation: _____

Observation: _____

NVC Practice: Translating self-judgment to self-empathy

The messages that we tell ourselves have the potential to create great suffering or to provide meaningful understanding in our lives. NVC encourages us to shift our thoughts from judging to empathetic, so that we can appreciate the humanity of ourselves and others, recognizing that everything we do is an attempt to meet a need.

Exercise

This is a two-part exercise. **First**, write down the initial thoughts/self-judgments that come to mind about the topic or situation named. **Second**, translate those self-judgments into NVC language. Because this is a SELF-empathy exercise, often the observation will be along the lines of “When I think about...”

Example:

My judgment about my body image.

Self judgment: _____ I think I'm too fat.

Translation: _____ When I look at myself in the mirror, I feel embarrassed and sad because I need self-acceptance and love.

1. My judgment or self-talk when I did something “wrong.”

Self judgment: _____

Translation: When I _____

I feel _____

Because I need _____

2. My judgment or self-talk when I did something that stimulated someone feeling hurt.

Self judgment: _____

Translation: When I _____

I feel _____

Because I need _____

3. My judgment or self-talk when I thought someone criticized me.

Self judgment: _____

Translation: When I _____

I feel _____

Because I need _____

4. My judgment or self-talk when I did something I didn't really want to do.

Self judgment: _____

Translation: When I _____

I feel _____

Because I need _____

5. My judgment or self-talk when I have think that "I am not enough."

Self judgment: _____

Translation: When I _____

I feel _____

Because I need _____

6. My judgment or self-talk when I have thoughts that "bad things are going to happen."

Self judgment: _____

Translation: When I _____

I feel _____

Because I need _____

7. My judgment or self-talk when I think that I have been a failure.

Self judgment: _____

Translation: When I _____

I feel _____

Because I need _____

8. My judgment or self-talk when I have diagnosed myself ("I am a narcissist.", "I am co-dependent." ...)

Self judgment: _____

Translation: When I _____

I feel _____

Because I need _____

9. My judgment or self-talk when I _____.

Self judgment: _____

Translation: When I _____

I feel _____

Because I need _____

NVC Practice: Translating my judgments, criticisms, diagnoses, etc, of others into my feelings and needs.

One of the most famous of all Marshall Rosenberg quotes is that “every judgment is a tragic expression of an unmet need.” He also said “If you want to make yourself miserable think about what is wrong with people. And if you want to make yourself really miserable say it out loud.”

NVC encourages us to develop the skill of translating our “jackal thoughts” into our feelings and needs. This will dramatically increase the likelihood that we will get our needs met in any particular moment and the quality of our relationships will flourish.

Exercise:

Write down the judgments, criticisms, demands, etc, that you have about the person or situation named. **Second**, translate those thoughts into NVC language.

Example:

My judgment about my partner’s communication with me.

Judgment: My partner talks too much.

Translation: When I think about how much my partner speaks relative to how much I speak when we are having a conversation, I feel a lot of frustration because I really value being heard and understood.

1. My judgment about someone else when I think they did something “wrong.” For example: “My partner made an insulting comment about my cooking.”

Judgment: _____

Translation: When _____

I feel _____

Because I need _____

2. My judgment when someone stimulated painful feelings in me. For example: “My best friend told me I should not talk so much when we are with our friends.”

Judgment: _____

Translation: When _____

I feel _____

Because I need _____

3. My judgment when I think someone criticized me. For example: "My boss said I was one of the laziest employees he ever had."

Judgment: _____

Translation: When _____

I feel _____

Because I need _____

4. My judgment when someone did something I did not want them to do. For example: "My mother did not return my phone call for over a week."

Judgment: _____

Translation: When _____

I feel _____

Because I need _____

5. My judgment when someone makes a demand of me. For example: "My son told me to stop calling him so much."

Judgment: _____

Translation: When _____

I feel _____

Because I need _____

6. My judgment when someone diagnoses me. "My husband told me I was a narcissist."

Judgment: _____

Translation: When _____

I feel _____

Because I need _____

7. My judgment when someone threatens me. For example: "My neighbor told me I had to keep my dog inside the house, so that it did not bother him, or he would call the police."

Judgment: _____

Translation: When _____

I feel _____

Because I need _____

I'm afraid you would not like me if...

When I was an adolescent I really liked...

When I was an adolescent I really disliked...

What I really love about my life right now is...

What I really miss in my life right now is...

The greatest pleasure in my life right now is...

What I really wish I had more of in my life right now is...

The time I was most afraid in my life was...

The time I felt most alive in my life was...

The time I felt most embarrassed in my life was...

The time I felt the most shame in my life was...

The time I felt the most sexually alive in my life was...

The person in this room that I am most attracted to is...

The person in this room that I am least attracted to is...

The person in this room that I am most curious about is...

The person in this room that I am least curious about is...

The person in this room that I am most afraid to approach is...

One thing that I usually don't say when I first meet someone is...

A secret that I kept from my parents was/is...

A secret that I kept from my entire family was/is...

The thing I most loved about my father was...

The thing I most disliked about my father was...

The thing I most loved about my mother was...

The thing I most disliked about my mother was...

The part of my body that I like the most is...

The part of my body that I like the least is...

The thing about my body that I like the most is...

The thing about my body that I like the least is...

My best experience using drugs was...

My worst experience using drugs was...

The thing I remember most about my first sexual experience was...

The thing I liked most about my first sexual experience was...

The thing I liked least about my first sexual experience was...

The time I most questioned my sanity was...

When I am tempted to cheat on my partner I ...

When I have cheated on a partner I ...

The last time I cheated on a partner was...

The time that I was most afraid for my life was...

The most frightening thing I ever witnessed was...

I wish my father would have said to me...

I wish my father had more often said to me...

I wish my mother would have said to me...

I wish my mother had more often said to me...

One thing I wish I had told my father was...

One thing I am really glad I told my father was...

One thing I really wish I had done with my father was...

One thing I really wish I had done with my mother was...

One thing I really wish I had done more of with my father was...

One thing I really wish I had done more of with my mother was...

If I only had a year to live, one thing I would be sure to do was...

If I only had a week to live, one thing I would be sure to do was...

If I only had a day to live, one thing I would be sure to do was...

The biggest regret of my life so far is...

The thing I would most like to change about my childhood is...

The most recurring element of my sexual fantasies is...

The most embarrassing element of my sexual fantasies is...

The most exciting element of my sexual fantasies is...

For me, masturbation is...

The most exciting sexual experience I ever had was...

The most embarrassing sexual experience I ever had was...

One sexual experience I have never had but am curious about is...

One sexual activity that I judge as emotionally unhealthy is ...

The number of female sexual partners I have had is...

The number of male sexual partners I have had is...

When I think about my genitals I ...

The proudest achievement of my life is ...

The biggest disappointment of my life is ...

One of my favorite/edgiest/darkest fantasies is...

My relationship to sex/anal sex/same-sex play/homosexuality is...

The status of my heart is...

My relationship to anger is...

Something I'm really fucking good at is...

Something I want to be seen/appreciated for is...

Something most people don't know about me is...

Something I feel ashamed about is...

What the shoes of the person next to me says about them is...

My experience with flirting is...

As a child, I was...

My favorite part of my body is...

How I make art with the conflict I'm having is ...

A time I was disappointed in love is... the worst part about it was...

A time I was elated in love is... The best part about it was...

A transcendent experience I had in sex was... The most rewarding part of it was...

A spiritually unitive experience I've had was... The most rewarding part was...

A time when I felt most vulnerable was... The most vulnerable part about it was...

A time in my life when I felt most challenged was... Most challenging part was...

An embarrassing experience I had as a child was... Most embarrassing part was...

An embarrassing experience I had at school was... Most embarrassing part was...

My earliest memory is... The way I felt in that moment was...

My favorite toy as a child was... because...

The people in this room I am afraid of are...

The people in this room I feel relaxed with are...

The people in this room I feel like I would like to extend care to are...

The people in this room I feel like I would want to care for me are...

The people in this room that I might want to have sex with are...

The person here I would most like to have a conversation with is...

The person here I would most like to hug is...

The person here I would most like to kiss is...

The person here I would most like to have sex with is...

I probably would feel hurt if you ...

I probably would feel happy if you ...

I probably would feel excited if you ...

I probably would feel really embarrassed if you ...

I probably would laugh if you ...

I probably would feel ... if you ...

Thriving in Relationships: Five Tools for Success

An Online course presented by Steve Torma & The School of Integrated Living

SESSION 4: NEEDS-BASED NEGOTIATION

What we mean by “Needs-Based Negotiation” in NVC

NVC is built on the belief that the most precious thing that one human being can give another is that which is in their heart, which in NVC is often referred to as feelings, needs, and requests. That human beings are happiest when they are giving and receiving from the heart. That they are contributing to life out of the joy of meeting needs.

To do this well requires conversations and negotiations about the needs we are having at any particular moment and the ideas that we have about how to meet those needs. It requires an awareness moment by moment and a flow of giving and receiving out of vulnerability and authenticity.

While this desire is the most natural thing for human beings, many things can happen that block this natural flow of “making life wonderful together.” Our dominator culture conditioning, aka Jackal Culture conditioning, interrupts this life force energy and turns the joy of meeting needs together into painful patterns of power-over.

NVC helps us to regain our natural capacity for joyful relationships by clarifying our intentions for compassionate giving and following mindful practices that keep us connected to the feelings and needs of everyone involved.

Needs-based, or compassionate negotiation, is one in which the highest priority is connection and care, and our intention is to create a plan of action that considers and meets everyone's needs in that situation.

Here are fundamental principles that help with successful needs-based negotiation:

1. All perspectives are valid,
2. All feelings and needs are precious.
3. A "no" is an expression of a need
4. Saying "no" compassionately and clearly helps us stay connected to everyone involved.
5. One of the main ways we block this natural needs-based negotiation process is confusing strategies and needs. Remember to hold our needs tightly and our strategies lightly.

As Marshall Rosenberg use to say, “When we stay connected to everybody’s feelings and needs, everyone expresses themselves fully, and we so deeply understand and empathize with the other person’s feelings and needs that we can reflect it back, then “the solution will find you.” He would also say “It is a magic show” and “is too beautiful for words.”

The 9 Basic Human Needs

By Manfred Max-Neef, Chilean economist and environmentalist

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Sustenance | 4. Empathy | 7. Creativity |
| 2. Safety | 5. Rest, recreation, & play | 8. Autonomy |
| 3. Love | 6. Community | 9. Meaning or Purpose in life |

Sustenance

air
food
health & healing
pleasure
shelter
touch
water

Safety

order
consistency
predictability
reassurance
security
safety (emotional)
safety (physical)
stability
structure

Love

acceptance
affection
attention
belonging
care
closeness
companionship
connection
friendship
harmony
honesty
intimacy
nurturing
to hear & be heard
to trust & be trusted
warmth

Empathy

authenticity
compassion
integrity
presence
to understand
to be understood

Rest Recreation

& Play
beauty
exercise
humor
joy
leisure
movement
relaxation
rest/sleep
sexual expression
sleep
solitude

Community

appreciation
belonging
cooperation
communication
communion
consideration
inclusion
communion
ease
equality

ease

equality
fairness
inclusion
mutuality
respect
self-respect
shared reality
sharing
support
to know & be known
to see & be seen

Creativity

clarity
inspiration
discovery
effectiveness
efficiency
exploration
flow
focus
information
integration
self-expression
stimulation
power in your world

Autonomy

choice
freedom
independence
space
spontaneity

Meaning or Purpose in Life

aliveness
awareness
celebration of life
challenge
competence
consciousness
contribution
growth
hope
learning
making sense of life
mourning
nature
participation
peace (external)
peace (internal)
self-acceptance
self-care
self-connection
self-knowledge
self-love
self-realization
self-responsibility
to matter
to understand
to be understood
transcendence
well-being of
someone else

FEELINGS WHEN YOUR NEEDS ARE SATISFIEDFEELINGS WHEN YOUR NEEDS ARE NOT SATISFIED**AFFECTIONATE**

compassionate
friendly
loving
open hearted
sympathetic
tender
warm

CONFIDENT

empowered
open
proud
safe
secure

ENGAGED

absorbed
alert
curious
fascinated
interested
intrigued
stimulated

INSPIRED

amazed
awed
wonder

EXCITED

amazed
astonished
eager
energetic
enthusiastic
invigorated
lively
passionate
surprised

EXHILARATED

blissful
ecstatic
elated
exuberant
radiant
thrilled

GRATEFUL

appreciative
moved
thankful
touched

HOPEFUL

expectant
encouraged
optimistic

JOYFUL

amused
delighted
glad
happy
pleased
tickled

PEACEFUL

calm
clear headed
comfortable
centered
content
fulfilled
mellow
quiet
relaxed
relieved
satisfied
serene
still
tranquil
trusting

REFRESHED

enlivened
rejuvenated
renewed
rested
restored
revived

AFRAID

panicked
scared
suspicious
terrified
worried

ANNOYED

aggravated
frustrated
impatient
irritated

ANGRY

furious
outraged
resentful

AVERSION

disgusted
horrified
repulsed

CONFUSED

ambivalent
hesitant
lost
torn

DISCONNECTED

alienated
apathetic
bored
distant
distracted
numb
withdrawn

DISQUIET

agitated
alarmed
disturbed
restless
shocked
startled
surprised
uncomfortable
upset

EMBARRASSED

ashamed
guilty
self-conscious

FATIGUE

exhausted
tired
weary
worn out

PAIN

grief
heartbroken
hurt
lonely
miserable
regretful

SAD

depressed
despair
disappointed
discouraged
heavy hearted
hopeless
unhappy

TENSE

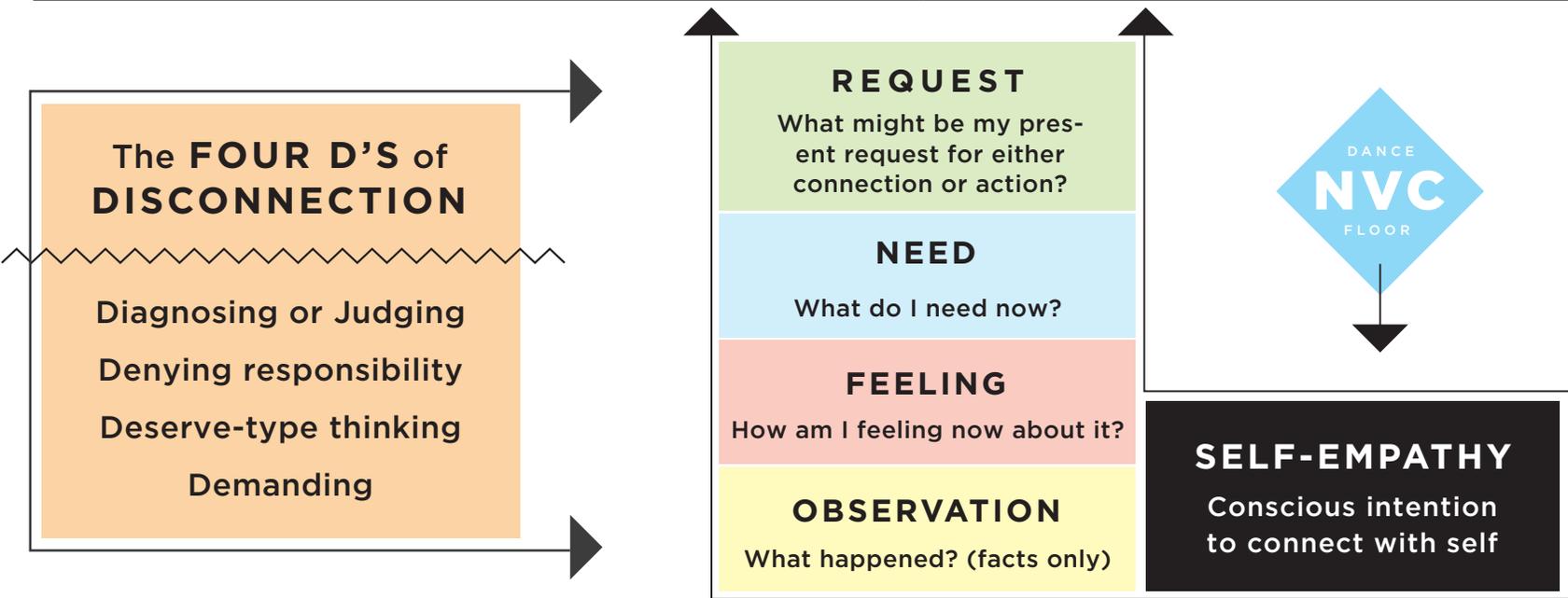
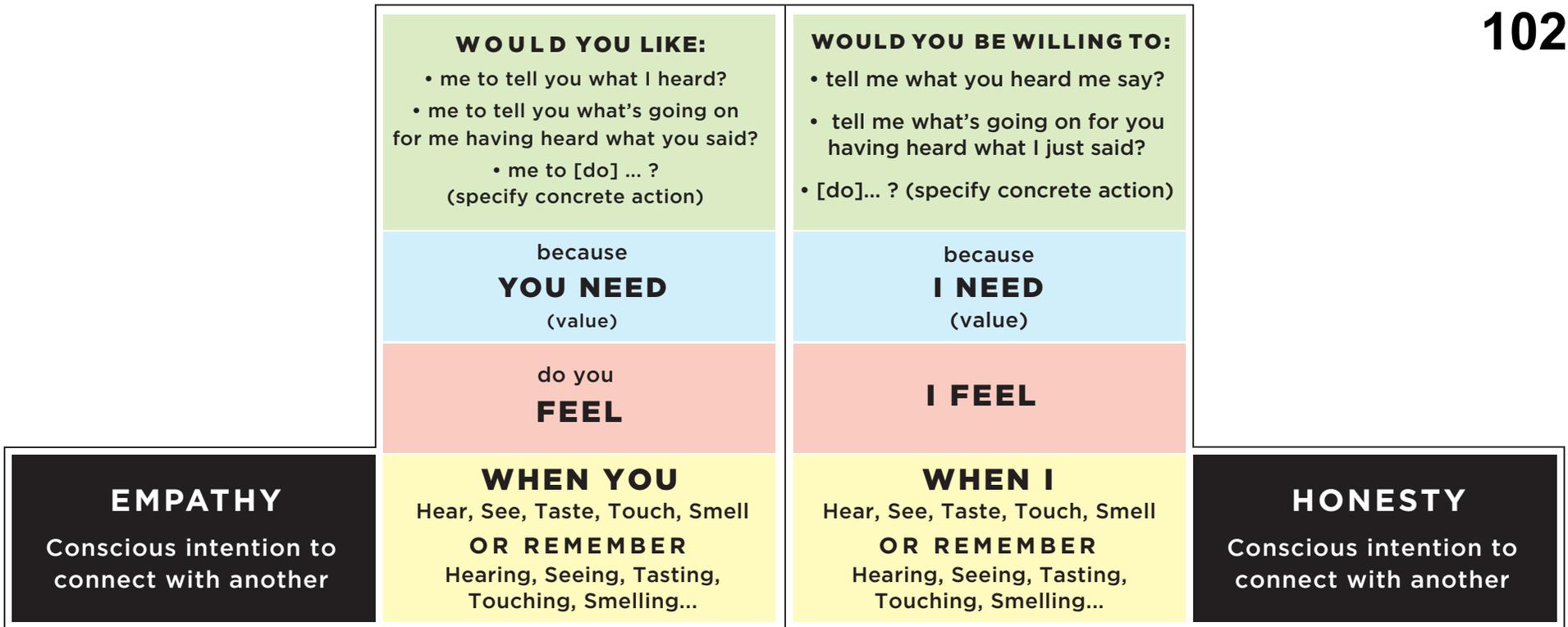
anxious
fidgety
irritable
nervous
overwhelmed
restless
stressed out

VULNERABLE

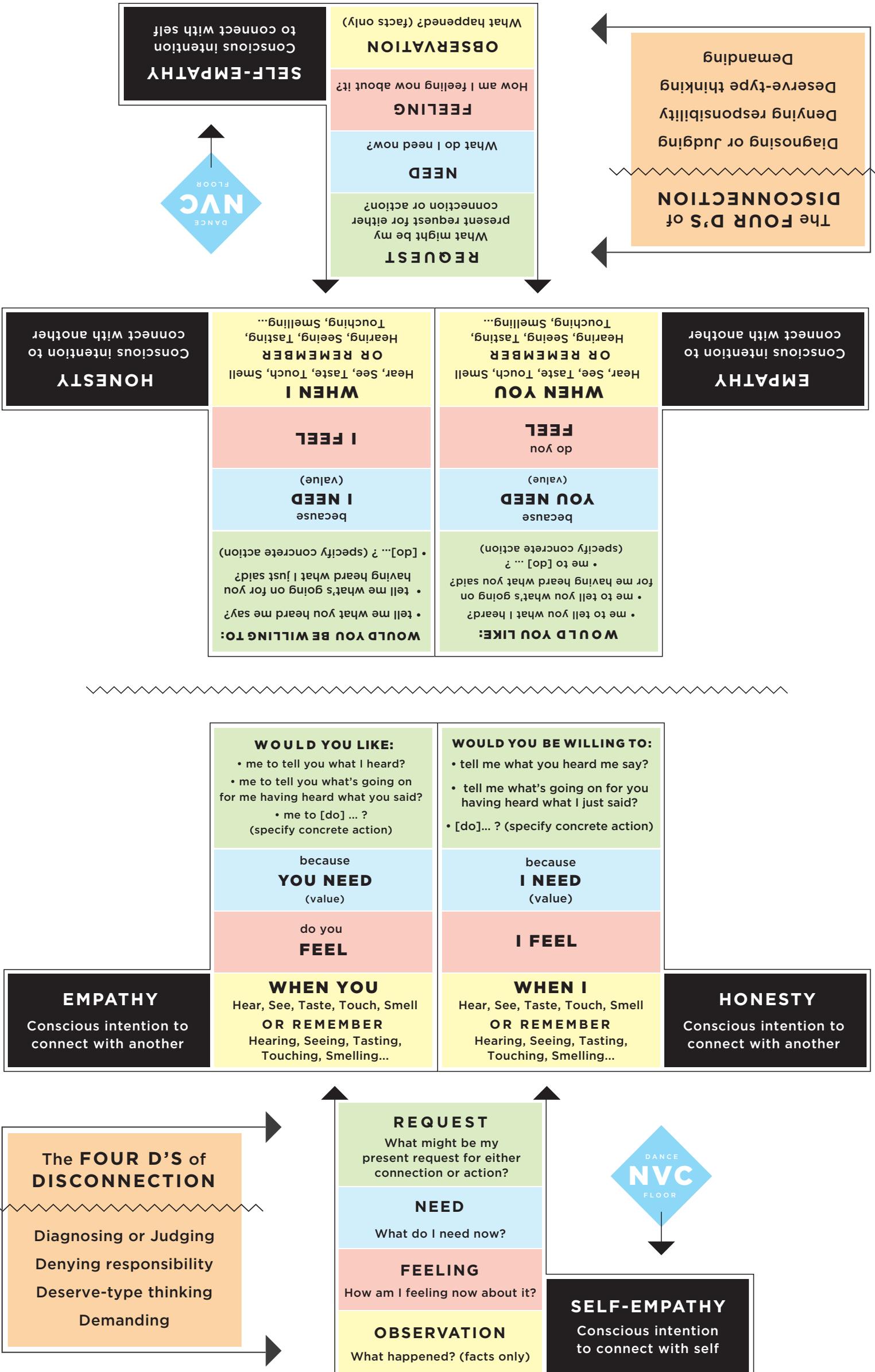
fragile
guarded
helpless
insecure
sensitive
shaky

YEARNING

envious
jealous
longing



NVC Dance Floors Communication Process



A COMPASSIONATE COMMUNICATION DIALOG

Slow it down!
Chunk it down!

“What I would like to tell you is (using OFNR & < 40 words) ...”

“Would you please tell me what you heard me say?”

Reflect it back!

“Thank you for sharing that with me.”

“What I heard you say was...”

“Is that right?”

“Is there more?”

“Thank you for hearing me.”

“Yes, that’s right and I would also like to say (using OFNR & < 40 words)

or “No, that’s not quite it. What I am trying to say...”

“Would you please tell me what you heard me say?”

Reflect it back!

“Thank you for sharing that with me.”

“What I heard you say was...”

“Is that right?”

“Is there more?”

“Thank you for hearing me. I’m complete for now.”

“Would you please tell me what is going on for you having heard me say this?”

“Thank you for asking.”

“What’s going on for me having heard you say that is...”

“Would you please tell me what you heard me say?”

5 Key Practices for a Compassionate Conversation

1- Slow it down

-Speak at a rate the listener can really get what you are saying.

2- Chunk it down

-Talk about smaller bits of information so the listener can really get your meaning.

3- Reflect back

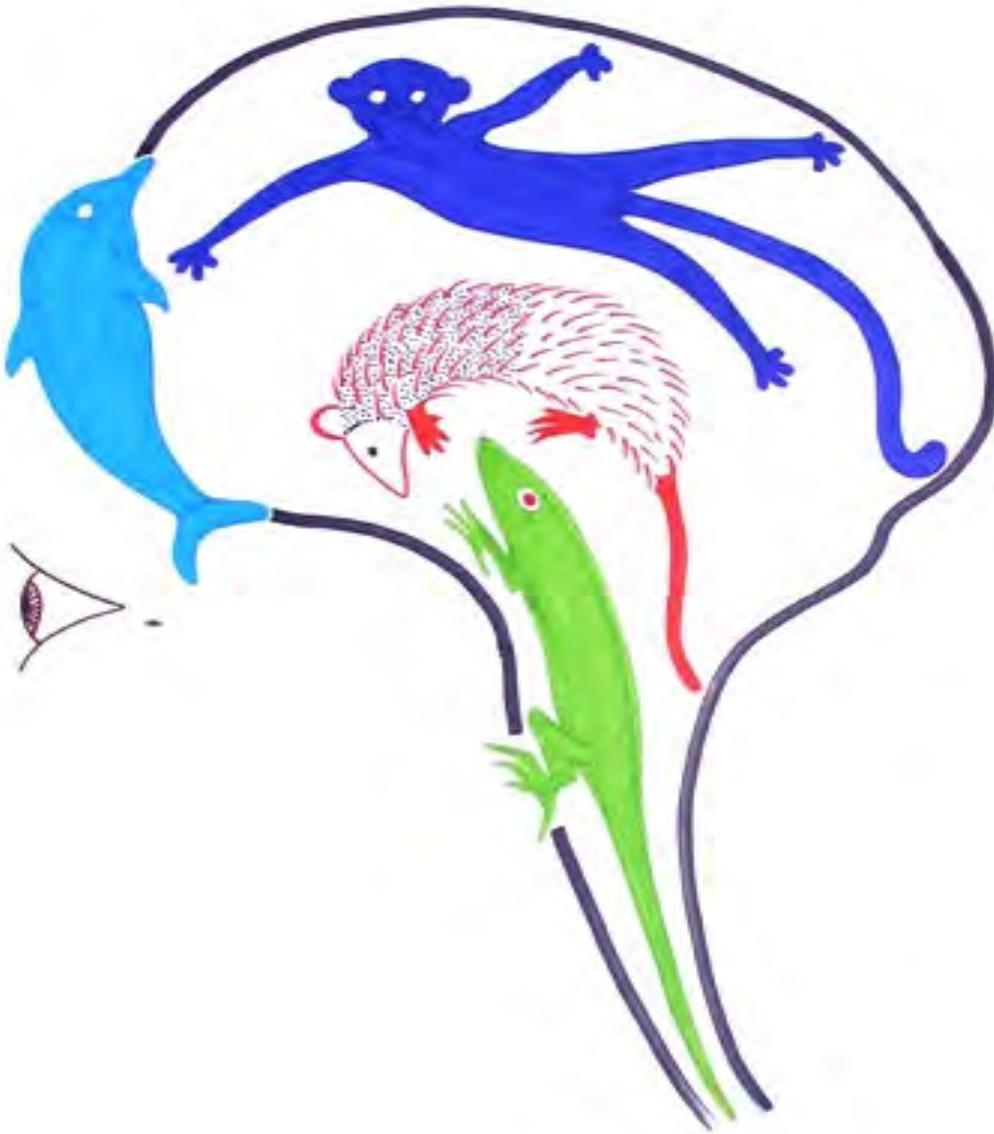
-Say back the essential meaning of what you heard to be sure you understand what was intended.

4- Alternate speaking

-Go back and forth at the rate that best meets everyone's needs.

5- Express gratitude

-Say thank you whenever you are sincerely grateful.



This image is used with permission from Michael Dowd and Connie Barlow

OUR QUADRUNE BRAIN. Our deepest, oldest brain components reflect our ancient “reptilian” heritage — our *Lizard Legacy*. Next is our paleomammalian brain, the seat of emotions — our *Furry L’il Mammal*. Then our neomammalian *Computer Brain*. Finally, our most recently evolved prefrontal lobes — our *Higher Porpoise*. (These charts can be downloaded at <www.thegreatstory.org/charts/triune.html>.)

The Quadrune Brain and Evolutionary Psychology 107

(For more info and a free online class go to: www.thegreatstory.org/evolutionize.html)

Our mind emerges from the interaction of four sequentially evolved components of our brain which evolved over the course of millions of years. At the root of many of our life challenges, especially our close relationships, is the fact that we operate out of inherited “**Stone-Age Instincts**” in a world of “**Supernormal Allurements.**” At this stage in human evolution our “unchosen nature” is mismatched with many of the challenges we face everyday. For example, the desires to eat whenever we see food, have sex with anyone we are attracted to, and fight or flee from someone who criticizes us. One of the most important lessons is to be compassionate with ourselves and each other. Another important lesson is to be aware of the negativity bias of our minds that is one of the main factors eroding our inner peace and loving relationships.

The image playfully shows:

Lizard Legacy - REPTILIAN BRAIN (Brain Stem and Cerebellum)

-Our physical instincts: Safety, sustenance, sex.

Exercise: 1- What do your reptilian instincts want that helped your ancient ancestors survive and reproduce but that now have negative consequences if you act on them indiscriminately, habitually, or in ways that are out of integrity? (List everything related to food, substances, and sex that cause you problems or challenge one or more of your relationships.)

(Did you know that according to Wikipedia 74.6% of Americans are overweight or obese and in 2003, obesity-attributable medical expenditures reached \$75 billion?)

2- What do you appreciate about your reptilian instincts?

How do they serve your life and your relations?

Furry Li'l Mammal - OLD MAMMALIAN BRAIN (Limbic System)

-our social instincts: Bonding, status, and play

Exercise: “Soliciting Feedback” See the weekly homework.

Monkey Mind - NEW MAMMALIAN BRAIN (Neocortex)

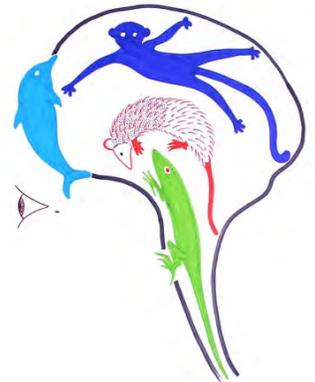
-our interpretive (often self-deceptive) instincts: Meaning, morality, and making sense

Exercise: “I notice, I imagine” Look around you and practice saying what it is you are actually observing (something that can be photographed or recorded) and then saying what judgment or assessment you have about that thing or event.

Higher Porpoise - ADVANCED (Prefrontal Cortex)

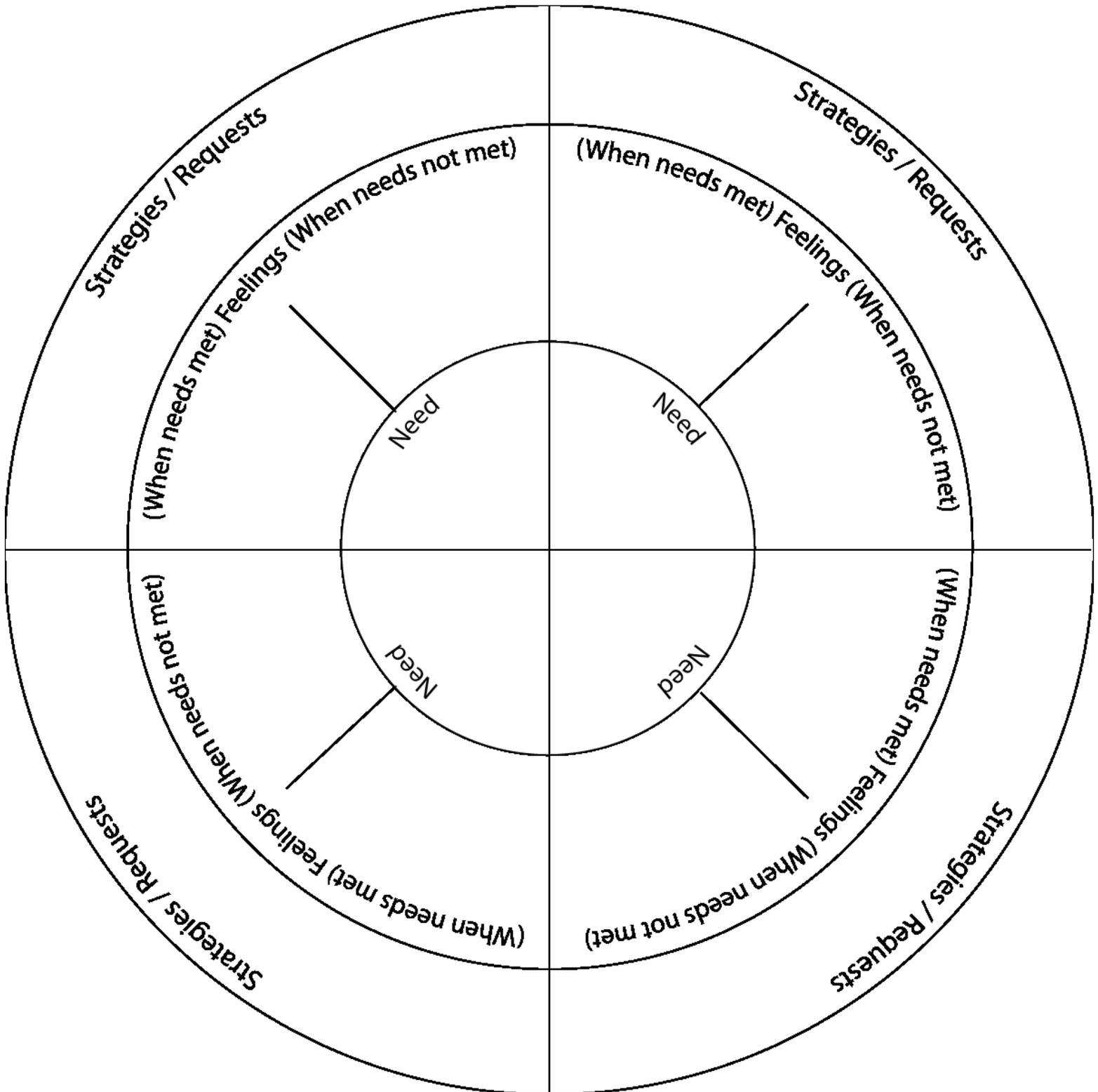
-our executive brain/co-creative instincts: wholeness, transcendence, & contribution

Exercise: Think of an event in your life that seemed like a “bad” thing at the time but later proved to be a “good” thing. Now think of something that you are afraid of and imagine how it could actually be a positive effect on your life.



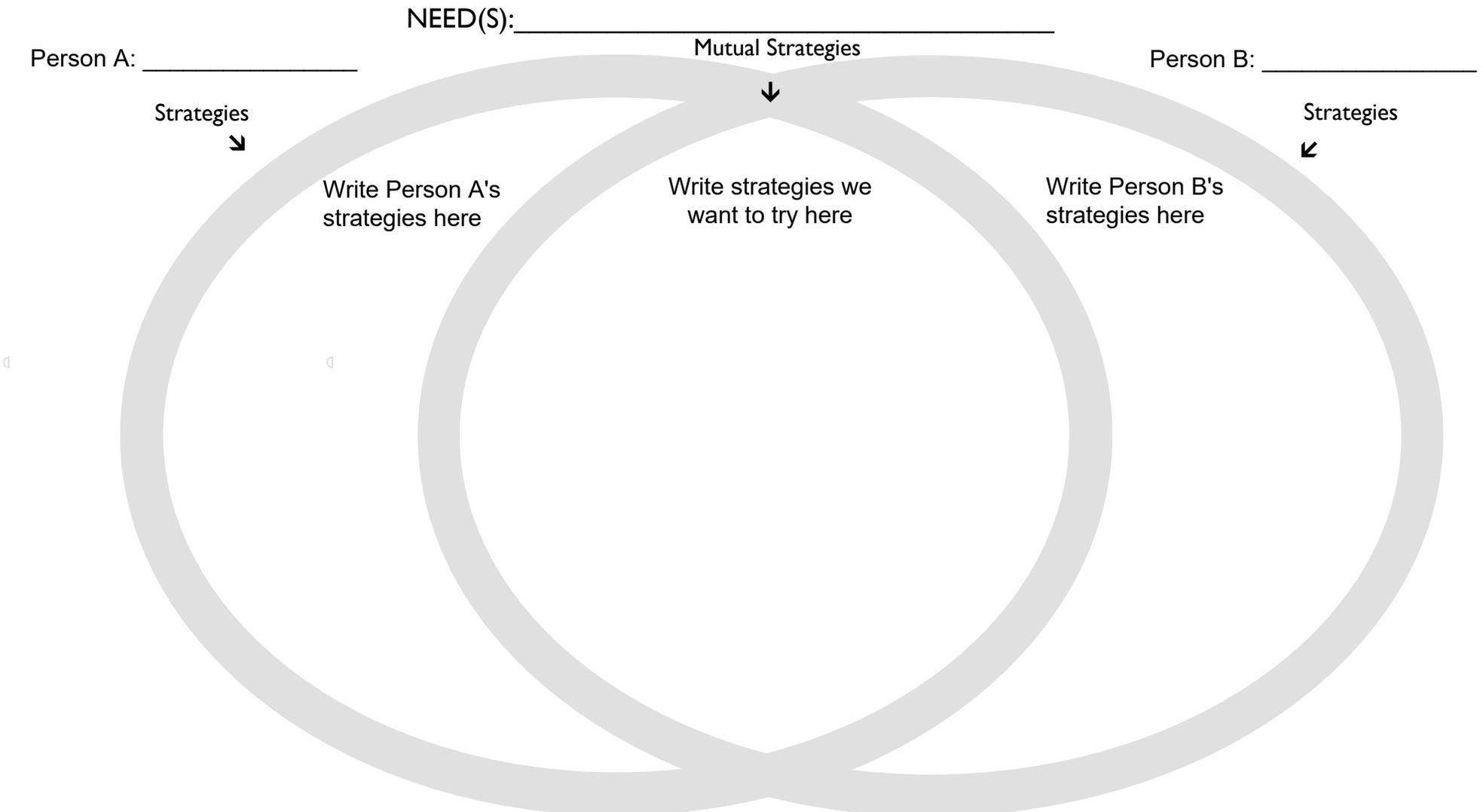
Compassionate Communication Wheel

This wheel can be used as a tool in several different ways. When working with a conflict, it is useful for identifying what needs are alive for a person, what feelings occur when a need is met or unmet, and what strategies or requests could be made to meet those needs. Conversely, a person could start with identifying a strategy, noticing what they are feeling, and ask what needs are met or not met by that strategy.



Worksheet for Finding Mutual Strategies for More Satisfying Relationships

In NVC, it is commonly understood that conflict is never between needs, but rather always between strategies. This worksheet is a tool for helping two people discover mutual strategies for getting needs met. We are much more likely to get our needs met when we focus on what we want, instead of what we don't want. Step 1: Choose a need that you would like to have met better in your relationship and write that in the **NEED(S):** area. Step 2: Each person writes their suggested strategies in the outside part of the circles. Step 3: The two people discuss all of the strategies and find mutually satisfying strategies that they would like to try. Be on the lookout for creative strategies related to, but not identical to, the ones originally suggested. This same process could be used whether you are focusing on particular needs or just looking for strategies for enjoying your relationship more.



How to say “no” in NVC

Saying “no,” in the framework of Compassionate Communication helps create an environment where people are more likely to get their needs met. It is an essential skill in learning to negotiate with people in a way that cares for everyone. Since everything we ever say or do is an attempt to meet a need, when we say “no” to a request, we are actually saying “yes” to other important needs of ours.. Here are some basic steps to say, “no.”

1. **Express gratitude.** Connect with the person making the request and offer gratitude to them for sharing what is alive in them if it is sincere. They shared their heart with you. Can you see the gift in that?
2. **Offer empathy.** Often when people make a request there are significant feelings and needs that are present. Connect with what those may be if it is sincere.
3. **Get clarity.** Make sure you really understand what the other person is asking before you answer. What needs are this person hoping to meet with their request of you? What exactly is the request- What? When? For how long? How often? With whom? Where?
4. **Your needs.** Have a conversation about the feelings and needs that are alive for the person being asked. Let them know what needs of yours would lead you to say “yes,” and what needs of yours would lead you to say “no.” Remember that when you share your heart with them you are also offering a gift of yourself.
5. **Strategies to meet all needs.** Brainstorm a strategy in which everyone’s needs could be met. Now that all the feelings and needs are on the table have a conversation to search for a way for everyone’s needs to be met. Remember Marshall Rosenberg’s NVC principle that conflict is never between needs. Conflict is always between strategies. And that when we drop down to the feeling and need level in our conversations and everyone’s feelings and needs are fully expressed, and everyone has received the empathy they need, that “the solution will find you.”

Exercise 1

This exercise is an abbreviated attempt to say “no” in the framework of compassionate communication. How would you say “no” if someone asked you the following?

Example:

Would you help me cook dinner tonight?

Thanks for asking me. I'm feeling torn because I would like some time to relax after work and I would also like to help you cook. Would it be alright with you if I had an hour for myself after work and then I help you prepare dinner?

1. Could you help me with the dishes?

2. Can I borrow some money?

3: Would you be willing to go on a diet with me so I can have help losing weight?

4. Would you be willing to find a better paying job so our family can have more money?

5. Would you be willing to skip your women's group on Friday and go to the office party with me?

6. Would you write the report for our company team?

7. Can I use your car to go to work tomorrow?

Responding Empathetically to a Jackal “No” in NVC

When we make a genuine request we are giving the gift of ourselves to the other person. A request is genuine if we have no demand or should energy with it and we are okay with hearing “no.” Of course we prefer to hear a “yes” but we only want an authentic “yes” where the other person is agreeing to our request in order to meet their one needs and not out of duty, obligation, fear of punishment, to earn love, or any other jackal thinking.

But often when we make a genuine request people hear it as a demand and think that they have to do it or else there will be negative consequences to them from the person making the request. In these situations it is important to hear their jackal “no” as a tragic expression of their feelings and needs and offer them empathy for what is beneath the jackal “no.”

Below are some jackal statements to practice empathizing with. What feelings and needs would you guess are beneath each of these? There is a list of possible responses at the end of the worksheet.

Example:

Why would you even ask me to help you? You know I have tons to do at work and don't have time.

Are you feeling overwhelmed and really want to create more self-care and balance in your life right now?

1. I don't want to make dinner right now.

Are you feeling _____ because you need/value _____?

2. I don't want to watch the basketball game with you.

Are you feeling _____ because you need/value _____?

3. I don't care if you think I am a bad communicator, I'm done with this NVC crap.

Are you feeling _____ because you need/value _____?

4. The kids don't need to wear safety equipment on the boat.

Are you feeling _____ because you need/value _____?

5. I'm not going to go to the NVC workshop with you. It's a whole weekend.

Are you feeling _____ because you need/value _____?

6. I don't want to sound like a controlling boss, but no, you can't call off sick just because you are tired.

Are you feeling _____ because you need/value _____?

7. No, I am not going to call you every day.

Are you feeling _____ because you need/value _____?

8. We don't have the money in the budget to hire an assistant for you.

Are you feeling _____ because you need/value _____?

9. I've had a hard day so I am not going to walk the dog tonight..

Are you feeling _____ because you need/value _____?

10. No I am not going to get a job that I don't like because you think we need more money for the family.

Are you feeling _____ because you need/value _____?

11. They are your dishes. You clean them up.

Are you feeling _____ because you need/value _____?

12. You clean the house, I think it's clean enough.

Are you feeling _____ because you need/value _____?

13. No, I am not going to talk to him for you.

Are you feeling _____ because you need/value _____?

14. I am not going the School Board Meeting. It's a waste of time.

Are you feeling _____ because you need/value _____?

15. Oh no, not another one of your environmental petitions to sign. I'm done with those.

Are you feeling _____ because you need/value _____?

16. I don't want your mom to come and visit this weekend.

Are you feeling _____ because you need/value _____?

17. I don't want to lend our ladder to your friend again. It took 3 weeks to get it back last time.

Are you feeling _____ because you need/value _____?

18. You go to a therapist if you they are so helpful. I don't need to go with you.

Are you feeling _____ because you need/value _____?

19. I'm not going to cook gluten free foods for you. It's hard enough just getting meals on the table.

Are you feeling _____ because you need/value _____?

20. I don't want to talk about this now.

Are you feeling _____ because you need/value _____?

Possible answers: Responding Empathetically to a Jackal “No” in NVC

1. Are you feeling tired and want rest?
2. Are you disappointed and hoping to have more collaboration in our decision making?
3. Are you feeling hopeless and wanting more ease?
4. Are you feeling kind of restless and wanting more spontaneity (the need for kid’s well-being).
5. You are feeling worried and needing self-care?
6. Are you feeling concerned because you need support and dependability?
7. Are you feeling agitated because you have a need for autonomy and choice?
8. Are you nervous for the financial well-being of the organization? (needs for security, meaning in life, contribution)
9. Are you feeling exhausted and needing rest?
10. Are you feeling hesitant because you need creativity?
11. Are you feeling resistant because you need fairness?
12. Are you feeling aggravated because you want consideration?
13. Are you feeling surprised and really me to develop my communication skills (the need for the well being of another)
14. Are you feeling hopeless because you want to use your time wisely? (need for contribution and effectiveness)
15. Are you feeling distressed because you want because you want to put your energy toward things you are confident will make a difference? (need for effectiveness)
16. Are you feeling overwhelmed and wanting quiet and alone time?
17. Are you feeling cautious because you want access to you your tools? (need for responsibility, security and creativity)
18. Are you feeling guarded because previous sessions didn’t seem to help us? (need for growth and learning)
19. Are you feeling overwhelmed and don’t want to push yourself too hard? (need for self-care and balance)
20. Are you feeling resentful because you have a need for space?

Because I care so much about our relationship, please do as I request **ONLY** if you can do so out of the pleasure of meeting your own needs.

Because I care so much about our relationship, please do as I request **ONLY** if you can do so out of the pleasure of meeting your own needs.

Because I care so much about our relationship, please do as I request **ONLY** if you can do so out of the pleasure of meeting your own needs.

Because I care so much about our relationship, please do as I request **ONLY** if you can do so out of the pleasure of meeting your own needs.

Please, please, please **DO NOT** do as I request if you are motivated by any of the following: fear of punishment if you don't, doing it for reward, that I will like you better if you do, or any shame, guilt, duty or obligation.

Please, please, please **DO NOT** do as I request if you are motivated by any of the following: fear of punishment if you don't, doing it for reward, that I will like you better if you do, or any shame, guilt, duty or obligation.

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Thriving in Relationships: Five Tools for Success

An Online course presented by Steve Torma & The School of Integrated Living

SESSION 5: RELATIONSHIP REPAIR

What we mean by “Relationship Repair” in NVC

NVC is built on the belief that the most precious thing that one human being can give another is that which is in their heart, which in NVC is often referred to as feelings, needs, and requests. And that human beings are happiest when they are giving and receiving from the heart because one of the deepest needs we have is to contribute to life. Sometimes that is the life inside of us and sometimes that is life outside of us. So naturally when we have said or done things that create disconnection with others we would naturally want to repair our relationships.

Relationship repair is the art and practice of tending to hurt feelings and unmet needs in order to heal from the destructive conflict and re-establish connection and trust. Each person expresses what they said and did that did not meet their own and other people’s needs. Likewise offering empathy to themselves and each other for those unmet needs. When repair is successful, it helps us learn from our previous actions without self-judgment and thereby strengthening our relationships going forward.

“Conflict is the flow of information. Conflict becomes painful when we resist the flow of information.” –Dominic Barter.

So what do we do when our conflicts have become so painful that we have lost the ability to relate constructively and enjoyably? Nonviolent Communication offers us the practice of “The Mourning Process,” a tool that focuses on communicating with each other with honesty and empathy to understand what happened to create the disconnection and how to make more skillful choices going forward.

By looking deeply at the needs that were not met by our decisions, the needs that we were trying to meet by our decisions, and how we might choose differently in the future, we can create true forgiveness. Additionally, can use the experience to recommit to our compassionate consciousness as well as increase our skill level for choices that meet everyone’s needs.

When you learn the skills of relationship repair you can remain centered and present in times of painful disconnection. You have a lot of confidence that you can re-establish connection in spite of hurt and anger. Relationship repair allows you to weather the most difficult of times and return to connection.

The 9 Basic Human Needs

By Manfred Max-Neef, Chilean economist and environmentalist

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Sustenance | 4. Empathy | 7. Creativity |
| 2. Safety | 5. Rest, recreation, & play | 8. Autonomy |
| 3. Love | 6. Community | 9. Meaning or Purpose in life |

Sustenance

air
food
health & healing
pleasure
shelter
touch
water

Safety

order
consistency
predictability
reassurance
security
safety (emotional)
safety (physical)
stability
structure

Love

acceptance
affection
attention
belonging
care
closeness
companionship
connection
friendship
harmony
honesty
intimacy
nurturing
to hear & be heard
to trust & be trusted
warmth

Empathy

authenticity
compassion
integrity
presence
to understand
to be understood

Rest Recreation

& Play

beauty
exercise
humor
joy
leisure
movement
relaxation
rest/sleep
sexual expression
sleep
solitude

Community

appreciation
belonging
cooperation
communication
communion
consideration
inclusion
communion
ease
equality

ease

equality
fairness
inclusion
mutuality
respect
self-respect
shared reality
sharing
support
to know & be known
to see & be seen

Creativity

clarity
inspiration
discovery
effectiveness
efficiency
exploration
flow
focus
information
integration
self-expression
stimulation
power in your world

Autonomy

choice
freedom
independence
space
spontaneity

Meaning or Purpose in Life

aliveness
awareness
celebration of life
challenge
competence
consciousness
contribution
growth
hope
learning
making sense of life
mourning
nature
participation
peace (external)
peace (internal)
self-acceptance
self-care
self-connection
self-knowledge
self-love
self-realization
self-responsibility
to matter
to understand
to be understood
transcendence
well-being of
someone else

FEELINGS WHEN YOUR NEEDS ARE SATISFIEDFEELINGS WHEN YOUR NEEDS ARE NOT SATISFIED**AFFECTIONATE**

compassionate
friendly
loving
open hearted
sympathetic
tender
warm

CONFIDENT

empowered
open
proud
safe
secure

ENGAGED

absorbed
alert
curious
fascinated
interested
intrigued
stimulated

INSPIRED

amazed
awed
wonder

EXCITED

amazed
astonished
eager
energetic
enthusiastic
invigorated
lively
passionate
surprised

EXHILARATED

blissful
ecstatic
elated
exuberant
radiant
thrilled

GRATEFUL

appreciative
moved
thankful
touched

HOPEFUL

expectant
encouraged
optimistic

JOYFUL

amused
delighted
glad
happy
pleased
tickled

PEACEFUL

calm
clear headed
comfortable
centered
content
fulfilled
mellow
quiet
relaxed
relieved
satisfied
serene
still
tranquil
trusting

REFRESHED

enlivened
rejuvenated
renewed
rested
restored
revived

AFRAID

panicked
scared
suspicious
terrified
worried

ANNOYED

aggravated
frustrated
impatient
irritated

ANGRY

furious
outraged
resentful

AVERSION

disgusted
horrified
repulsed

CONFUSED

ambivalent
hesitant
lost
torn

DISCONNECTED

alienated
apathetic
bored
distant
distracted
numb
withdrawn

DISQUIET

agitated
alarmed
disturbed
restless
shocked
startled
surprised
uncomfortable
upset

EMBARRASSED

ashamed
guilty
self-conscious

FATIGUE

exhausted
tired
weary
worn out

PAIN

grief
heartbroken
hurt
lonely
miserable
regretful

SAD

depressed
despair
disappointed
discouraged
heavy hearted
hopeless
unhappy

TENSE

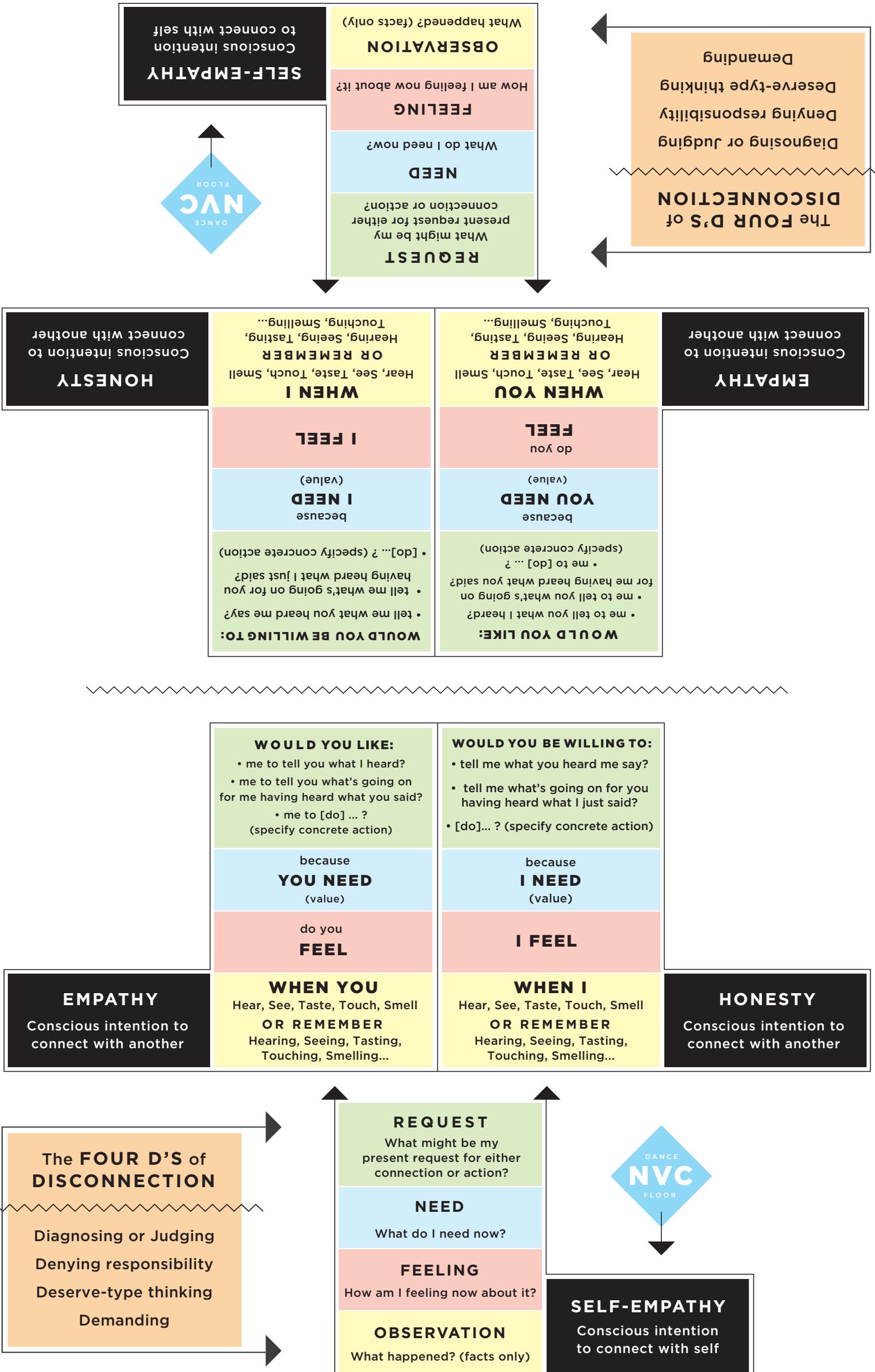
anxious
fidgety
irritable
nervous
overwhelmed
restless
stressed out

VULNERABLE

fragile
guarded
helpless
insecure
sensitive
shaky

YEARNING

envious
jealous
longing



A COMPASSIONATE COMMUNICATION DIALOG

Slow it down!
Chunk it down!

“What I would like to tell you is (using OFNR & < 40 words) ...”

“Would you please tell me what you heard me say?”

Reflect it back!

“Thank you for sharing that with me.”

“What I heard you say was...”

“Is that right?”

“Is there more?”

“Thank you for hearing me.”

“Yes, that’s right and I would also like to say (using OFNR & < 40 words)

or “No, that’s not quite it. What I am trying to say...”

“Would you please tell me what you heard me say?”

Reflect it back!

“Thank you for sharing that with me.”

“What I heard you say was...”

“Is that right?”

“Is there more?”

“Thank you for hearing me. I’m complete for now.”

“Would you please tell me what is going on for you having heard me say this?”

“Thank you for asking.”

“What’s going on for me having heard you say that is...”

“Would you please tell me what you heard me say?”

5 Key Practices for a Compassionate Conversation

1- Slow it down

-Speak at a rate the listener can really get what you are saying.

2- Chunk it down

-Talk about smaller bits of information so the listener can really get your meaning.

3- Reflect back

-Say back the essential meaning of what you heard to be sure you understand what was intended.

4- Alternate speaking

-Go back and forth at the rate that best meets everyone's needs.

5- Express gratitude

-Say thank you whenever you are sincerely grateful.

NVC Mourning Process (To do with oneself)

The practice of mourning is an important aspect of NVC. We use it as an alternative to apologizing when the assumption is that someone did something bad or wrong. In NVC, we assess our behaviors as to whether needs have been met or not; we don't evaluate on the basis of good or bad. Since one of the most satisfying things for a person to do is to meet needs (our own or others) whenever we act in a way that does not meet needs, it is something that we would naturally want to mourn. Even though we are trying to meet our needs and are doing the best we can think of to do in every moment, sometimes the things we say or do stimulate difficult feelings in ourselves and other people. Sometimes we are only able to notice the full impact of our actions when we look back on these occurrences in hindsight. This is when we can engage the mourning process to create healing and reconciliation.

The “Educator” is that part of us that looks back at our choices and notices what needs, of ours and others, were met or not met, by what we said or did. The “Chooser” is that part of us that looks back at our choices and notices what needs we were trying to meet with what we said or did. The “Educator” can speak to us in both jackal and giraffe. For example: Jackal Educator might say, “That was sure selfish of you to buy a treat for yourself but not for your partner or children. The Giraffe Educator might say, “You’re feeling disappointed because did not meet your own need for considering other people, especially those closest to you. And you probably did not meet their needs for inclusion and care.”

Exercise: Think of something that you have said or done that you now wish you had not and answer the following.

Example:

1. What did you say or do? I went out to dinner with a woman I had a crush on and did not tell my partner.

2. When you think about what you said or did how do you feel? (*EMPATHY FOR THE EDUCATOR*)

I feel sad, disappointed, and a little sick to my stomach.

3. What needs of your own did you not meet? (*EMPATHY FOR THE EDUCATOR*)

Honesty, integrity, and my partner’s well being.

4. What needs of the other person(s) did you not meet? (*EMPATHY FOR THE EDUCATOR*)

Honesty, respect, love, and emotional safety.

5. When you did what you now regret, what needs were you trying to meet? (*EMPATHY FOR THE CHOOSER*)

Acceptance, belonging, pleasure, and autonomy.

6. How would you choose to address those needs differently now?

First, I would remember my intention to create a quality of relationship with my partner where we are as honest and empathetic as possible. Second, I would connect with myself to feel my feelings and sense my needs.

Third, I would talk to a friend to get empathy. Fourth, I would talk to my partner about what feelings and needs are alive for me.

1. What did you say or do? _____

2. When you think about what you said or did how do you feel? (EMPATHY FOR THE EDUCATOR)

3. What needs of your own did you not meet? (EMPATHY FOR THE EDUCATOR) _____

4. What needs of the other person(s) did you not meet? (EMPATHY FOR THE EDUCATOR) _____

5. When you said or did what you now regret, what needs were you trying to meet? (EMPATHY FOR THE CHOOSER)

6. How would you choose to address those needs differently now?

1. What did you say or do? _____

2. When you think about what you said or did how do you feel? (EMPATHY FOR THE EDUCATOR)

3. What needs of your own did you not meet? (EMPATHY FOR THE EDUCATOR) _____

4. What needs of the other person(s) did you not meet? (EMPATHY FOR THE EDUCATOR) _____

5. When you said or did what you now regret, what needs were you trying to meet? (EMPATHY FOR THE CHOOSER)

6. How would you choose to address those needs differently now?

Working with Conflict using the NVC Model: Short Version

(A companion to the Dance Floors process)

- 1- Notice your jackal show. Enjoy it if you want to.
- 2- Give yourself empathy for any jackal things the other person(s) said or did
- 3- Translate any jackal thoughts you have of the other person into your feelings and needs.
- 4- Translate any jackal thoughts you have of yourself into your feelings and needs
- 5- Go through a Self-Empathy OFNR with each of your jackal translations.
- 6- Ask yourself if you still have any enemy images of yourself or the other person
- 7- If so, translate them into your feelings and needs.
- 8- Repeat step 6 and 7 until all enemy images have been translated
- 9- Ask yourself what feelings and needs might be alive for the other person.

When you have translated all your enemy images into your feelings and needs you are ready to talk to the other person about the conflict.

- 10- When you are ready to engage the other person ask them if they are willing to talk to you about the conflict. If so, when.

When both people are ready to talk about it.

- 11- Ask the other person if they would let you know if they hear anything you say as criticism or blame. Clarify that you want to rephrase anything that they hear as criticism or blame so that they only hear it as your expression of feelings and needs.

- 12- Ask them if they would like to go first or have you go first.

- 13- If you are going to start decide whether you want to lead with empathy or honesty, knowing that you will be engaging in both honesty and empathy as the conversation unfolds.

In order to maximize connection and mutual understanding be aware of:

14- ... slowing the conversation down

15- ... speaking in smaller chunks of conversation

16- ... reflecting back what you heard the other person say

17- ... taking turns

18- ... expressing gratitude for the other person sharing their honesty or reflecting back to you

19- If you do not remember what someone said ask them to repeat it.

20- If you only remember part of what someone said repeat that back to them and ask them to say again what you missed.

Working with Conflict using the NVC Model: Long Version (A companion to the Dance Floors process)

Let's imagine a common conflict situation between two people. We will call Chris and Pat. In the process Chris swears, calls Pat names, and threatens other acts of emotional violence.

Now person Chris wants to initiate a repair process with Pat.

These are some steps Chris could take using the NVC model.

1- Notice one's own jackal thoughts. Don't push them away. Remember that there are life-serving feelings and needs beneath them.

"Pat is such a control freak."

"Pat never shuts up and is constantly criticizing me."

"All Pat ever does is complain."

2- Give yourself empathy for any jackal things the other person(s) said or did.

"Pat said to me 'Chris, you are the reason we have such a bad relationship.'"

"When I heard that I felt so angry, hurt, and disgusted."

"It so deeply did not meet my needs for respect, care, and to be understood."

3- Translate any jackal thoughts you have of the other person into your feelings and needs. Often these will be things you actually said to the other person in an active conflict situation.

"I said to Pat in a very loud voice 'You are such a control freak.'"

"What was going on for me was that I was incredibly frustrated and really needing autonomy and space"

"I swore at Pat in a very loud voice while making fists with my hands."

"What was going on for me was that I was feeling a lot of shame and fear and was really needing empathy and understanding."

4- Translate any jackal thoughts you have of yourself into your feelings and needs.

“I have a lot of thoughts like ‘What’s wrong with me’ and
‘I am a hopeless case’ and
‘I am so mean and stupid’.

“When I translate these jackal statements they sound like:”

“I am heartbroken about how difficult it is for me to create loving relationships.”

“I am so afraid that I will never be able to communicate deeply and vulnerably.”

“I long for the skill to hear other people’s feedback and not react violently.”

5- Ask yourself if you still have any enemy images of yourself or the other person

6- If so, translate them into your feelings and needs.

7- Repeat step 6 and 7 until all enemy images have been translated

8- Ask yourself what feelings and needs might be alive for the other person.

“I imagine that I stimulated a lot of intense feelings for Pat and that the things I said and did violated a lot of very important needs.”

“Some of Pat’s feelings are probably fear, overwhelm, sadness, grief, hurt, and anger.”

“Some of Pat’s deeply unmet needs are for respect, emotional safety, physical safety, empathy, to be understood, and compassion.”

When you have translated all your enemy images into your feelings and needs, and you have taken the time to feel into what might be going on for the other person, you are ready to talk to the them about the conflict.

9- When you are ready to engage the other person ask them if they are willing to talk to you about the conflict and if so, when. It may be that there are power dynamics present between the two of you that requires a third person to

mediate the conflict so that both people feel safe enough to be present. Or some other factors need to be present before both people feel safe to engage.

10- If the violence has been mostly one-sided by you start by being in empathy mode. Explain to the other person that you want to be empathetically present to them while they share with you what it was like for them to be on the receiving end of your words and actions. Some possible phrases could be:

“Pat, I would really want to hear what was going on for you when I said ___ and did ___.”

“I really want to be empathetic and understanding to what you experienced with me.”

“I really want to do all I can to create repair and reconciliation in our relationship.”

“I want to learn from my mistakes and be more skillful going forward.”

11- Ask them if they would like to go first or have you go first.

If they go first let them know that you would like to reflect back the feelings and needs you are hearing and it would be helpful if they could pause after every few sentences. But if they don't want to, you will still your best to listen and reflect empathetically.

So when they start speaking it might sound something like,

“Chris, how could you treat me like that again?” And other statements of strong feelings.

Chris responds empathetically with something like,

“Thanks for telling me, Pat.”

“I hear how painful it was for you and when I said ___ and did ___.”

“Did I get that right?”

You may want to check in with the person to see if they are wanting spoken empathy. If not, It might be more effective to empathize silently.

If there is a mediator present, they might step in to also offer empathy to the person on the receiving end of the violence.

As long as you are able, continue to be empathetically present and encourage the other person to fully express themselves.

Once they are fully expressed and have received all the empathy and understanding they want at this time this part of the process is over.

12- Both people check in about whether they want to continue on to next stages of the repair process.

This may be all that happens at this time depending on many factors including time, energy level, capacity for emotional presence, etc.

13- If both people want to continue on, the next step is for the person who had been in empathy mode to share what is going on for them after hearing the other person's experience.

It could sound something like this:

“Pat, I am feeling really sad and embarrassed hearing how much you suffered as a result of our conflict.”

“I have so much grief and sadness about how I treated you and how much pain you've experienced.”

“I'm feeling a lot of despair about what I said and did and how much damage it has done to our relationship.”

This continues until Chris has shared what is alive for them or until one or both of them calls time out.

Again it might be that the mediator is the person who reflects back and provides empathy.

If both people want to continue the next step could be the following.

14- Pat shares with Chris what was going on for him when he said and did those things.

That might sound like:

“Pat, I take full responsibility for what I said and did.”

“in no way am I blaming you for my actions.”

“if you are able and willing to hear me, then I would like to tell you what was going on for me at the time I said and did those things.”

If Pat says “yes” then Chris might say something like:

“When you said that our relationship problems were my fault, I was overcome with intense anger shame and grief.”

“Would you be willing to tell me what you heard me say?”

Pat responds and checks in to see if they heard Chris correctly.

This continues as long as both people feel able and willing.

15- The last step is for each person to suggest ideas about how they could handle this, or similar situations in the future.

In order to maximize connection and mutual understanding be aware of:

16- ... slowing the conversation down

17- ... speaking in smaller chunks of conversation

18- ... reflecting back what you heard the other person say

19- ... taking turns

20- ... expressing gratitude for the other person sharing their honesty or reflecting back to you

21- If you do not remember what someone said ask them to repeat it.

22- If you only remember part of what someone said repeat that back to them and ask them to say again what you missed.

23- Make pure observations. Don't mix in evaluations

24- Express feelings or bodily sensations not thoughts

25- Express needs not strategies or requests

26- Make requests not demands

27- When giving empathy remember it is more important to be sincerely concerned about the other person than to be right about guessing their feelings and needs.

28- Remember, connection before correction or education.

29- Remember we are never trying to make the other person do anything. We are trying to care equally about everyone's needs and create a quality of connection where everyone gives out of the joy of contributing to life.

30- When someone is doing something that is not meeting your needs, the most powerful way to invite them to a different behavior is to empathize with the feelings and needs that are behind the behavior that you do not like.

The practice of mourning is an important aspect of NVC. We use it as an alternative to apologizing when the assumption is that someone did something bad or wrong. In NVC, we assess our behaviors as to whether needs have been met or not; we don't evaluate on the basis of good or bad. Since one of the most satisfying things for a person to do is to meet needs (our own or others) whenever we act in a way that does not meet needs, it is something that we would naturally want to mourn. Even though we are trying to meet our needs and are doing the best we can think of to do in every moment, sometimes the things we say or do stimulate difficult feelings in ourselves and other people. Sometimes we are only able to notice the full impact of our actions when we look back on these occurrences in hindsight. This is when we can engage the mourning process to create healing and reconciliation.

The “Educator” is that part of us that looks back at our choices and notices what needs, of ours and others, were met or not met, by what we said or did. The “Chooser” is that part of us that looks back at our choices and notices what needs we were trying to meet with what we said or did. The “Educator” can speak to us in both jackal and giraffe. For example: Jackal Educator might say, “That was sure selfish of you to buy a treat for yourself but not for your partner or children. The Giraffe Educator might say, “You’re feeling disappointed because did not meet your own need for considering other people, especially those closest to you. And you probably did not meet their needs for inclusion and care.”

Exercise: Think of something that you have said or done that you now regret and do the following steps.

Example:

Steps 1-6 are done with yourself and follow the basic NVC model of Observation, feelings, needs and requests.

1- What did you say or do? I went out to dinner with a woman I had a crush on and did not tell my partner.

2- When you think about what you said or did how do you feel? (*EMPATHY FOR THE EDUCATOR*)

I feel sad, disappointed, and a little sick to my stomach.

3. What needs of your own did you not meet? (*EMPATHY FOR THE EDUCATOR*)

Honesty, integrity, and my partner’s well being.

4. What needs of the other person(s) did you not meet? (*EMPATHY FOR THE EDUCATOR*)

5- When you said or did what you now regret, what needs were you trying to meet? (*EMPATHY FOR THE CHOOSER*)

Acceptance, belonging, pleasure, autonomy, and emotional safety.

6- How would you choose to address those needs differently now?

First, I would remember my intention to create a quality of relationship with my partner where we are as

and empathetic as possible. Second, I would connect with myself to feel my feelings and sense my needs.

Third, I would talk to a friend to get empathy. Fourth, I would talk to my partner about what feelings and needs

are alive for me.

Steps 7-11 are done in conversation with the other person.

7. ME: When I think about having gone on that date and not told you I feel sad, disappointed, and a little sick to my stomach. Would you please tell me what you heard me say.

PARTNER REFLECTS BACK

8. ME: I imagine that you are feeling really hurt, sad, and angry and that your needs for honesty, respect, love, and emotional safety were deeply not met by what I did. Is that right? (Always empathize in the form of a question.)

PARTNER RESPONDS AND WE DIALOG ABOUT HER UNMET NEEDS.

9. ME: I feel so much pain because I now realize that I did not meet so many of my own needs by what I dd. My needs for honesty, integrity, and your well being Would you please tell me what you heard me say.

PARTNER RESPONDS AND WE DIALOG ABOUT THE NEEDS OF MINE I DID NOT MEET BY MY ACTIONS.

10. ME: I also realize that when I did that I was trying to meet my own needs for acceptance, belonging, pleasure and emotional safety.

PARTNER RESPONDS AND WE DIALOG ABOUT THE NEEDS I WAS TRYING TO MEET.

11. I would like to brainstorm with you ideas we have about to navigate any similar situation in the future.

PARTNER RESPONDS AND WE DIALOG ABOUT IDEAS WE HAVE OF HOW TO NAVIGATE ANY SIMILAR SITUATIONS IN THE FUTURE.

THE MOURNING PROCESS Steps 1-11

Steps 1-6 are done with yourself and follow the basic NVC model of observation, feelings, needs, & request.

1. What did I say or do? _____

2. When I think about what I said or did I feel? _____
_____ (EMPATHY FOR THE EDUCATOR)

3. When I think about what I said or did I realize that I did not meet my own needs for? _____
_____ (EMPATHY FOR THE EDUCATOR)

4. When I think about what I said or did I imagine that I really did not meet the other person's needs for _____
_____ (EMPATHY FOR THE EDUCATOR)

5. When I think about what I said, I realize that I was trying to meet my needs for _____
_____ (EMPATHY FOR THE CHOOSER)

6. If a similar situation were to come up in the future I would like to try to get everyone's needs met by

Steps 7- 11 are done in conversation with the other person.

7- ME to OTHER: When I think about what I did, I feel _____

Would you please tell me what you heard me say?

PARTNER REFLECTS BACK SAYING "Thanks for sharing that with me" and asks "Did I get that right?"

ME: "Yes, thank you" or "Yes, you got part of it but I also want to let you know..."

8- When I think about what I did I imagine you felt _____

because that really did not meet your needs for _____

Is that right?

PARTNER ANSWERS BY SHARING THEIR FEELINGS AND NEEDS THAT WERE NOT MET.

ME: "Thank you for sharing that with me. What I heard you say was Is that right?"

PARTNER SAYS "Yes, thank you" or "Yes, you got part of it but I also want to let you know..."

DIALOG CONTINUES UNTIL PARTNER IS FULLY HEARD AND EMPATHIZED WITH

9- ME TO OTHER: "Hearing your feelings and all your needs that were not met by what I said or did I feel

because I really did not meet my own needs for _____

Would you please tell me what you heard me say?

PARTNER REFLECTS BACK SAYING "Thanks for sharing that with me" and asks "Did I get that right?"

ME: "Yes, thank you" or "Yes, you got part of it but I also want to let you know..."

10- ME TO OTHER: I also realize that when I said or did that I was trying to meet my own needs for

Would you please tell me what you heard me say?

PARTNER REFLECTS BACK SAYING "Thanks for sharing that with me" and asks "Did I get that right?"

ME: "Yes, thank you" or "Yes, you got part of it but I also want to let you know..."

11- ME TO OTHER: Now that we both have our needs met for empathy and understanding, I would like to have a conversation about how we could do this differently in the future so that is more likely we will get all of our needs met.

PARTNER AND I HAVE A CONVERSATION ABOUT OUR IDEAS OF HOW WE COULD DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY NEXT TIME.

THE MOURNING PROCESS

An NVC practice for healing from painful situations where things were said or done that did not meet needs. These are the questions to ask oneself in preparation for doing the mourning process with another person in the goal of relationship repair.

Mourning the past actions of another toward me:

1. What did the other person say or do that did not meet my needs?
2. When I think about what they said or did how do I feel right now?
3. What needs of my own were not met by what they said or did?
4. What needs of their own did they probably not meet by what they said or did?
5. What needs of their own were they trying to meet by what they said or did?
6. What might I request of myself and/or the other person, to do differently in the future, in order to meet everybody's needs, if a similar situation occurred?

Mourning my past actions:

1. What did I say or do that I now regret?
2. When I think about what I said or did how do I feel right now?
3. What needs of my own did I not meet by what I said or did?
4. What needs of the other person did I not meet by what I said or did?
5. When I said or did what I now regret, what needs or mine was I trying to meet?
6. What might I choose to do differently in the future, to meet everybody's needs, if a similar situation occurred?

Relationship Repair NVC Style

In the course of our intimate relationships there are times when we say or do things that are not in harmony with our needs and the needs of the people we are relating to. When this happens NVC can guide us in creating healing and bring us back to heartfelt connection.

Example: Person A says to Person B (me) "You are so selfish!" Person B responds by saying, "You are such a control freak" and walking out of the room. One hour later, Person B wants to initiate relationship repair.

Here are some steps to creating this relationship repair.

1. Intention

- a. Our ability to move from our jackal thinking to compassionate connection starts with getting in touch with our deep desire to live in harmony with our needs and values. In this situation it may sound like, "I really want to change my pattern of reactivity and the amount of suffering that we create together. I care very deeply about our relationship and I want to grow in my capacity to care about myself and the other even when I am triggered."

2. Self empathy

- a. Enjoy my jackal show. Listen to my own judgments, blaming, etc. (4 D's of disconnection)
- b. Mourn with self
 - i. Translate my jackal statement to Person A into my feelings and needs. "You are such a control freak" could be translated into "When he said I was selfish I felt hurt and scared because my need for understanding and empathy were so not met."
 - ii. Get in touch with my feelings and unmet needs in how I responded to Person A. "When I think about having said "You are such a control freak" I feel sad and disappointed because that did not meet my need for how I want to treat people with respect and care."
- c. Imagine what the other person's feelings and needs might have been that led them to say what they said. "When he said "You are so selfish" he might have been feeling frustrated and needing support."

- d. Imagine what their feelings and unmet needs were related to my reaction. "When I said 'You are such a control freak' he might have been feeling hurt and frustrated because he was needing understanding and empathy."
3. Get empathy ~ At this point it might be helpful to seek out empathy from a third person in order to get connected to myself in preparation for talking to Person A.
 4. Mourn with the other person.
 - a. Share your desire to do the mourning process with Person A and see if they are willing.
 - b. Steps to the mourning process.
 - i. Observation
 1. What I said or did. "When I think about having said 'You are such a control freak' and walking out of the room..."
 - ii. Present Feelings "...I feel sad and disappointed..."
 - iii. Unmet Needs of Person A "...because I imagine it didn't meet your need for respect and care. Is that right?" Person A responds.
 - iv. Unmet Needs of My Own "I also feel sad and disappointed because I did not meet my own needs for how I want to relate to you."
 - v. My Chooser's Needs "I realize now that the needs I was trying to meet when I did that were understanding and empathy."
 - vi. Searching for a Solution for Everyone's Needs to be Met in the Future "I'd love to have a conversation now about how we could do this differently if a similar situation arises in the future. Are you open to that?"
 5. Optional PostHearsal. Replay the situation using NVC consciousness and tools. Consult the following handouts to assist in imagining how you could do it more effectively next time.
 - a. A Commitment to Compassionate Consciousness in Relationships and Conflict
 - b. Compassionate Communication Dialogue Checklist
 - c. Repair Basics Connection Gem of the Week

Giving and Receiving Feedback NVC Style

Giving and receiving feedback is one of the most important practices for creating satisfying relationships of all kind. NVC encourages us to do this free of moralistic judgments by focusing on observations, feelings, and needs. Try practicing giving and receiving feedback in your family, friend circle, workplace, and intimate partnerships.

You can share the answers to these questions in order to give your feedback to others. Or you can ask the other person to give you feedback by answering them about their experience of relating to you.

A very useful question for people in relationships to ask on an ongoing basis is, “What needs of yours are not being met to your satisfaction in our relationship?” And, “What ideas do you have about how those needs could be better met?”

Asking these questions of each other regularly will likely create much higher level of satisfaction in the relationship.

1- What is the pure observation of what the other person said or did? Or what is the observation of what you have noticed about that person and their behavior(s)?

2- How do you feel now as you remember it? Or if it has just happened, how are you feeling right now?

3- What needs of yours did it not meet? What needs of other people might it not have met?

4- What needs were you trying to meet when you did the thing I did not enjoy/

5- What can we do differently in the future to better meet our needs?

Repair Basics

LaShelle Charde's Connection Gem of the Week

Repair, in the context of Compassionate Communication, means to repair a rupture in connection when either of you sense disconnect or there was a behavior that threatened or didn't meet needs. Repair rests on the assumption that you seek connection.

With this as your definition there are a few key elements to consider:

1. Questions: The questions you ask direct your attention. Repair questions might sound like the following:

What was the impact of my behavior on another and the impact of another's behavior on me?

What needs was the behavior in question trying to meet?

What feelings are present?

What needs are unmet?

What different actions by me or the other person would meet needs in future similar situations?

2. Empathy: Giving and receiving empathy is an essential part of repair. You come to the repair dialogue with a willingness to fully honor and understand the other person's experience, regardless of how different it is from your own.

3. Accountability: Accountability is another essential part of repair. Accountability means a willingness to identify the needs that went unmet due to your behavior and a commitment to do something different in a future similar situation. This commitment includes specific and do-able actions.

4. Responsibility: Both people are responsible for re-connecting and maintaining connection. Regardless of who did what, each person is responsible for finding their way back to connection. Your partner may make every effort to repair, but they can't be responsible for you opening your heart to reconnecting.

5. Tolerating Discomfort: Repair isn't instantaneous, it occurs little by little as connection is built and trust is earned through new behaviors. True repair occurs in the experiences of connection and trust building over time. This means you will want to find a way to be present with the pain and discomfort of what happened for as long as it takes to heal rather than pushing for a quick fix, or what you hope would be a quick fix.

TRAGIC MODELS OF REPAIR

In models of repair that are not meant to create connection, wrong and right, blame and shame are the means through which behavior is sorted. As such, you find yourself arguing over the details of what happened or gathering evidence to prove that you are in the right and the other is in the wrong. Concepts like forgiveness are about restoring another's goodness rather than movement toward healing and understanding. Accountability means admitting you're wrong, but doesn't require you to learn a new way forward for next time.

HOW REPAIR GETS DERAILED

If you are making a whole-hearted attempt to reconnect and still not creating repair, here are some places to check in with.

Insecurity: To the extent that you are unsure about the validity of your own feelings and needs you will tend to shame, blame, analyze, minimize, dismiss, criticize, defend, use "should's", and compare. You may need empathy from someone outside of the situation in order to access a sense of honor for your own feelings and needs.

Reactivity: Holding onto your story of who someone is based on past events to such a degree that you cannot take in new information in the present is a form of reactivity. Perceiving threat when none is present is another form of reactivity. When you are unable to separate past painful events from the present moment painful events, or movement toward healing in the present, you are stuck in reactivity. You may need to create a greater sense of safety in the interaction before you can proceed without reactivity.

Fear of Disharmony: When fear of disharmony is deciding for you, you likely don't trust that repair is possible. You then choose to ignore disconnecting interactions and allow disconnect and resentment to grow. This leaves you disconnected from your own feelings and needs and those in another. Repair is very difficult to create from this disconnected place. You may need more support before you can approach repair in a self-connected way.

Lack of Skill: When there is a lack of skill, you have good intentions, but don't know how to create repair without falling into the old model of blame and shame. You may need learning and practice to integrate new skills.

ROLES IN REPAIR

Traditionally repair was done by finding out who did what wrong and then asking them to apologize. When you try to replace this with NVC language by saying who's behavior didn't meet what needs, you may create a slippery slope to using a new framework to

enact the same old patterns. What's more helpful is to immediately acknowledge that both people are responsible for tending to the needs present in any given moment, you are both initiators of action and receivers of action. Therefore each of you would consider the roles of initiator and receiver and reflect on the tasks of that role:

As initiator your behavior is the trigger for disconnect or has not met needs. Your work is to notice and have empathy for the impact on the other person while maintaining compassion for yourself. Your work is to also find a different way to meet your needs so that the behavior won't occur again and you have a plan to take responsibility for it if it does.

As receiver of a triggering behavior or behavior that doesn't meet needs, your work is to be present to your feelings and needs and any reactivity, while giving the other person the benefit of the doubt. Your work is also to be open to receiving empathy (empathy might first be from someone outside the situation) and requesting that which allows you to reconnect.

If all this sounds like a long and over complicated process, it may be most helpful to remember the essential principles of effective repair: take full responsibility for your own feelings, needs, and actions, find a way to empathy for yourself and the other person, and get support if repair is inaccessible.

Practice

Take a moment to reflect on things that derail repair. Which of these are you most likely to encounter in yourself? What would you like to do or ask for to help with this for the next repair dialogue you have?

Self-Worth, Forgiveness, & Repair

LaShelle Charde's Connection Gem of the Week

When you realize you have done something that didn't meet the needs of others, there is a natural feeling of regret, feeling sorry for the effects of your actions. To the extent that you can allow yourself to mourn the needs unmet by your actions, is the extent to which you can learn from the experience and move forward doing something different.

Creating real repair with someone and being able to behave differently in the future can get blocked by the view that your behavior and the reactions of others is an indicator of your self-worth. From this view, you have thoughts that you are bad, worthless, a failure, unlovable and that your terrible behavior is proof of it. This creates a cycle of violence both within you and in your relationships with others.

For you, it creates a sense of shakiness and vulnerability that can result in defensiveness and quick anger. If anything you do can lessen your self-worth, then it follows that any little bit of negative feedback from others is also a potential threat to your worth. Being in the trance that your worth is not innate but rather depends on your behavior or the judgement of others, is a sort of hell realm that gives rise to a repetitive cycle of guilt, shame, depression and anger. From this place you can't access compassion for yourself or for the person whose needs you didn't meet with your behavior. This blocks healing in the relationship.

Being disconnected from your innate worth, you may put the other person in the position of the one who can restore your Goodness. "Please forgive me", becomes "please restore my goodness". This puts the other person in a tricky position. They may feel compelled to say "yes, I forgive you" in order to superficially meet a need to restore harmony. Also, they may have a voice in their head that pushes them to "forgive" to be in accord with the ideal of a compassionate person. In doing this however, needs for authenticity, empathy, clarity, healing, and true harmony are often at cost.

If there is already a dynamic in the relationship in which guilt tripping and demands are used to meet needs, asking the other to forgive you contributes to this dynamic. It feeds the dance of "power over/power under".

Forgiveness in the framework of Nonviolent Communication (NVC) is about creating a quality of connection that gives rise to a natural giving from the heart.

When you are grounded in a confidence that life energy is inherently good (and you

are a manifestation of life energy), and you can name critical thoughts as just thoughts rather than Truth, you can see your behavior differently. You don't get lost in a swirl of guilt, shame, and self-judgment ("self-attachment" as we might say in Buddhism). Grounded in your inherent goodness, you can engage in self-empathy. You can reflect on the thoughts, feelings, and needs you had at the time with compassion for the past you who did the best s/he could. You can grieve the needs not met and feel compassion for the person you affected. This is the road to true repair.

Here is an example of a mistake I made around an agreement with my partner. I had critical voices that said, "You failed!" I could feel reactivity from my critical voices arising. It would have been easy to fall into the trap of asking for forgiveness. Because of my critical voices, I couldn't immediately go to empathy for my partner, but I did avoid the "please forgive me" dynamic. Here's how forgiveness from a NVC perspective sounded in this situation:

Initial Dialogue (in the morning)

Me: I have scheduled clients and won't work with you this afternoon as we talked about, can we do it Thursday?

Partner: (A look of irritation in his face). That doesn't work for me. I rearranged the truck rental according to what we talked about.

Me: I feel disappointed because I want to honor our agreements.

Partner: It looks like we didn't communicate clearly enough.

Me: I feel touched by your willingness to arrange your day to work with me, that caring means a lot to me. Maybe I can shift some things.

Partner: I am okay with it. No worries.

Second Dialogue (internal, self-compassion)

Me to Me: What happened? How did I make that mistake?

I am only two days into my new schedule and I didn't yet have clarity about how it all works. I was juggling several needs at once. I am putting energy into making this change and it takes time for this transition to happen fully. It's understandable that I made this mistake.

Third Dialogue (with my partner later in the day)

Me: Babe, I am guessing that my scheduling mistake today was frustrating for you and did not meet your needs for consideration, teamwork, trust, and predictability. Is that right?

Partner: Yea, I plan my day carefully so there is a sense of flow and efficiency and I also like doing projects with you.

Me: Yea. I so regret that my mistake interfered with meeting those needs. Is there more there for you? (pause to see if there is more he wants to express).

Me: I want you to know that I want to support those needs being met for you and I am committed to writing what we plan together in my calendar to help do that. I wonder if there is anything else you would like to request to meet those needs?

Partner: Just if you can let me know where you are holding things – as a maybe or solid commitment.

Me: I can do that.

In this dialogue you see the four basic elements of repair:

1. Self-empathy
2. Empathy for the other person
3. Honest expression of regret about how your behavior didn't meet needs
4. A plan of action about what you will do differently in a future similar situation.

Practice

This week as you make mistakes and things don't go as planned, pause to breathe several times a day and remind yourself of the needs you are trying to meet, the good intentions you have. Giving more attention to intentions keeps the outer world from crowding in on you and popping you into a trance of wobbly self-worth. You are born worthy not different from the dog looking up at you, the birds singing in the morning, and the trees standing outside in their majesty.

Building Trust with Attunement & Repair
LaShelle Charde's Connection Gem of the Week

According to research, couples who maintain long term healthy relationships consistently attune to each other and repair disconnect when it occurs. Attunement, in this context, can be described in a number of ways. When you and your partner are in attunement, you consistently acknowledge each other's experience with some form of verbal or nonverbal expression. Attuning might include a simple "uh-huh", eye contact and a smile, affectionate touch, noticing a physical detail (like a new haircut), a question about or verbal reflection of what was said, a guess at feelings and needs, and/or an emotional / energetic resonance with your partner's state.

You and your partner's ability to attune with each other, allows you to feel a secure sense of bond. This in turn engenders an easy acceptance of differences in which you both have space to be authentic and to follow your unique interests without it being perceived as a threat to the relationship.

Even though you are committed to being attuned to each other, attunement failures are bound to happen. For example, imagine you have had a stressful day at work and you and your partner are on an evening walk. She begins to share something vulnerable about herself and you are suddenly distracted by your dislike of a construction project in your neighborhood and start talking about it. For your partner (if she is attuned to her own experience), there is likely a sense of hurt, loneliness, or jolt in that moment. If either of you ignore this attunement failure, no matter how small you might say it is, trust begins to erode in your relationship.

Being able to repair small or large attunement failures, on the other hand, builds trust. Over time you begin to trust that neither of you

has to be perfect for the relationship to work. You trust that one or both of you are committed to seeking repair when disconnect happens.

Repair in the example above might sound like this: "Hey, I just got distracted and cut you off. I'm sorry. Hearing you is important to me. I'm listening, would you be willing to try again?"* Just like attunement, repair can take many forms. It might look like a few seconds of a warm smile, an acknowledgement of grumpiness, an expression of appreciation, an hour of empathy and honest expression, physical intimacy, etc.

If you are not repairing with your partner several times a week, it likely means that you are not catching attunement failures as they happen. You can help yourself become more aware of attunement by simply asking your partner what contributes to a sense of attunement for her and sharing the same for yourself.

Practice

This week, pay special attention to how you are already attempting to attune with your partner. Are you offering verbal reflection, curiosity, anticipating a need of hers, guessing a feeling? What else?

LaShelle Charde's Connection Gem of the Week www.wiseheartpdx.org