



An Introduction to Nonviolent Communicationsm (NVC)

A Language of Compassion Rather Than Domination

Nonviolent Communicationsm (NVC), developed by Marshall Rosenberg, guides us to reframe how we express ourselves, how we hear others and resolve conflicts by focusing our consciousness on what we are observing, feeling, needing, and requesting. It is a tool that leads us toward a quality of connection among people where everyone's needs are valued and get met through compassionate giving—out of the joy of contributing to another human being.

The potency of NVC is in its pragmatic simplicity. In any moment, there are two ways to enhance connection & understanding: (1) vulnerably express our own feelings & needs, or (2) empathically listen to the feelings & needs of the other. These are radically different choices than we are accustomed to experience when we are in conflict: namely, fight, submit or flee.

While simple, NVC is often challenging to embody because we are so deeply conditioned to perceive each other through judgments. With practice, the tool of NVC helps us navigate within ourselves to transform blame & judgment--where neither our own needs nor those of the other person are likely to be met--into a mutual awareness of human needs.

Thinking & Language that Alienate Us from One Another

- Diagnoses, judgments, labels, analysis, criticism, comparisons, etc.
- Deserve thinking (i.e. that certain behaviors merit punishment or rewards)
- Demands (denial of other person's choice; intention to punish those who don't do it)
- Denial of choice or responsibility (had to, should, supposed to, they made me do it, etc.)

Purpose of NVC

- To inspire compassionate, heartfelt connection so that all needs may be valued
- To connect to the life in ourselves and others
- To be inspired and to inspire others to give from the heart

"In every moment, each of us is trying to meet our needs in the best way we know how." ~ Marshall Rosenberg

Background of NVC

- Developed by Marshall Rosenberg during the Civil Rights era; influenced by Carl Rogers
- Center for Nonviolent Communication: web: www.cnvc.org, email: cnvc@cnvc.org, phone: 1-818-957-9393

"Judgments & violence are tragic expressions of unmet needs." ~ Marshall Rosenberg

What NVC is not ...

NVC is not about being nice; it's about being real. It's not about stifling intensity, but transforming it.

NVC is not about changing other people or getting them to do what we want. It's about creating connection & understanding.

NVC is not a technique or formula. It's a process that helps guide our consciousness to a new awareness.

4 Components of an NVC Expression

1. OBSERVATION

(free of judgments, labels, diagnoses, opinions, etc.)

“When I see/hear/notice...”

2. FEELING (free of thoughts)

Examples of feelings when needs ARE met:

Affectionate	Confident	Engaged
Excited	Exhilarated	Grateful
Inspired	Hopeful	Exuberant
Joyful	Calm	Refreshed

“... I feel ...”

Examples of feelings when needs are NOT met:

Annoyed	Angry	Disgusted
Uneasy	Detached	Tense
Embarrassed	Tired	Sad
Vulnerable	Scared	Pain

3. NEED (universal human needs free of strategies)

Examples:

Beauty	Autonomy	Empathy
Mourning	Honesty	Love
Meaning	Safety	Respect
Community	Contribution	Mutuality
Authenticity	Transparency	Acceptance
To be valued	Play	Support

“... because I need/value ...”

4. REQUEST (free of demands)

“Would you be willing to ...?”

2 Ways of Moving Toward Connection

1. *Honestly express* your own feelings & needs

- Ongoing awareness of feelings & connected needs in present moment
- Willingness & courage to express those feelings & needs (vulnerability)

Example: “When I see you read the newspaper while I’m talking, I feel frustrated because I’m wanting to be heard. Would you be willing to close the newspaper for 5 minutes and hear my idea?”

2. *Empathically listen* to other’s feelings & needs

- Qualities of empathic listening: presence, focus, space, caring, verbal reflection of feelings & needs
- NOT advising, fixing, consoling, story-telling, sympathizing, analyzing, explaining, ...
- No matter what is said, hear only feelings, needs, observations & requests

Are you feeling ... because you need ...?