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Conflict & Communication Mastery

# Empathic Communication

A language for connecting with others, self, and life

Based on Dr. Marshall Rosenberg's Nonviolent Communication

"Out beyond ideas of wrong-doing and right-doing, there is a field. I'll meet you there." —Rumi

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Empathic Communication (NVC) is the language of our intention to connect with the humanness and aliveness in others and ourselves. This quality of connection awakens compassion and the desire to contribute to one another's well being. NVC offers concrete tools to connect—to reside in Rumi's field.

## Hear Empathically

Hearing how others are, regardless of the words and actions they use to express their truth.

# H e a r t a l k

## Talk Honestly

Expressing how I am without blame, criticism, or judgment, so others are likely to hear my truth.

- 1. Observations** (without evaluation)  
concrete actions I am observing (seeing, hearing, remembering, or imagining)
- 2. Feelings** (not thoughts, assumptions, or interpretations)  
making myself vulnerable by sharing how I am feeling in relation to my observations
- 3. Needs** universal needs, core values, deepest longings, and highest hopes (not strategies)  
focusing on what's most important to me, and why I am feeling as I am
- 4. Requests** (without demand)  
clearly requesting the concrete actions I would like taken to enrich my life

Empathy		Honesty
1. "When you (see, hear, imagine)...	< <b>observation</b> >	1. "When I (see, hear, imagine)..."
2. are you feeling...	< <b>feeling</b> >	2. I feel...
3. because you (need, hope, value)...	< <b>need</b> >	3. because I (need, hope, value)...
return to #2; only go to #4 after needs are heard		immediately go to #4
4. Now would you like..."	< <b>request</b> >	4. Would you be willing to..."

Although feelings are stimulated by what happens to us, they are actually caused by our beliefs, assumptions, and thoughts, Feelings are messengers serving us by calling attention to our needs, connecting us to life. When speaking take responsibility for your feelings.

**KEY POINT** → Take Responsibility: "I feel \_\_\_ because I need \_\_\_." (Not: "I feel \_\_\_ because you did something.")

4 D's of Disconnection	4 R's of Reconnection
<b>Diagnosing</b> , analyzing, criticizing, categorizing, or judging others or oneself as good or bad—inducing shame	<b>Respecting</b> others and self; knowing we all behave as we do in order to meet our common basic needs
<b>Denying choice</b> , blaming others for causing our feelings, obscuring choice by saying "I had to.."—inducing guilt	<b>Responsibility taking</b> for our own actions, beliefs, feelings, assumptions, and thoughts
<b>Demanding</b> , threatening, bribing—inducing fear	<b>Requesting</b> , only wanting a "yes" if it is heart felt
<b>Deserve thinking</b> that justifies punishment and reward (figuring out who is right or wrong and what they deserve)	<b>Remembering</b> that we all are interdependent (our wellbeing is connected to everyone's well being)

# Feelings

GLAD	MAD	SAD	SCARED
adventurous	agitated	bored	afraid
affectionate	angry	depressed	anxious
calm	annoyed	despairing	cautious
cheerful	appalled	disappointed	concerned
comfortable	bitter	discouraged	insecure
confident	cranky	dismayed	jittery
curious	disgusted	exhausted	nervous
delighted	enraged	gloomy	overwhelmed
eager	frustrated	grief	panicky
ecstatic	furious	helpless	reluctant
encouraged	impatient	hopeless	terrified
engrossed	indignant	hurt	worried
excited	infuriated	indifferent	
fascinated	irritated	lonely	<b>BAD</b>
friendly	resentful	melancholic	apathetic
giddy	upset	troubled	ashamed
grateful			bewildered
happy	<b>FAUX FEELINGS</b>		confused
intrigued	Judgements masquerading as feelings		disturbed
moved			dubious
peaceful			embarrassed
playful			guilty
proud	<i>abandoned</i>	<i>manipulated</i>	lethargic
refreshed	<i>abused</i>	<i>neglected</i>	puzzled
relaxed	<i>attacked</i>	<i>patronize</i>	restless
relieved	<i>betrayed</i>	<i>rejected</i>	shocked
satisfied	<i>bullied</i>	<i>rushed</i>	stressed
stimulated	<i>ignored</i>	<i>smart</i>	tired
thrilled	<i>inadequate</i>	<i>stupid</i>	torn
touched	<i>invisible</i>	<i>unappreciated</i>	weary
	<i>left out</i>	<i>worthless</i>	

# Requests

A request is a bridge to connecting. A “no” following a request is not a rejection, but rather, an invitation to learn what is of value to the other person, to connect.

## Action Requests

- Do-able (observable behavior)
- Specific (specify who and what)
- Positive (what you do want, not what you don't want)
- Present (can be done now, e.g. “would you be willing to agree to...”)

## Connecting Requests

1. “Would you be willing to tell me how you feel having heard that?”
2. “Would you be willing to say back what you heard me say?”

# Needs



## Universal Needs, Values, Longings, Hopes

All human behavior is for the purpose of meeting needs. In NVC needs are understood to be universal (we all have the same needs). Needs make no reference to a specific person, action, or thing. Our needs connect us with what we value in life. Our feelings tell us whether or not our needs are met. To express our needs is to offer the gift of connection to life.

When persons fear they won't get their needs met, they often act in ways that preclude those or other needs from being met. Behind each action based on fear there is a need, desire, yearning, intention, or hope based on love. If we don't like some behavior in ourselves or others, recognizing the universal needs and values behind the action can foster compassion and generate solutions.

## Four Basic Groups of Needs

**Security—be safe** (survival): strength, food, rest, energy, ease, warmth, power, efficacy, movement, harmony:  
**PEACE**

**Autonomy—be real** (self esteem): freedom, authenticity, choice, integrity, creativity, learning, honesty, challenge, space, self expression, clarity, growth, wisdom: **TRUTH**

**Community—belong** (social): kindness, respect, nurturance, compassion, intimacy, support, appreciation, consideration, cooperation, exchange, care, acceptance, empathy: **LOVE**

**Possibility—be happy** (spiritual): aliveness, play, beauty, contribution, meaning, purpose, unity, connection with life, celebration, inspiration, transformation, fun: **JOY**