

# Can we talk?

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CAN WE TALK? - Effective organization through meaningful interpersonal connection

Power struggles, hurt feelings, wasted time. Sound familiar? Well-intentioned boards or committees can be brought to a standstill -- or worse, friendships destroyed -- because of the challenge of working with others. We can choose better outcomes. Introduce yourself to a technique for communicating with a focus on empathy and connection that will make your meetings more effective (and all relationships more enjoyable).

## Nonviolent Communication (NVC)

*Communication is what the listener does.*

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These materials available at:

[https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/18155656/NVC/SWROC\\_Session7\\_ErikErhardt\\_CanWeTalk\\_NVC.pdf](https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/18155656/NVC/SWROC_Session7_ErikErhardt_CanWeTalk_NVC.pdf)

## Introduction

Nonviolent Communication is a giving and receiving of messages that centers on two very important questions:

1. What's alive in us? and
2. What can we do to make life more wonderful?

It requires great honesty and openness, developing a certain literacy of expressions, and overcoming deeply ingrained learning that emphasizes judgment, fear, obligation, duty, punishment and reward, and shame.

Everything we do is in service of our needs.

This intention is to create the quality of connection with other people and oneself that allows compassionate giving to take place.

We are giving service to others and ourselves –not out of duty or obligation, not out of fear of punishment or hope for a reward, not out of guilt or shame, but for what I consider part of our nature. It's in our nature to enjoy giving to one another.

NVC guides us in reframing how we express ourselves and hear others. Instead of being habitual, automatic reactions, our words become conscious responses based firmly on an awareness of what we are perceiving, feeling and wanting. We are led to express ourselves with honesty and clarity, while simultaneously paying others a respectful and empathic attention. In any exchange we come to hear our own deeper needs and those of others.

## The NVC Process

*Observation, feeling, need, request*

### Four+1 components of NVC

1. **Observe** the situation *without evaluating or judging*.  
A pure observation is without comparison to the past.
2. Identify a **feeling**.  
Feelings are always related to your body, and never involve others.
3. Identify your **need** or desire.  
A psychic or basic need is always about oneself, not about another, and is always a basic human quality.
4. Formulating a **request**.  
Phrase a specific request positively, speaking kindly, but firmly and clearly, without unnecessary emotion such as sarcasm.
5. Obtain **feedback** on everything you have done so far.  
"Am I on the right track with this conversation?" or "Time out. How are we doing resolving this issue?"

### Example, NVC process

“Felix, when I (1) see socks under the coffee table I (2) feel irritated because I am needing (3) more order in the room that we share in common.

(4) Would you be willing to put your socks in your room or in the washing machine?

[If the response lacks clarity or seems disconnected, then request feedback.]

(5) So I know that you understood me, would you tell me what you heard me say?”

### Two parts of NVC

1. **Expressing honesty** through the four components
2. **Receiving emphatically** through the four components

## Communication that blocks compassion

(life-alienating communication)

*In the world of judgments, our concern on WHO “IS” WHAT.*

### Four D's of Disconnection

1. Diagnosis (judgment, analysis, criticism, comparison)
2. Denial of Responsibility
3. Demand
4. 'Deserve' oriented language

### Diagnosis, judgments, analysis, criticism, comparisons

Blame, insults, put-downs (critical remark), labels, criticism, comparisons, and diagnoses are all forms of judgment.

When we judge, as a result, we *increase defensiveness and resistance from others*. If they do agree to act in harmony with our values because they concur with our analysis of their wrongness, they will likely do so out of *fear, guilt, or shame*.

### Examples

- “The problem with you is that you’re too selfish.”
- “She is lazy.”
- “It is wrong.”
- “If you don’t help me I won’t lend it to you.” (demand with punishment)
- “It is going to be a shame if you don’t show up.” (demand with blame)
- “Why can’t you be like your brother?” (comparison)
- “You are so stupid.” (labeling and insult)
- “You are so intelligent.” (positive labeling)

### Denial of responsibility

We are each responsible for our own thoughts, feelings, and actions. The phrase “You make me feel guilty” is an example of how language facilitates the denial of personal responsibility for our own feelings and thoughts.

### Examples

- “I cleaned my room because *I had to.*” – impersonal forces.
- “I drink because *I am alcoholic.*” – diagnosis or psychological history.
- “I hit my child because *he ran into the street.*” – action of others.
- “I lied because *my boss told me to.*” – dictates of authority.
- “I start smoking because *all my friends did.*” – group pressure.
- “I have to suspend you because *it is the school policy.*” – institutional policies rules, and regulations.
- “I do it because *I am a husband and a father.*” – gender, social, or age roles.

Replace “I have to” with “I choose to”, and “I should” with “I might”.

### Communicating our desires as demands

A demand explicitly or implicitly threatens listeners with *blame or punishment* if they fail to comply. It is a common form of communication in our culture, especially among those who hold position of authority.

### Examples

- “*You have to* attend school until you’re 16.” – demand language
- “*We’d like you to* attend school until you’re 16 because we value a solid education.” – without demand

### Deserve reward and deserve punishment

Life-alienating communication is also associated with the concept that *certain actions merit reward while others merit punishment.*

### Examples

- “He deserves to be punished for what he did.” – It assumes “badness” and calls for punishment to make them repent and change their behavior. It is in everyone’s interest that people change, not in order to avoid punishment, but because they see the change as benefiting themselves.
- “People who hurt others deserve to be punished.” – deserve oriented language
- “I’d like to see people who hurt others be given the opportunity to make amends for harm they caused because I value healing and restoration of trust.” – NVC

## Taking responsibility, how we choose to hear difficult messages

*We are each responsible for how we hear what other people are saying.*

### The four ears

The **giraffe** part of us sees two ways to connect in any moment.

Giraffe **ears in** senses our own feelings and needs.

Giraffe **ears out** senses the feelings and needs of the other person.

The giraffe is keenly aware of the choices she is making in every moment.

The **jackal** part of us uses judgements, criticism, and blaming to break connection.

Jackal **ears in** judges and criticizes oneself, submitting.

Jackal **ears out** judges and blaming the other person, attacking.

The jackal may not see choices, but often responds in a habitual or automatic manner.

### Example 1, choosing how to hear

*"You are the most self-centered person I've ever met."*

- Jackal in, choose to take it personally, and accept the other person's judgment and blame ourselves (guilt, shame, depression): "Oh, I should've been more sensitive!"
- Jackal out, blame the speaker (and feel anger): "You have not right to say that! I am always considering your needs, You're the one who is really self-centered."
- Giraffe in, shine the light of consciousness on our own feelings and needs: "When I hear you saying that I am the most self-centered person you've ever met, I feel hurt, because I need some recognition on my efforts to be considerate of your preferences."
- Giraffe out, shine the light of consciousness on the other person's feelings and needs as they are currently expressed: "Are you feeling hurt because you need more consideration for your preferences?"

### Example 2, choosing how to hear

*Person A: How dare you walk out of the room when I'm talking! You inconsiderate S.O.B.! You just can't stand to hear the truth.*

- Jackal out, Person B (blaming A): Me the S.O.B. ... how about you! You're the one who started all this in the first place. You are so self-righteous telling me I'm inconsiderate. You've never thought about another human being besides yourself!
- Jackal in, B (blaming himself): Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to be disrespectful. It's just that I don't know what to do. I never know what to do, or what to say. I feel so worthless!
- Giraffe in, B (sensing his own feelings/needs): When I hear you say that, I feel hurt because I'm needing respect and to be seen for who I am. And I really need some space because I'm in a lot of pain right now... Would you be willing to tell me what you heard me just say?
- Giraffe out, B (sensing A's feelings/needs): Are you feeling angry and wanting respect and to be heard? ...

### Example 3, choosing how to hear

[Mother has a 1-1/2 hour coffee with a friend... her first time away from the children in 3 days.]

*6-Year-Old: Mama I don't want you to go! What could be more important than being with me?!*

(tugging at her leg, crying loudly)

- Jackal out, M (blaming child): Let go of my leg! And be quiet! You've got no reason to cry ... I've been with you all day. You always make this so hard! ... when all I want to do is have a few minutes to myself!
- Jackal in, M (blaming herself): Oh, my gosh, I've really upset you! Why do I always do this?! ... Why am I so selfish? ... I'm such an awful mother.
- Giraffe in, M (sensing her own feelings/needs): Honey, I'm really feeling exhausted and needing to just have some personal time to connect with my good friend, Betty. Would you be willing to let Mary (the babysitter) hold you? ...
- Giraffe out, M (sensing her child's feelings/needs): Are you feeling sad and wanting to be held? ... Are you feeling hurt and needing to know that you are loved? ...

## Being motivated out of guilt

The basic mechanism of motivating by guilt is to attribute the responsibility for one's own feelings to others.

### Example

"It hurts Mommy and Daddy when you get poor grades at school."

The parents are implying that the child's actions are the cause of their happiness or unhappiness. On the surface, *feeling responsible for the feelings of others can easily be mistaken for positive caring*. It appears that the child cares for the parent and feels bad because the parent is suffering. However, if children who assume this kind of responsibility *change their behavior* in accordance to parental wishes, they are not acting from the heart, but acting *to avoid guilt*.

## Denial of responsibility

In each of these instances, we can deepen our awareness of our own responsibility by substituting the phrase: "I feel ... because I ..."

### 1. Denial of responsibility by using impersonal pronouns:

- "It really infuriates me when spelling mistakes appear in our public brochures."
- "I feel infuriated when spelling mistakes like that appear in our public brochures, because I want our company to project a professional image." - NVC
- "That bugs me a lot." – denial responsibility
- "Little things people say sometimes hurt me." – denial responsibility
- "Sometimes when people say little things, I feel hurt because I want to be appreciated, not criticized." – NVC

### 2. Denial of responsibility by mention only the actions of others:

- "When you don't call me on my birthday, I feel hurt."
- "Mommy is disappointed when you don't finish your food."
- "Mommy feels disappointed when you don't finish your food, because I want you to grow up strong and healthy." - NVC
- "You irritate me when you leave company documents on the conference room floor."
- "I'm irritated when you leave company documents on the conference floor, because I want our documents to be safely stored and accessible." – NVC
- "I feel frustrated when you come late."
- "I feel frustrated when you come late, because I was hoping we'd be able to get some front-row seats." – NVC
- "I feel happy that you received that award." – positive Denial resp.
- "When you received that award, I felt happy because I was hoping you'd be recognized for all the work you'd put into the project." – NVC

### 3. Denial of responsibility by "I feel ... because you":

- "I feel hurt because you don't love me."
- "I feel angry because the supervisor broke her promise."
- "I feel angry when the supervisor broke her promise, because I was counting on getting that long weekend to visit my brother." - NVC

- “I feel disappointed because you said you would do it and you didn’t.”
- “When you said you’d do it and then didn’t, I feel disappointed because I want to be able to rely upon your words.” – NVC

## Observing without evaluating

One specific thing that a person did is what I call an **observation**. What do people do that we either like or don’t like?

We want to communicate the behavior *without mixing in a diagnosis, judgment, or evaluation*.

### Examples

- “John was *angry* with me yesterday *for no reason*.” – evaluation
- “John told me he was angry” - observation
- “John pounded his fist on the table” - observation
- “My father is a *good man*.” – evaluation
- “For the last 25 years my father has given one tenth of his salary to charity.” - observation
- “Janice work *too much*.” – evaluation
- “Janice spent over 60 hours at the office this week.” - observation
- “Henry is *aggressive*.” – evaluation
- “Henry hit his sister when she switched the television channel.” - observation
- “You are a *responsible child*.” – evaluation (positive labeling)
- “You are *too generous*.” – evaluation (positive labeling)
- “When I see you doing that I think you being too generous” - NVC
- “You *are going to fall*” – evaluation (statement with no possibilities)
- “Be careful, *I fear* that you could fall” – NVC
- “He *is a poor soccer player*” – evaluation (negative label)
- “He has not scored a goal in 20 games” – NVC (observation)

### Examples: exaggerations

- “My son *often* doesn’t brush his teeth.” – evaluation
- “Twice this week my son didn’t brush his teeth before going to bed.” - observation
- “Luke told me I didn’t look good in yellow.” - observation
- “Pam was first in line every day this week.” - observation
- “My aunt *complains* when I talk with her.” – evaluation
- “My aunt called me three times this week, and each time talked about people who treated her in ways she didn’t like.” - observation

- “My husband hardly express any affection.” - evaluation
- “My husband hasn’t kissed me for two weeks.” - observation
- “You are *arguing with me* for the fourth time this week.” - evaluation
- “This is the fourth time this week that you stated you disagree with something I’m saying.” - observation
- “They are *destroying* the environment.” – evaluation
- “They have cut over 90% of this territory, and are still continuing.” – observation
- “The doctor *refuses to explain* anything to me.” - evaluation
- “The doctor did not say anything to me about what causes the pain or what can be done.” – observation

## Identifying and expressing feelings

To say clearly what’s alive in us at any given moment we have to be clear about what we feel and what we need. Let’s start with the feelings.

### Example

One student in the university I was working with wanted to work on his roommate.

*Friend:* “Ok, what is the behavior that your roommate does that you don’t like?”

*Student:* “He plays the radio late at night when I am trying to sleep.”

*Friend:* “Ok, now tell me how do you feel when he does that?”

*Student:* “I feel it is wrong.”

*Friend:* “I am not making clear then what I mean by feelings. ‘It’s wrong’ is what I would call a judgment of the other person. I’m asking you how you feel. What emotions do you feel? How do you feel?”

*Student:* “Well, I think that when a person is so insensitive to other people, it ’s evidence of a personality disturbance.”

*Friend:* “Hold it, hold it. You’re still up in your head analyzing his wrongness. I’m asking, go into your heart, just listen to your body for a moment. How do you feel when he plays the radio late at night?”

*Student:* “I feel pissed off.”

*Friend:* “Ok, there are other ways of saying it, but that is Ok.”

Feelings can be used in a destructive way if we try to imply that other people’s behavior are the cause of our feelings. **The cause of our feelings** is not other people’s behavior, it **is our needs**. It’s not what other people do that can hurt you: it’s how you take it.

### Example, destructive, guilt-inducing use of feelings

- “It hurts me when you don’t clean up your room.”
- “You make me angry when you hit your brother.”

## Feelings versus non-feelings

NVC distinguish the expressions of actual feelings from words and statements that describe thoughts, opinion, assessments, and interpretations.

### 1. Distinguish feelings from thoughts (opinion, interpretations).

- “I *feel* that you should know better.” – thought (“I *think*...”)
- “I *feel* *frustrated*.” – feeling
- “I *feel* it is useless.” – thought (“I *think*...”)
- “I *feel* *scared* when you say that” – feeling
- “I *feel* you don’t love me.” – opinion (“I *think*...”)
- “I am *sad* that you’re living” – feeling
- “I *feel* you are annoying me on purpose.” – opinion (“I *think*...”)
- “I am *upset* because I think you are annoying me purpose.” – feeling
- “I *feel* I am being unkind to them.” – opinion (“I *think*...”)
- “I *feel* *regret* around how I am behaving towards them.” – feeling

### 2. Distinguish between words that express feelings and those that describe what we think we are (self opinion).

- “I *feel* *inadequate* as a guitar player.” – opinion of my ability
- “I *feel* (*disappointed, impatient, frustrated*) with myself as a guitar player.” - feelings

### 3. Differentiate between words that express feelings and those that describe how we think others are evaluating us. (opinion).

- “I *feel* *unimportant* to the people with whom I work.” – how I think other are evaluating me.

### 4. Differentiate between words that express feelings and those that describe how we *think others* are behaving towards (or around) us.

- “I *feel* *misunderstood*.” – my opinion about the other person level of understanding.
- “I *feel* *ignored*.” – again it is an interpretation of the action of others rather than a clear statement of how we are feeling.
- “When you don’t greet me, I *feel* *neglected*.” – interpretation
- “When you don’t greet me at the door, I *feel* *lonely*.” - feeling

## Interpretations we confuse with feelings

(see the "Jackal list" on the back of the Needs and Feelings Inventory handout)  
abandoned, abused, attacked, belittled, betrayed, blamed, ..., violated, wronged

### Examples

- “I am *happy* that you can come.” – feeling
- “I *feel* *disturbed*” - feeling
- “I *feel* *like hitting you*” - opinion
- “I’d be *angry* too if that had happened to me.” – interpretation
- “I *feel* *concerned* that this happened to you. I would have been angry if it had been me.” – feeling
- “You are *wearing me out*.” – opinion (denial of responsibility)
- “I *feel* *exhausted*.” – feeling

## Feelings when our needs are satisfied

(see the Needs and Feelings Inventory handout)

affectionate, confident, engaged, inspired, excited, exhilarated, grateful, hopeful, joyful, peaceful, refreshed

## Feelings when our needs not are satisfied

(see the Needs and Feelings Inventory handout)

afraid, annoyed, angry, aversion, confused, disconnected, disquiet, embarrassed, fatigue, pain, sad, tense, vulnerable, yearning

## The needs at the root of our feelings

It is when people see the needs of another person that it stimulates their enjoyment of giving – because we can identify with needs. All humans have the same basic needs.

Interpretations, criticisms, diagnoses, and judgments of others are actually alienated expressions of our unmet needs.

When people begin talking about what they need rather than what's wrong with one another, the possibility of finding ways to meet everybody's needs is greatly increased.

## From emotional slavery to emotional liberation

1. Emotional slavery – we believe ourselves responsible for the feelings of others.
2. Obnoxious – we feel angry; we no longer want to be responsible for others' feelings.
3. Emotional liberation – we respond to the needs of others out of compassion, never out of fear, guilt, or shame. We accept full responsibility for our own intentions and actions, but not for the feelings of others.

We are aware that we can never meet our own needs at the expense of others. Emotional liberation involves stating clearly what we need in a way that communicates we are equally concerned that the needs of the others be fulfilled.

## Examples

- “I feel angry when you say that, because I am wanting respect and I hear your words as an insult.” - NVC
- “I am sad that you won't be coming for dinner because I was hoping we could spend the evening together.” - NVC
- “I feel scared when you raise your voice.”
- “When you raise your voice, I feel scared because I'm telling myself someone might get hurt here, and I need to know that we're all safe.” - NVC
- “I am grateful that you offered me a ride because I was needing to get home before my children.” - NVC

## Some basic needs we all share

(see the Needs and Feelings Inventory handout)

autonomy, connection, honesty, meaning, peace, physical well-being, play

## Requesting that which would enrich life

What can be done to make life more wonderful? Make a *specific, clear request* in *positive action* language.

Focus on what we want to do rather than what went wrong.

### Examples

- “Please *do not shout* in this room.” – negative request
- “Please talk in low voice in this room.” - NVC
  
- “I want you to *stop drinking*.” – negative request
- “I want you to tell me what needs of yours are met by drinking, and to discuss with me other ways of meeting those needs.” – NVC
  
- “I want you to *understand* me.” – vague action
- “I want you to tell me what you heard me say.” – NVC
  
- “I’d like you to tell me one thing that I did that you appreciate.” – NVC
- “I would like you to drive in a *better way*” – vague action
- “I would like you to drive at or below the speed limit.” - NVC
  
- “I’d like you to *feel more confidence* in yourself.” – vague action
- “I’d like you to take a course in assertiveness training, which I believe would increase your self-confidence.” – NVC
  
- “I’d like you *to be honest* with me about yesterday’s meeting.” – vague action
- “I want you to tell me how you feel about what I did and what you’d like me to do differently.” – NVC
  
- “I’d like to *get to know you better*.” – vague action
- “I’d like you to tell me if you would be willing to meet for lunch once a week.” – NVC
  
- “I would like you to *show respect for my privacy*.” – vague action
- “I’d like you to agree to knock before you enter my office.” – NVC

### Making requests consciously

We are often not conscious of what we are requesting. It may not be clear to the listener what we want them to do when we simply express our feelings. Request unaccompanied by the

speaker's feelings and needs may sound like a demand. The clearer we are on what we want back from the other person, the more likely it is that our needs will be met.

## Asking for a reflection

To make sure the message we sent is the message that's received, ask the listener to reflect it back and express appreciation when your listener tries to meet your request for a reflection.

"I'm grateful to you for telling me what you heard. I can see that I didn't make myself as clear as I'd have liked so let me try again."

## Requests versus demands

Requests are received as demands when others believe they *will be blamed or punished if they do not comply*. When people hear us make a demand, they see only two options: submission or rebellion. Either way the person requesting is perceived as coercive, and the listener's capacity to respond compassionately to the request is diminished. The more people hear demands, the less they enjoy being around us.

The most powerful way to communicate that we are making a genuine request is to *empathize with people when they don't respond to the request*. If we are prepared to show an empathic understanding of what prevents someone from doing as we asked, then by definition, we have made a request, not a demand.

Is that a request or a demand?

- "I would like you to hang up your clothes when you are finished with them."

We don't know yet. What determines the difference between a request and a demand is how we treat people when they don't respond to our request.

Observe what the speaker does if the request is not complied with.

It's a demand if the speaker then criticizes or judges instead of empathizing.

- J - "I am lonely and would like you to spend the evening with me."
- L - "Jack, I'm really tired."
- J - "You know how lonely I am feeling. If you really loved me, you'd spend the evening with me." – demand (guilt trip)

In order for them to trust that it's a request, they need to know that they can disagree and be understood.

Anytime somebody does what we ask out of guilt, shame, duty, obligation, or fear of punishment, we're going to pay for it.

We can help others trust that we are requesting, not demanding, by indicating that we would only want the person to comply if he or she can do so *willingly*.

"*Would you be willing to set the table?*" rather than "*I would like you to set the table.*"

## Camouflaged demands

If our objective is to change people and their behavior or to get our way, then NVC is not an appropriate tool.

The purpose is to create a quality of connection that allows us to give to one another out of the joy of compassionate giving. It's not just to get what you want. If the other person senses that we have single-mindedness of purpose to get our request complied with, it changes the game. Then it turns our requests into camouflaged demands.

### Examples (observation, feeling, need and request)

- "Your dog just made a mess on my lawn."
- "When I see your dog leaving turds on the lawn, I feel upset. We have kids who play here and I want the yard to be safe, clean space for them. Would you be willing to use this plastic bag to remove the turds?"
- "Yelling obscenities isn't going to get you what you want."
- "When I hear you addressing me like that, I feel agitated because I need cooperation and a peaceful resolution of our differences. Are you willing to tell me what you are feeling and needing right now instead of what you think I am?"
- "By putting your money in mutual funds, you are just supporting guns and tobacco and sweat shops and all the things we're trying to change in this world."
- "When I hear you have put your money in mutual funds, I feel dejected because I'd like to see us put our resources into what we value, rather than to support guns, tobacco, and sweatshops. Would you be willing to tell me what you are feeling when you hear me say this?"
- "Hey kids, flashlights aren't toys. Don't waste batteries. They cost money."
- "When I see you kids playing with the flashlights under the blanket, I feel uneasy. I want these flashlights to last so they'll be available if we have an emergency. Would you be willing to put them away?"
- "But you told me two weeks ago that it would be fine if I were to take a long weekend this month."
- "When I hear you say 'no' to my taking a long weekend this month and then remember you saying two weeks ago that it would be fine, I feel frustrated and confused. I need more clarity and some reassurance that we are communicating accurately. Would you be willing to tell me what you just heard me say?"

Much more NVC at [cnvc.org](http://cnvc.org).

<b>NEEDS INVENTORY</b>		<b>FEELINGS INVENTORIES</b>			<i>WHEN YOUR NEEDS ARE NOT SATISFIED</i>			
CONNECTION	PLAY		EXCITED	PEACEFUL		CONFUSED	EMBARRASSED	SAD
acceptance	joy		amazed	calm		ambivalent	ashamed	depressed
affection	humor	<i>WHEN YOUR NEEDS ARE SATISFIED</i>	animated	clear headed		baffled	chagrined	dejected
appreciation	PHYSICAL		ardent	comfortable	AFRAID	bewildered	flustered	despair
belonging	WELL-BEING		aroused	centered	apprehensive	dazed	guilty	despondent
cooperation	air	AFFECTIONATE	astonished	content	dread	hesitant	mortified	disappointed
communication	food	compassionate	dazzled	equanimous	foreboding	lost	self-conscious	discouraged
closeness	movement/exercise	friendly	eager	fulfilled	frightened	mystified		disheartened
community	rest/sleep	loving	energetic	mellow	mistrustful	perplexed	FATIGUE	forlorn
companionship	sexual expression	open hearted	enthusiastic	quiet	panicked	puzzled	beat	gloomy
compassion	safety	sympathetic	giddy	relaxed	petrified	torn	burnt out	heavy hearted
consideration	shelter	tender	invigorated	relieved	scared		depleted	hopeless
consistency	touch	warm	lively	satisfied	suspicious	DISCONNECTED	exhausted	melancholy
empathy	water		passionate	serene	terrified	alienated	lethargic	unhappy
inclusion		CONFIDENT	surprised	still	wary	aloof	listless	wretched
intimacy	MEANING	empowered	vibrant	tranquil	worried	apathetic	sleepy	
love	awareness	open		trusting		bored	tired	TENSE
mutuality	celebration of life	open	EXHILARATED		ANNOYED	cold	weary	anxious
nurturing	challenge	proud	blissful	REFRESHED	aggravated	detached	worn out	cranky
respect/self-respect	clarity	safe	ecstatic	enlivened	dismayed	distant		distressed
safety	competence	secure	elated	rejuvenated	disgruntled	distracted	PAIN	distraught
security	consciousness	ENGAGED	enthralled	renewed	displeased	indifferent	agony	edgy
stability	contribution	absorbed	exuberant	rested	exasperated	numb	anguished	fidgety
support	creativity	alert	radiant	restored	frustrated	removed	bereaved	frazzled
to know and be known	discovery	curious	rapturous	revived	impatient	uninterested	devastated	irritable
to see and be seen	efficacy	engrossed	thrilled		irritated	withdrawn	grief	jittery
to understand and be understood	effectiveness	enchanted	GRATEFUL		irked		heartbroken	nervous
trust	growth	entranced	appreciative			DISQUIET	hurt	overwhelmed
warmth	hope	fascinated	moved		ANGRY	agitated	lonely	restless
	learning	interested	thankful		enraged	alarmed	miserable	stressed out
	mourning	intrigued	touched		furious	discombobulated	regretful	
	participation	intrigued			incensed	disconcerted	remorseful	VULNERABLE
	purpose	involved	HOPEFUL		indignant	disturbed		fragile
HONESTY	self-expression	spellbound	expectant		irate	perturbed		guarded
authenticity	stimulation	stimulated	expectant		livid	rattled		helpless
integrity	to matter	INSPIRED	encouraged		outraged	restless		insecure
presence	understanding	amazed	optimistic		resentful	shocked		leery
		awed				startled		reserved
PEACE	AUTONOMY	wonder	JOYFUL		AVERSION	surprised		sensitive
beauty	choice		amused		animosity	troubled		shaky
communion	freedom		delighted		appalled	turbulent		
ease	independence		glad		contempt	turmoil		YEARNING
equality	space		happy		disgusted	uncomfortable		envious
harmony	spontaneity		jubilant		dislike	uneasy		jealous
inspiration			pleased		hate	unnerved		longing
order			tickled		horrified	unsettled		nostalgic
					hostile	upset		pinning
					repulsed			wistful

**JUDGMENTS**  
(pseudo feelings)

*Jackal list*

Game:

1. Have one person read a judgment as a feeling: "I am feeling attacked."  
2. Have each remaining member of the group respond with a possible feeling word that might more clearly identify the person's feeling. "When you think you are being attacked, are you feeling scared?"  
\* Reflect the word back as a thought rather than as a feeling.  
*Careful:* If we put any emphasis on the word "think" it can sound sarcastic and/or judgmental.

abandoned  
abused  
attacked  
belittled  
betrayed  
blamed  
bullied  
caged/boxed in  
cheated  
coerced  
cornered  
criticized  
discounted  
disliked  
disrespected  
dumped on  
harassed  
hassled  
ignored  
insulted  
interrupted  
intimidated  
invalidated  
isolated  
left out  
let down  
manipulated  
mistrusted  
misunderstood  
neglected  
not accepted  
overpowered  
overworked  
patronized  
pressured  
put down  
rejected  
ripped off  
smothered  
taken for granted  
threatened  
trampled  
tricked  
unaccepted  
unappreciated  
unheard  
unloved

unseen  
unsupported  
unwanted  
used  
victimized  
violated  
wronged  
  
lazy  
invisible  
selfish  
good  
bad  
greedy  
irresponsible  
(your turn: try converting words from the needs list to judgment labels)

**Demands**  
should  
ought  
must  
have to

**Quotes**

Observe without introducing any judgment or evaluation.

Translate all self-judgments into self-empathy.

Interpretations, criticisms, diagnoses, and judgments of others are actually alienated expressions of our unmet needs.

The cause of anger lies in our thinking - in thoughts of blame and judgment.

**Four D's of Disconnection:**

1. Diagnosis (judgment, analysis, criticism, comparison)
2. Denial of Responsibility
3. Demand
4. 'Deserve' oriented language.

**Definitions**

*Judgments* = clues to feelings and/or needs

*Guilt/Anger/Depression/Shame (GADS)* = Feelings that are Clues to Judgments

*Most Feelings* = clues to needs

*Needs* = Impelling aspects of Life Energy

**Four+1 steps**

1. **Observe** the situation without evaluating or judging.  
*A pure observation is without comparison to the past.*
2. Identify a **feeling**.  
*Feelings are always related to your body, and never involve others.*
3. Identify your **need** or desire.  
*A psychic or basic need is always about oneself, not about another, and is always a basic human quality.*
4. Formulating a **request**.  
*Phrase a specific request positively, speaking kindly, but firmly and clearly, without unnecessary emotion such as sarcasm.*
5. Obtain **feedback** on everything you have done so far.  
*"Am I on the right track with this conversation?" or "Time out. How are we doing resolving this issue?"*

# How You Can Use the NVC Process



Clearly expressing  
how **I am**  
without blaming  
or criticizing

Empathically receiving  
how **you are**  
without hearing  
blame or criticism

## OBSERVATIONS

1. What I observe (*see, hear, remember, imagine, free from my evaluations*) that does or does not contribute to my well-being:

“When I (see, hear) . . . ”

1. What you observe (*see, hear, remember, imagine, free from your evaluations*) that does or does not contribute to your well-being:

“When you see/hear . . . ”

*(Sometimes unspoken when offering empathy)*

## FEELINGS

2. How I feel (*emotion or sensation rather than thought*) in relation to what I observe:

“I feel . . . ”

2. How you feel (*emotion or sensation rather than thought*) in relation to what you observe:

“You feel . . . ”

## NEEDS

3. What I need or value (*rather than a preference, or a specific action*) that causes my feelings:

“ . . . because I need/value . . . ”

3. What you need or value (*rather than a preference, or a specific action*) that causes your feelings:

“ . . . because you need/value . . . ”

Clearly requesting that  
which would enrich **my**  
life without demanding

Empathically receiving that  
which would enrich **your** life  
without hearing any demand

## REQUESTS

4. The concrete actions I would like taken:

“Would you be willing to . . . ?”

4. The concrete actions you would like taken:

“Would you like . . . ?”

*(Sometimes unspoken when offering empathy)*



## ATTENDEE NOTES:

In communication, what the receiver interprets is being put out by the “talker”.

See the first 4 paragraphs of the handout. The source is Marshall Rosenberg, Center for Non-violent Communication.

2 important questions:

1. What’s alive in you?
2. How can we improve that?

Good for men regarding feelings and needs

Feelings = needs met (+) or not (-)

Use the sheet for expressing needs in letters, emails

It’s not about judgment, etc.

The NVC process is a way to see what’s alive.

Observation, (clear observation) connects with Feelings connects with Needs (met or not met) connects with a Request (celebrate or mourn) connects with Feedback. Feedback = “Can you tell me what you heard me say?” so they hear you, not what they think you said.

Classes of disagreement, for example, from a group

Class 1 = no one understands

Class 2 = each can understand and express the other’s position

“What’s alive in us” seems so nice!

Judgment = who is what

“Loss of control” = denial of your own responsibility

Giraffe ears = hear what’s alive in others/ self

Jackal ears = judgment, etc. Put these away as much as possible.

Observation: Pack! animals attacking the one

Feelings

I feel misunderstood = opinion

Presenter did examples of identifying and expressing feelings that demonstrated well.