

Immersion in Nonviolent Communication

2023-24 Information Packet

Join the warmth of a learning community in the Immersion in NVC (aka “IN”), where we integrate the principles and practice of Nonviolent Communication, apply them to real-life situations, and uncover new ways to respond in place of old habits. Each year, the Immersion attracts a range of practitioners: those who are relatively new as well as more experienced students. Participants find great value in the continuity of the monthly meetings and the opportunity to learn and grow in a lively community. We laugh, share, mourn, and learn together. We practice specific NVC skills while emphasizing the intention behind the form, the heart behind the words. If you know enough about NVC to want to immerse yourself more deeply, ***we warmly invite you to join IN!***

The Immersion in Nonviolent Communication offers training to:

- Transform recurring conflicts
- Enhance your ability to support others
- Find more balance and clarity with your own “triggers” or reactions
- Make movement on areas in your life that seem stuck
- Deepen your capacity for listening and empathy
- Develop mediation skills
- Build community with those who share values of nonviolence

2023-24 Program Dates and Curriculum:

The Immersion Program officially begins with the [Living Peace Retreat](#), a four-day online retreat in August. It continues with eight monthly weekend workshops, taking place from September 2023 through April 2024. The program also includes empathy-partner relationships, a monthly Zoom coaching call with a lead trainer, and other ongoing practice opportunities.

NOTE: Registration for the Living Peace Retreat is separate. Not everyone who attends IN joins the retreat, and not everyone who attends the retreat goes on to join IN.

Program dates:

August 10 - 13: *Living Peace Retreat online 9-11a & 1-3p PT daily, plus optional empathy group*

8-month intensive weekend workshop dates: 9 - 11:30a PT and 2 - 4:30p PT, Topics may change

Sept 9, 10: *A Strong and Vital Heart: Empathy under Fire (Roxy & Oren)*
Oct 7, 8: *The Myth of Perfection: Self-acceptance & Growth (Roxy & Oren)*
Nov 4, 5: *Being Real When It Counts: Authenticity and Vulnerability (Oren)*
Dec 2, 3: *A Deeper Freedom: Power, Resources and Choice (Roxy)*
Jan 6, 7: *Multiple workshops on different topics with guest trainers**
Feb 3, 4: *Radical Responsibility: Giving and Receiving Without Shame (Oren)*
Mar 2, 3: *The Art of Mourning, Healing, and Reconciliation (Roxy)*
Apr 6, 7: *Bridging the Gap: Skills for Mediation (Roxy & Oren)*

* You're invited to bring friends or family to the January workshops free of charge!

To help us plan for and staff the program, we urge you to [apply by August 1, 2023](#). Applications open June 15, 2023. We will accept applications as long as space is available in the program. The last time we ran this program in 2022, we were not able to accept everyone on our waiting list.

Please note that these programs do NOT offer Continuing Education credits (CEs).

Questions? Contact NVC@orenjaysofer.com

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Program Components

The Immersion in NVC runs from September 2023 through April 2024. This online program consists of a 4-day retreat in August and eight monthly weekend workshops, led by Dr. Roxy Manning and Oren Jay Sofer, a group of experienced assistants, and visiting trainers. Each of the program components is described in detail below.

1. Living Peace Retreat – August 10-13, 2023

The Living Peace Retreat is co-led by Roxy, Oren, and an amazing team of experienced NVC assistants, with time for small-group practice to focus on what matters most to you. You can read more about the leadership team below (page 9). Note that you must register for the Living Peace Retreat separately.

Living Peace Retreat Daily Schedule

- 9am – 11am PT: Morning session (various topics, includes small group practice)
- 1pm – 3pm PT: Afternoon session (various topics, includes small group practice)
- Plus optional empathy group (we will offer empathy groups at various times of day to accommodate different time zones and work schedules).

2. Sample Monthly Schedule

The Immersion in NVC program is designed to support your practice and integration of NVC in daily life. There will be a training, small group, or other practice opportunity four out of five weeks each month. A typical month of IN online might look like this:

- **First weekend:** Two-day training with lead trainers (see #3 below)
- **Second week:** Small empathy group
- **Third week:** Coaching call with lead trainer
- **Fourth week:** Small empathy group
- **[Fifth week:** Journaling and personal practice]
- **Weekly:** 1:1 call with empathy buddy

3. IN Weekend workshops

After the retreat, we will meet online once per month for two-day weekend workshops from September 2023 through April 2024. These weekends are designed to deepen your immersion in NVC consciousness and practice, as well as to build community. During January, we will have guest NVC trainers offer workshops on a variety of topics. You are invited to bring one friend or family member to each session, free of charge!

Below is a sample daily schedule for these weekends. We may move some of the topics around or change some specific pieces or aspects of the schedule, but you can anticipate having these kinds of focus-areas on the weekends. For each theme we bring teaching, small- and large-group experiential learning, and lots of practice.

IN Weekend Workshop Typical Daily Schedule *

Saturdays and Sundays, 9-11:30am and 2-4:30pm PT

Time	Activity
9:00-9:15	Opening circle / Activity
9:15-10:15	Core teaching, Q&A
10:15-10:25	Short break
10:25-11:30	Small group practice sessions
2:00-3:00	Core teaching, Q&A
3:00-3:10	Short break
3:10-4:10	Small group practice sessions
4:10-4:30	Discussion and closing

* (sample only, actual weekend schedules may vary)

4. Bi-weekly Empathy Groups

Every month, you will meet twice with a small group to practice listening with and receiving empathy. Empathy groups are a powerful way to build community, integrate NVC consciousness, and hone your skills. Each month you will be assigned to a different group. A skilled assistant will help run the group the first two months; subsequent empathy groups will be peer-led for the rest of the program.

5. “Empathy Buddy” relationships

Based on your preferences, we will pair you up with an “empathy buddy.” We ask buddies to schedule at least a 1-hour phone or video conversation each week. Buddy relationships are one of the most popular components of this program, giving participants opportunities for mutual contribution, relationship building, practice, learning, integration of concepts, empathy, and deep connection.

6. Monthly Zoom Coaching Calls

Each month, between sessions, Roxy or Oren will lead a 60-minute, live coaching call open to all participants. These calls are intended to support your learning, integration of the skills, and the continuity of the program from month to month. They are a time when the lead trainers will be available for questions, coaching, and live role plays. Dates and times will be announced in September before the program begins.

7. Group Size

We anticipate limiting enrollment in the Immersion program to 60 participants. Much of our learning and practice occurs in small groups, where we have an average teacher-to-student ratio of six to one.

8. Program Webpage and Online Forum

We will post all relevant resources, recordings, and contact information on a private webpage. To support the creation of online community, connection, and continued learning between sessions, we will also provide a private, online group forum for all IN participants. This forum will serve as the primary means of communication for the program leaders with participants, as well as a shared forum to share challenges, offer mutual support and empathy, exchange information, explore teaching questions, and share celebrations. We request that each participant post to the group at least once every other month, even if it is just a brief check-in, to contribute to the overall connection, meaning and aliveness of the group for everyone. Assistants and trainers will participate in the forum as they are able, according to schedules and availability.

9. Individual Learning

Each month, we will provide suggested practices and other activities to support your learning, either on your own or with a buddy. Some of these will be internal reflection, some journaling suggestions, and some opportunities to learn with others.

10. Self-Organized Small Group Meetings

To maintain connection with each other between monthly sessions, we encourage self-organized study groups. Assistants may offer or be asked by participants to facilitate these groups based on their availability and the needs of the group.

11. Individual NVC Coaching / Empathy with Assistant Trainers

As a part of IN, we also invite you to receive one private coaching, empathy, or support session with an assistant trainer during the program. The session will last 45 minutes.

12. Reference Materials

As part of your participation in the program, you will receive a 150+ page packet of Nonviolent Communication training materials for your learning, including:

- Key assumptions and intentions of NVC – an elaboration of the spiritual and practical foundations of NVC
- Reference lists and summaries of essential communication topics
- Worksheets, self-reflection prompts, and journal assignments for your learning during the program and at home.

Requested Experience and Commitment from Participants

1. Experience

We would like Immersion Program applicants to have *at least two of the following*:

- Conceptual understanding of the basic principles of NVC
- Taken one 6-8 week NVC Foundations course
- Attended an NVC intensive or retreat
- Participated in a monthly NVC training program of 6 months or longer
- Participated in a weekly NVC practice group for 2 months or longer
- Studied on their own through reading or recordings
- Taken an NVC course online
- Taken NVC Teleclasses

2. Commitment

We request that program participants participate fully in the program. Along with individual learning, the program aims to be a source of community and mutual support for all of its members, so each individual's participation has an impact on everyone. One of

the themes we explore each year is that of interdependence, being able to count on participation is a key way for us to investigate that together. This said, we recognize we all have other commitments, and expect that there are circumstances in which participants may choose to miss one day or weekend during the program. *If you anticipate missing more than one full weekend (or two full days of the program) over the course of the year, please indicate this in your application.*

Financial Contributions

1. **About money**

Within Nonviolent Communication communities, we aim to relate with money in line with our values of considering everyone's needs. Receiving financial contributions is a strategy for meeting our needs for sustainability, as well as for contribution, appreciation, mutuality, care and choice about how we spend our time. We also want to meet the needs of the people who want to learn NVC with us – needs for sustainability, joy, contribution, choice, and care, to mention a few. In thinking about how much money to request, we have tried to create a sliding scale that is likely to accommodate more people, as well as having a commitment to include as many people as we possibly can regardless of financial means.

In order for this approach to meet our sustainability needs, however, we assume that most people will contribute *above* the minimum we request; contributions at the middle range of the sliding scale are set to cover our anticipated program costs. At the same time, we request that each person give no more than what they would enjoy giving. This last request greatly contributes to meeting our need for pleasure in receiving your support.

If the contributions requested are beyond your means...

We strongly encourage you to raise funds for your expenses. If you believe the Immersion Program will benefit you and the communities you are involved in and you are not able to raise funds from your community, we hope you will apply for a scholarship and not let financial considerations deter you. We will do our best to include you in the program.

2. **Financial Contributions Requested for the Immersion Program**

The Immersion Program has two distinct categories of contributions: tuition for the retreat, and tuition for the weekend programs.

Tuition for the Living Peace Retreat:

Sliding scale \$900-\$300

This covers our basic expenses for running the retreat (admin and tech support, planning time) as well as compensation for assistants and lead trainers.

Registration opens June 15: www.orenjaysofer.com/living-peace-retreat-2023

Scholarships and youth rates (24 and younger) are available.

Tuition for the 8-Month Intensive:

We ask \$4500-\$2000 sliding scale tuition to participate in the 8-Month IN Program. This helps to cover the range of costs for the program, as well as trainer prep, teaching, assistants, and support time.

Applications open June 15: <https://www.orenjaysofer.com/in-2023-24>

Scholarships and youth rates (24 and younger) available.

Application Process and Timelines

We've set the following dates by which we would like to hear from you and by which you can expect that we will get back to you with specific information.

Step 1: Submit an Application: If you meet the application criteria, we encourage you to submit an application as soon as possible, preferably no later than August 1. Applications are rolling; we will continue to accept applications until the program is full. All instructions are on the application form, which will be published on our [website](#) by June 15.

Step 2: Follow-up Questions: If we have questions about your application, one of our team members may contact you by email or phone for a short conversation.

Step 3: Receive Confirmation: We plan to review applications and make final decisions on a rolling basis. If you apply before August 1st you can expect to hear from us within 2-3 weeks. If you apply after August 1st, you can expect to hear from us within 2 weeks. If you are accepted into the program you will receive a confirmation email with a link to register. *Your place in the program is not reserved until you register and make a deposit.*

Payments:

Living Peace Retreat: Full payment due upon registration

IN: Deposit due upon registration; full payment due by August 23.

(Payment plans are available for IN upon request)

Rolling Applications:

We welcome applicants as long as we have space. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis, which means that we cannot guarantee there will be space in the program. Each year we have accepted several people who decided to apply after attending the Living Peace retreat, and we will gladly accept applications after the retreat if we still have room.

Cancellation Policy:

Our ability to make these programs sustainable depends on having a certain number of participants. The closer it is to the start date, the harder it becomes to fill a cancelled spot. We expect this program to fill with a waitlist, and want to ensure that those signing up are fully committed to attending the program. To support our sustainability, we have set the following cancellation policy:

Living Peace Retreat

- Before **July 10**: Full refund, less \$75 admin fee per person
- By **July 27**: 50% refund, less \$75 admin fee per person
- Cancellations after July 27, two weeks prior to retreat, will not be refunded.

IN: 8-Month Intensive

- Before **August 1st**: Full refund, less \$75 admin fee per person
- By **August 14th**: 50% refund, less \$75 admin fee per person
- *Cancellations after August 14th will not be refunded.*

Program Leadership

Roxy Manning, Ph.D., a CNVC Certified Trainer. Roxy's experience as an Afro-Caribbean immigrant to the US and academic training and professional work as a licensed clinical psychologist and CNVC Certified Trainer and Assessor fuel her passion for work supporting social change at the personal, interpersonal, and systemic levels. A San Francisco based psychologist and an Assessor with CNVC, Roxy delights in helping opposing voices hear each other and see past individual hurt and struggles to the structures that contribute to those challenges. Roxy is the author of two forth-coming books, *Antiracist Conversations* and *The Antiracist Heart*. www.roxannemanning.com

Oren Jay Sofer, a CNVC Certified Nonviolent Communication Trainer, teaches workshops and retreats on meditation and communication nationally. His teaching emphasizes how awareness practice and communication training deepen one another in a synergistic manner. He holds a degree in Comparative Religion from Columbia University, is a Somatic Experiencing Practitioner for healing trauma, and is a member of the Spirit Rock Teachers Council. Oren is also the author of *Say What You Mean: A Mindful Approach to Nonviolent Communication*, co-author of *Teaching Mindfulness to Empower Adolescents*, and author of the forth-coming title *Your Heart Was Made For This*. www.orenjaysofer.com

Assistant Trainers Team

In 2023, we anticipate having 10-12 assistant trainers, including graduates from past Immersion programs. Assistant trainers maintain personal contact with program participants, offer empathy support during the retreat, lead small groups, and engage in many other support activities. With a leadership team of 12+ people, we anticipate being able to provide lots of individual attention and frequent small group practice. Often small groups will have just 4-6 participants, allowing for maximum focus on the particular areas each participant would like to explore.

Testimonials

Here are testimonials from past participants and students of Oren's and Roxy's. We hope they give a sense of what the program can offer and entice you to join us!

“Roxy is a natural healer with a huge capacity to hold pain and create space for deep healing. I love the way Roxy facilitates groups; there's something about her energy and the way she leans forward that inspires me and gives me hope.” – Martha Lasley, Founder and Certified Coach, Leadership that Works

*“This year of NVC Immersion allowed me better access to my inner experience and gave me countless tools and practice regarding how to communicate my inner experience and requests with others. I learned to listen more attentively to others, and to hear their requests. I felt engaged by the material, and by Oren and Roxy's teaching style. The vibrant community that developed among participants will continue for me beyond the course. The Immersion helped me meet goals for learning, growth, and improving my communication skills.”
– Immersion Participant*

“The practice has given me tools to meet my own experience such that I feel so much more like I'm on my own team. It's also left me so much more equipped to support others in all facets of my personal life and activism. Roxy and Oren complemented each other beautifully and together, provided a robust holding of the internal, interpersonal, and systemic holding of the practice.” – Immersion Participant

“I was blown away by Oren's ability to clearly, consciously, and potently articulate and bring to life so many teachings. The organization of his retreat was flawless, which made it much easier for me to see the connections between various ideas and practices. I would be thrilled to spend another retreat with Oren.” – Living Peace Retreat Participant

“Being in the Immersion program with Roxy has transformed my life in a thousand positive ways... I've learned more of what it means to be a part of a community. The Immersion has been a safe space that's supported me in experimenting with living in a way that has more joy and authenticity. And this is just the beginning of all the positive changes rippling out through my life from my involvement in this program. Thank you, Roxy, and all the leadership in the Immersion and the NVC community.” – Sarah

“I signed up for the Living Peace Retreat to increase my skill and training in NVC, one of the most powerful and effective tools I have ever used in my work as divorce mediator. Oren and Roxy brought to life the practice of NVC with their skill, authenticity, compassion, and humor in a practical and profound manner. It was a great combination of large and small group learning with numerous opportunities to practice and connect in a safe and supportive

environment. After the retreat I practiced NVC with my teenager and noticed an immediate improvement in our connection. I enthusiastically recommend this retreat for anyone who wants to learn to communicate and connect with others from a place of authenticity and peace.” – Living Peace Retreat Participant

“The Living Peace retreat offered the space to put in to material practice the fundamental skills of nonviolent communication. There was ample opportunity to take risks and explore new ways of expression, without fear of 'making mistakes' - all in a warm and welcoming environment.” – Living Peace Retreat Participant

“The Immersion program was an inspiring experience for me. I really built a foundation upon which to grow in NVC in the future - and I was part of an amazing community along the way!” – Immersion participant

“Hands down the most useful, practical and inspiring tool for creating connection – deep, meaningful connection – I’ve ever encountered.” – Dave O, father, husband, writer

“The Living Peace retreat and Immersion in NVC were life changing for me. My ability to make peace with myself and others grew exponentially. This is a gift that keeps on giving in ways I had only dared to hope.” – Astraea Bella, LCSW, Relational Therapist

“Learning the ways to connect and speak to people through NVC has deepened and enriched my life on all levels.” – A. Rogers, M.D.

“The Immersion program was a place where I could show up as my authentic self and be appreciated for what I have to offer without worrying about protecting others from the parts of me they don’t want. Everyone is able to take care of themselves and are empowered to do so. The focus on the lack of judgement and on understanding made it safe.” – “G”

“NVC and the Immersion have given me the vocabulary to communicate in a deeper and more authentic manner. I’ve been particularly delighted with the effect on my relationship with one of my lifelong friends. We are able to hear each much more clearly, and we don’t fight anymore!” – Nurse

“The Immersion has been a wonderful container for my NVC practice. Knowing that I have a community, empathy buddies and a regular meeting schedule has really helped raise my NVC consciousness in a way that I doubt I would have been able to do on my own. This has helped me tremendously at work and my personal life.” – Leadership trainer/entrepreneur

“Though I did the BayNVC Leadership Program, in the Immersion Program I still found new, inspiring ways to renew and remember some of the things I’ve learned and a loving community of conscious, compassionate communication.” – Mental Health Counselor

“Being in an NVC retreat environment . . . reminds me of all the love I have in my heart for myself and the world and all the potential I have as a person to create the connected, compassionate world of my dreams.” – Former teacher, current personal growth facilitator

“It is difficult for me to capture in just a few sentences the profound impact that immersion into NVC study has made for me in my life. My levels of acceptance, self-acceptance and non-judgment have increased in ways that have allowed my heart to open and for peace to flower in my life as never before. This is my second time through the program but not the last.” – Lawyer

“I feel very empowered by the retreat, which helped me tremendously clarify a very critical situation I found myself into. It responded to an urgent need for me to be able to communicate more compassionately and with more clarity. I’m very grateful and excited about the next few months of training.” – Living Peace Retreat participant