# Nonviolent Communication: Quick Reference Guide

| Expression | Empathy |
|---|---|
| **Observation**<br><br>*When I see/hear . . .* | [Observation]<br>    [*When you see/hear . . .*] |
| **Feeling**<br><br>*I feel . . .* | **Feeling**<br><br>*Are you feeling . . .* |
| **Need**<br><br>*Because I need . . .* | **Need**<br><br>*Because you need . . .* |
| **Request**<br><br>*Would you be willing…?* | [Request]<br>    [*Would you like…?*] |

<u>Observations:</u> Description of what is seen or heard without added interpretations. For example, instead of "She's having a temper tantrum," you could say "She is lying on the floor crying and kicking."   If referring to what someone said quote as much as possible instead of rephrasing.

<u>Feelings:</u> Our emotions rather than our story or thoughts about what others are doing. For example, instead of "I feel manipulated," which includes an interpretation of another's behavior, you could say "I feel uncomfortable." Avoid the following phrasing: "I feel like . . . " and "I feel that…"—the next words will be thoughts, not feelings.

<u>Needs:</u> Feelings are caused by needs, which are universal and ongoing and not dependent on the actions of particular individuals. State *your need* rather than the other person's actions as the cause. For example, "I feel annoyed *because I* need support" rather than "I feel annoyed *because you* didn't do the dishes."

<u>Requests:</u> Asking concretely and clearly for what we want (instead of what we don't want). For example, "Would you be willing to come back tonight at the time we've agreed?" rather than "Would you make sure not to be late again?" By definition, when we make requests we are open to hearing a "no," taking it as an opportunity for further dialogue.

<u>Empathy:</u> In NVC, we empathize with others by guessing their feelings and needs. Instead of trying to "get it right," we aim to understand. The observation and request are sometimes dropped. When words are not wanted or are hard to offer, empathy can be offered silently.

<u>Self-Empathy:</u>  In self-empathy, we listen inwardly to connect with our own feelings and needs. It is that connection which enables us to choose our next step.