



Living Peace Online Retreat

with Roxy Manning and Oren Jay Sofer

January 20 – 23, 2022

A Nonviolent Communication Training

THE LEADERSHIP TEAM

Lead Trainers



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RETREAT SCHEDULE AND KEY LINKS

9:00 – 11:00 am Morning Session
1:00 – 3:00 pm Afternoon Session
Individual one-hour empathy group scheduled separately
* (All times listed in PST)

Retreat Home Page: <https://www.orenjaysofer.com/lpr-22>

Password: embodypeace

Tech Support: Sheryl@baynvc.org (available 9-11a & 1-3p PT during retreat)

WORKSHOP SESSION OVERVIEW

Thursday, January 20 NVC at Home (Day 1)

9:00 – 11:00 am Opening Session
1:00 – 3:00 pm Basics of Feelings, with Roxy *
1:00 – 3:00 pm Handling Triggers and Difficult Emotions, with Oren

Friday, January 21 NVC at Home (Day 2)

9:00 – 11:00 am Empathic Listening and Reflection, with Oren
1:00 – 3:00 pm Requests Basics, with Oren *
1:00 – 3:00 pm Refining Requests, with Roxy

Saturday, January 22 NVC at Work (Day 3)

9:00 – 11:00 am Power, Resources
1:00 – 3:00 pm Observations, with Roxy *
1:00 – 3:00 pm Refining Needs, with Oren

Sunday, January 23 NVC at Work (Day 4)

9:00 – 11:00 am Giving and Receiving Feedback Skillfully, with Roxy
9:00 – 11:00 am NVC with those “Allergic” to NVC, with Oren
1:00 – 1:55 pm Thresholds for Requests, with Roxy
1:00 – 1:55 pm Integrating NVC and Spiritual Practice, with Oren
2:00 – 3:00 pm Closing Session

** Those new(er) to NVC are encouraged to attend the sessions marked with an asterisk **

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KEY ASSUMPTIONS AND INTENTIONS OF NVC

I. Assumptions Underlying the Practice of Nonviolent Communication

Our ideas about individual and collective human nature have evolved and will continue to evolve. These ideas shape our expectations of what's possible, the social structures we create, and how we interact with ourselves and other people. Therefore the assumptions we make can have a profound effect on the life we live and the world we collectively create.

Following are key assumptions that NVC practice is based on. Many traditions share these assumptions; NVC gives us concrete, powerful tools for putting them into practice. When we live based on these assumptions, self-connection and connection with others become increasingly possible and easy.

1. **All human beings share the same needs:** We all have the same needs, although the strategies we use to meet these needs may differ. Conflict occurs at the level of strategies, not at the level of needs.
2. **All actions are attempts to meet needs:** Our desire to meet needs, whether conscious or unconscious, underlies every action we take. We only resort to violence or other actions that do not meet our own or others' needs when we do not recognize more effective strategies for meeting needs.
3. **Feelings point to needs being met or unmet:** Feelings may be triggered but not caused by others. Our feelings arise directly out of our experience of whether our needs seem to us met or unmet in a given circumstance. Our assessment of whether or not our needs are met almost invariably involves an interpretation or belief. When our needs are met, we may feel happy, satisfied, peaceful, etc. When our needs are not met, we may feel sad, scared, frustrated, etc.
4. **The most direct path to peace is through self-connection:** Our capacity for peace is not dependent on having our needs met. Even when many needs are unmet, meeting our need for self-connection can be sufficient for inner peace.
5. **Choice is internal:** Regardless of the circumstances, we can meet our need for autonomy by making conscious choices based on awareness of needs.
6. **All human beings have the capacity for compassion:** We have an innate capacity for compassion, though not always the knowledge of how to access it. When we are met with compassion and respect for our autonomy, we tend to have more access to our own compassion for ourselves and for others. Growing compassion contributes directly to our capacity to meet needs peacefully.

7. **Human beings enjoy giving:** We inherently enjoy contributing to others when we have connected with our own and others' needs and can experience our giving as coming from choice.
8. **Human beings meet needs through interdependent relationships:** We meet many of our needs through our relationships with other people and with nature, though some needs are met principally through the quality of our relationship with ourselves and for some, with a spiritual dimension to life. When others' needs are not met, some needs of our own also remain unmet.
9. **Our world offers abundant resources for meeting needs:** When human beings are committed to valuing everyone's needs and have regained their skills for fostering connection and their creativity about sharing resources, we can overcome our current crisis of imagination and find ways to attend to everyone's basic needs.
10. **Human beings change:** Both our needs and the strategies we have to meet them change over time. Wherever we find ourselves and each other in the present, individually and collectively, all human beings have the capacity to grow and change.

II. Key Intentions when Using Nonviolent Communication

Having clarity about our intentions can help us live and act in line with our values. We hold the following intentions when using NVC because we believe that they enrich our lives and contribute to a world where everyone's needs are attended to peacefully.

A. *Open-Hearted Living*

1. **Self-compassion:** We aim to release all self-blame, self-judgments, and self-demands, and meet ourselves with compassion and understanding for the needs we try to meet through all our actions.
2. **Expressing from the heart:** When expressing ourselves, we aim to speak from the heart, expressing our feelings and needs, and making specific, do-able requests.
3. **Receiving with compassion:** When we hear others, we aim to hear the feelings and needs behind their expressions and actions, regardless of how they express themselves, even if their expression or actions do not meet our needs (e.g. judgments, demands, physical violence).
4. **Prioritizing connection:** We aim to focus on connecting open-heartedly with everyone's needs instead of seeking immediate and potentially compromised solutions, especially in challenging situations.
5. **Beyond "right" and "wrong":** We aim to transform our habit of making "right" and "wrong" assessments (moralistic judgments), and to focus instead on whether or not human needs appear met (need-based assessments).

B. Choice, Responsibility, Peace

1. **Taking responsibility for our feelings:** We aim to connect our feelings to our own needs, recognizing that others do not have the power to make us feel anything. This recognition empowers us to take action to meet our needs instead of waiting for others to change.
2. **Taking responsibility for our actions:** We aim to recognize our choice in each moment, and take actions that we believe will most likely meet our needs. We aim to avoid taking actions motivated by fear, guilt, shame, desire for reward, or ideas of duty or obligation.
3. **Living in peace with unmet needs:** We aim to work with our feelings when we experience our needs as unmet, connecting with the needs rather than insisting on meeting them.
4. **Increasing capacity for meeting needs:** We aim to develop our internal resources, particularly our NVC skills, so we can contribute to more connection and greater diversity of strategies for meeting needs.
5. **Increasing capacity for meeting the present moment:** We aim to develop our capacity to connect in each moment with our own and others' needs, and to respond to present stimuli in the moment instead of through static stories about who we and others are.

C. Sharing Power (Partnership)

1. **Caring fully for everyone's needs:** We aim to make requests and not demands, thus staying open to the other's strategies to meet their needs. When hearing a "No" to our request, or when saying "No" to another's request, we aim to work towards solutions that attend to everyone's needs, not just our own, and not just the other person's.
2. **Increasing capacity for needs-based sharing of resources:** We aim to develop and practice needs-based strategies for sharing our world's resources with the goal of meeting the most needs for the most number of people and for the natural environment.
3. **Protective use of force:** We aim to use the minimum force necessary in order to protect, not to educate, punish, or get what we want without the other's agreement, and only in situations where we find that dialogue fails to meet an immediate need for physical safety. We aim to return to dialogue as soon as we have re-established a sense of physical safety.

NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

Expression	Empathy
Observation <i>When I see/hear . . .</i>	[Observation] [<i>When you see/hear . . .</i>]
Feeling <i>I feel . . .</i>	Feeling <i>Are you feeling . . .</i>
Need <i>. . . because I need . . .</i>	Need <i>. . . because you need . . .?</i>
Request <i>Would you be willing...?</i>	[Request] [<i>Would you like...?</i>]

Observations: 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.

Feelings: 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.

Needs: 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.”

Requests: 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 a request we are open to hearing a “no,” taking it as an opportunity for further dialogue.

Empathy: 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.

Self-Empathy: 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.

BASICS OF NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION

I. Introduction

Nonviolent Communication (NVC) has been described as a language of compassion, as a tool for positive social change, and as a spiritual practice. NVC gives us the tools and consciousness to understand what triggers us, to take responsibility for our reactions, and to deepen our connection with ourselves and others, thereby transforming our habitual responses to life. Ultimately, it involves a radical change in how we think about life and meaning. NVC is based on a fundamental principle:

Underlying all human actions are needs that people are seeking to meet, and understanding and acknowledging these needs can create a shared basis for connection, cooperation, and more globally – peace.

Understanding each other at the level of our needs creates such connection because, at this deeper human level, the similarities between us outweigh the differences, giving rise to greater compassion. When we focus on needs, without interpreting or conveying criticism, blame, or demands, our deeper creativity flourishes, and solutions arise that were previously blocked from our awareness. At this depth, conflicts and misunderstandings can be resolved with greater ease.

Learning NVC is a process similar to learning a new language or skill: step-by-step learning coupled with ample time for practice lead to growing mastery. While it takes time to develop fluency, any knowledge of a new language makes it more likely that communication can take place. In addition, because NVC invites us to a level of vulnerability and caring that often are not familiar or habitual, full integration of the consciousness underlying this language is likely to require changes in our internal connection to ourselves, and healing of past pain.

The language of NVC includes two parts: honestly expressing ourselves to others, and empathically hearing others. Both are expressed through four components - observations, feelings, needs, and requests – though empathic connection primarily relies on connection at the level of feelings and needs, hence observations and requests may or may not be articulated. Practicing NVC involves distinguishing these components from judgments, interpretations, and demands, and learning to embody the consciousness embedded in these components in order to express ourselves and hear ourselves and others in ways more likely to foster understanding and connection, to support everyone involved in getting their needs met, and to nurture in all of us a joy in giving and in receiving. The practice also includes empathic connection with ourselves - “self-empathy.” The purpose of self-empathy is to support us in maintaining connection with our own needs, choosing our actions and responses based on self-connection and self-acceptance.

NVC was developed by Dr. Marshall B. Rosenberg, who has introduced it to individuals and organizations world-wide. NVC has been used between warring tribes and in war-torn countries; in schools, prisons, and corporations; in health care, social change, and government institutions;

and in intimate personal relationships. Currently, over 300 hundred certified trainers and many more non-certified trainers around the world are sharing NVC in their communities.

II. Language, Practice, and Intention

Although the bulk of this document is about specific practices and concrete steps, the ultimate aim of NVC is to create the conditions – within, with others, in our groups and organizations, and in the world’s systems – that allow the flourishing of all life, where all needs are held with utmost care.

Hundreds of thousands of people have found the specific practices of NVC extremely beneficial to them, to the point of transforming their experience of life and creating relationships and workplaces that are aligned with this larger vision.

In order for these practices to be of support to you and others around you, it may be useful to remember the following:

- Focus on the precision and depth of the practice when you are practicing. In the rest of your life, prioritize authenticity, relying on your heart’s integration of your intentions.
- In particular, if you are entirely new to NVC, you might want to consider practicing only internally for a period of some months before trying out any new forms of expression with others.
- When with others, make sure they are in voluntary agreement to participate with your efforts to integrate a new language and approach to life before you try using specific linguistic forms.

III. The Components of NVC

A. Observations

Observations are what we see or hear that we identify as the stimulus to our reactions. Our aim is to describe what we are reacting to concretely, specifically and neutrally, much as a video camera might capture the moment. This helps create a shared reality with the other person. The observation gives the context for our expression of feelings and needs, and may not even be needed if both people are clear about the context.

The key to making an observation is to separate our own judgments, evaluations or interpretations from our description of what happened. For example, if we say: “You’re rude,” the other person may disagree, while if we say: “When I saw you walk in and I didn’t hear you say hello to me,” the other person is more likely to recognize the moment that is described.

When we are able to describe what we see or hear in observation language without mixing in evaluation, we raise the likelihood that the person listening to us will hear this first step without immediately wanting to respond and will be more willing to hear our feelings and needs.

Learning to translate judgments and interpretations into observation language moves us away from right/wrong thinking and helps us take responsibility for our reactions by directing our attention to our needs as the source of our feelings rather than to the other person. In this way, observations – paving the way towards greater connection with ourselves and with others – emerge as a crucial building block towards a profound consciousness shift.

B. Feelings

Feelings represent our emotional experience and physical sensations associated with our needs that have been met or that remain unmet (see below). Our aim is to identify, name, and connect with those feelings.

The key to identifying and expressing feelings is to focus on words that describe our inner experience rather than words that describe our interpretations of people's actions. For example: "I feel lonely" describes an inner experience, while "I feel like you don't love me" describes an interpretation of how the other person may be feeling.

When we express our feelings, we continue the process of taking responsibility for our experience, which helps others hear what's important to us with less likelihood of hearing criticism or blame of themselves. This increases the likelihood that they will respond in a way that meets both our needs.

The list of feelings that usually accompanies this handout (see www.baynvc.org if you don't have a feelings list) is neither exhaustive nor definitive; it is offered as a resource for exploration and discovery of the richness of our emotional life.

C. Needs

Our needs are an expression of our deepest shared humanity. All human beings share key needs for survival: hydration, nourishment, rest, shelter, and connection to name a few. We also share many other needs, though we may experience them to varying degrees and with more or less intensity at various times.

In the context of NVC, needs refer to what is most alive in us: our core values and deepest human longings. Understanding, naming, and connecting with our needs helps us improve our relationship with ourselves, as well as foster understanding with others, so we are all more likely to take actions that attend to everyone's needs.

The key to identifying, expressing, and connecting with needs is to focus on words that describe shared human experience rather than words that describe the particular strategies to meet those needs. Whenever we include a person, a location, an action, a time, or an object in our expression of what we want (remember the acronym PLATO), we are describing a strategy rather than a need.

For example: “I want you to come to my birthday party” may be a particular strategy to meet a need for love and connection. In this case, we have a person, an action, and an implied time and location in the original statement. The internal shift from focusing on a specific strategy to connecting with needs often results in a sense of power and liberation, as we can free ourselves from being attached to one particular strategy by identifying the underlying needs and exploring alternative strategies.

Feelings arise when our needs are met or not met, which happens at every moment of life. Our feelings are related to the stimulus, but they are not caused by the stimulus: their source is our own experience of met or unmet needs. By connecting our feelings with our needs, therefore, we take full responsibility for our feelings, freeing us and others from fault and blame. And by expressing our unique experience in the moment of a shared human reality of needs, we create the most likely opportunity for another person to see our humanity and to experience empathy and understanding for us.

The list of needs that usually accompanies this handout (see www.baynvc.org if you don't have a needs list) is by no means exhaustive or definitive. It is offered as a resource for identifying and experiencing your own needs and guessing others' needs. The needs on this list appear in their most abstract, general, and universal form. Each person can find inside herself or himself the specific nuance and flavor of these broader categories, which will describe more fully her or his experience.

D. Requests

In order to meet our needs, we make requests to assess how likely we are to get cooperation for particular strategies we have in mind for meeting our needs, always aiming to do so without cost to others. Our aim is to identify and express a specific action that we believe will serve this purpose, and then check with others involved about their willingness to participate in meeting our needs in this way. In a given moment, it is our connection with another that determines the quality of their response to our request. Therefore often our requests in the moment are “connection requests,” intended to foster connection and understanding and to determine whether we have sufficiently connected to move to a “solution request.” An example of a connection request might be: “Would you tell me if you heard any criticism in what I just said?” An example of a solution request might be “Would you be willing to take your shoes off when you come in the house?”

The spirit of requests relies on our willingness to hear a “no” and to continue to work with ourselves or others to find ways to meet everyone's needs. Whether we are making a request or a demand is often evident by our response when our request is denied. A denied demand will lead to punitive consequences; a denied request most often will lead to further dialogue. We recognize that “no” is an expression of some need that is preventing the other person from saying “yes”. If we trust that through dialogue we can find strategies to meet both of our needs, “no” is simply information to alert us that saying “yes” to our request may be too costly in terms of the other person's needs. We can then continue to seek connection and understanding to allow additional strategies to arise that will work to meet more needs.

To increase the likelihood that our requests would be understood, we attempt to use language that is as concrete and doable as possible, and that is truly a request rather than a demand. For example, “I would like you to always come on time” is unlikely to be doable, while “Are you up for spending 15 minutes with me talking about what may help you arrive at 9 am to our meetings?” is concrete and doable. While a person may assent to the former expression (“Yes, I’ll always come on time”), our deeper needs – for connection, confidence, trust, responsibility, respect, or others – are likely to remain unmet.

If someone agrees to our request out of fear, guilt, shame, obligation, or the desire for reward, this compromises the quality of connection and trust between us. When we are able to express a clear request, we raise the likelihood that the person listening to us will experience choice in their response. As a consequence, while we may not gain immediate assent to our wishes, we are more likely to get our needs met over time because we are building trust that everyone’s needs matter. Within an atmosphere of such trust, goodwill increases, and with it a willingness to support each other in getting our needs met.

Learning to make clear requests and shifting our consciousness to making requests in place of demands are very challenging skills for most people. People often find the request part to be the hardest, because of what we call a “crisis of imagination”: a difficulty in identifying a strategy that could actually meet our needs without being at the expense of other needs. Even before considering the needs of others, the very act of coming up with what we call a positive, doable request is challenging. We are habituated to thinking in terms of what we want people to stop doing (“don’t yell at me”), and how we want them to be (“treat me with respect”) rather than what we want them to do (“Would you be willing to lower your voice or talk later?”). With time, and a deeper connection to our needs, our creativity expands to imagine and embrace more strategies.

This fourth step is critical to our ability to create the life we want. In particular, shifting from demands to requests entails a leap in focus and in faith: we shift from focusing on getting our needs met, to focusing on the quality of connection that will allow both of our needs to truly matter and ultimately also to be met.

IV. Empathy

Expressing our own observations, feelings, needs and requests is one part of NVC. The second part is empathy: the process of connecting with another’s experience, often by guessing their feelings and needs, and many times doing so nonverbally. In times of conflict, communicating to another person in words that we understand their feelings and that their needs matter to us can be a powerful turning point in problem situations. Demonstrating that we have such understanding is not the same as agreeing to act in ways that don’t meet our own needs. In that way, the language of NVC often helps us relate with others.

Connecting empathically with another person is a way to meet our own needs – for understanding, connection, contribution, or others. At the same time, we hope that the empathy would meet the

other person's needs as well, and would aid both of us in finding strategies that would meet our needs.

The heart of empathy is in our ability to compassionately connect with our own and others' humanity. Offering our empathic presence, in this sense, is one strategy (or request) through which we can meet our own needs. It is a gift to another person and to ourselves of our full presence.

When we use NVC to connect empathically, we use the same four components in the form of a question, since we can never know what is going on inside the other. The other person will always be the ultimate authority on what is going on for them. Our empathy may meet other people's needs for understanding, or it may spark their own self-discovery. We may ask something like:

[When you [see, hear, etc...]]

Are you feeling

Because you need

[And would you like?]

Most often, in an ongoing process of dialogue, there is no need to mention either the observation (it is usually clear in the context of communication) or the request (since we are already acting on an assumed request for empathy). We might get to guessing a request when we have connected more and we are ready to explore strategies. Also, in many contexts, even the feelings are not necessary, because we can demonstrate our understanding simply by focusing on what the other person wants. In addition, in many contexts, speaking of feelings may invite more vulnerability than the other person might want to display.

In the process of sharing empathy between two people, if both parties are able to connect at the level of feelings and needs, a transformation often happens in which one or both parties experience a shift in intention and attention. This can lead to a shift of needs or generate new reserves of kindness and generosity, or, in seemingly impossible situations, it can open us to remarkable bursts of creative solutions that were unimaginable when clouded by disconnection. Those are moments of deep human connection, satisfaction, and hope.

V. Self-Empathy

Both expression of our own feelings and needs and empathic guesses of others' feelings and needs are grounded in a particular consciousness which is at the heart of NVC. This consciousness is nurtured by the practice of self-empathy.

In self-empathy, we bring the same compassionate attention to ourselves that we give to others when listening to them using NVC. This means listening through any interpretations and judgments we are making to clarify how we are in terms of our feelings and needs. This inner awareness and clarity supports us in choosing our next step: expressing ourselves to others, or

receiving them with empathy. This next step is our request to ourselves about where we want to focus our attention.

The practice of NVC entails an intention to connect compassionately with ourselves and with others, and an ability to keep our attention in the present moment – which includes being aware that sometimes in this present moment we are recalling the past or imagining a future possibility.

Often self-empathy comes easy, as we access our sensations, emotions, and needs to attune to how we are. However, in moments of conflict or reactivity to others, we may find ourselves reluctant to access an intention to connect compassionately, and we may falter in our capacity to attend to the present moment. Self-empathy at times like this has the power to transform our disconnected state of being and return us to our compassionate intention and present-oriented attention. With practice, many people find that self-empathy alone sometimes resolves inner conflicts and conflicts with others as it transforms our experience of life.

At other times, even after self-connection we remain disconnected from the other person. At such times, the process of humanizing the other person by guessing their feelings and needs may provide the missing bridge to full self-connection. This is because our own upset feelings often are related to losing sight of the other person's humanity. In such times, finding a needs-based way to make sense of that person's experience, actions, or words can provide enormous relief and be the final key to opening our hearts to life.

UNPACKING OFNR (OBSERVATIONS, FEELINGS, NEEDS, REQUESTS)

Observations

Many people think of a true observation as something that everyone can agree upon. Some people use the video camera as an example – a true observation is “what a video camera can see and hear.” This perspective perpetuates the myth of the neutral, unbiased observer. Video cameras are placed in a certain location, pointed in a certain direction, with a certain quality of lens, to record a stimulus determined by the operator. There is considerable bias in where the operator places the camera, when they turn it on and off, who it is pointed at, what filters are placed on the camera. What is recorded by the video camera is thus inherently biased. Similarly, it helps to think of observations reported by humans in the same way, to acknowledge the bias that comes in, sometimes systematically, when we take in stimuli and report back what we’ve observed.

We suggest three layers of observations. The iceberg of stimulation below suggests how much each layer may contribute to the intensity of our pain.

The Iceberg of Stimulation



External Observation: The stimulus that is outside a person that other people might also perceive. What can be taken in by our senses. Note that the perception of the external observation is mediated by our attention, expectations, capacity and prior knowledge. It is the stimulus most aligned with the video camera analogy. Additionally, it contributes the least to our pain.

Internal Observation: The external layer triggers the internal observation, often automatically without our intentional choice. The internal observation is our perception of what happens inside ourselves. This includes trauma reactions, memories, implicit associations, meanings, and might include our physical sensations. The connection to our past experiences means that we are often experiencing an increase in pain, as not just the present moment pain, but that of the past, is added to the overall stimulation.

Systemic Observation: Our understanding of the systems and patterns in our context with which this external observation may or may not align. Even if the external observation is not meant to

be representative of these systemic patterns, it may still stimulate the recollection of these patterns, and thus the immense pain we can experience when we have experienced harm repeatedly. When we experience stimulation at the systemic level, because of the chronic nature of the stimulus, the pain stimulated may be deep, far more intense than that stimulated if it had been the first time we encountered the external stimulus.

Understanding all the layers of observations is key to helping us connect with the depth of the needs stimulated by any given external stimulus to establishing a framework of shared understanding about our individual and collective experiences."

Here is an example: (please note the example references sexual violence against women):

Here is the external observation using classic NVC:

A female presenting person is sitting at her desk at work with her back to the hallway. A male presenting co-worker walks behind her and puts his hands on her shoulder. She is not aware of his presence.

The woman starts shaking and crying and yells at her co-worker - How dare you! I'm so angry. Don't ever touch me that way again! I need safety.

The male co-worker in the example really wants to understand his colleague. He is aware that past co-workers laughed and said, "You're such a joker" when he had done this in the past. Looking at just the external observation, he does not understand the connection between her feelings and needs and his behavior, represented by the external observation.

The woman explains more about her internal observation:

When you touched me without my expecting it, I had an immediate flashback to a rape I had experienced one night. I had a huge sense of fear.

She then adds the systemic observation:

All the times I and other women have experienced sexual trauma from men, even from coworkers, the CDC statistics saying 20% of women experience an attempted rape in their lifetime, flooded my mind.

This information helped the coworker understand why his touching the women stimulated that particular set of feelings and needs (anger, need for safety) rather than the ones he had stimulated with other people in the past (amusement, play). The internal and systemic observations, which occurred rapidly for the woman, were part of her stimulus.

Acknowledging the internal and systemic observations do not state he caused them, or that his behavior was "bad." We simply acknowledge that if the intention of naming the observation is to create shared reality about what is stimulating a person's feelings and needs, we often cannot have that shared reality without understanding the internal and systemic observations from the perspective of the person stimulated.

Feelings

Feelings are sign posts that can help us identify that a need is or is not met. Our body sensations are often one of the first guides to our feelings. However, many people have been socialized so that they do not have access to their full range of feelings. In many societies for instance, from a very young age, people who are identified as male at birth are encouraged to be tough, not to cry, to express anger and excitement, but not fear or sadness. Instead of noticing the body sensation of prickling in one's eyes and a lump in one's throat and interpreting it as sadness, men may be conditioned to interpret the same sensations as anger.

Similarly, the societal cost of having certain feelings are different for members of some groups than others. In some societies, expressing anger when one is in a subordinate position can lead to harsh consequences. A manager can express anger to an employee without consequences, but the employee cannot express anger to the manager without risking being fired or ostracized. In the United States, a man of African descent who expresses anger towards the police is more likely to be judged a threat and restrained, if not shot by the police, than a man of European descent. Because of these very real consequences to the expression of anger, people are socialized not to notice, express – indeed, not to feel their emotions. If, because of repeated experiences of censure and punishment when you express certain emotions, you no longer have access to those emotions, notice that, and hold yourself with compassion. With time, energy, support and patience it is possible to change that conditioning.

Another challenge for people in many societies is that these years of conditioning not to feel, not to acknowledge certain emotions means that we are ill equipped to deal with those emotions once we do feel them (or when others express them). We get flooded and do many things to avoid feeling emotions. Some of our avoidance behaviors are celebrated by society – I can distract myself with reading, compulsive exercises, work 16 hours a day so I have no time or energy to let myself feel anything. Others are judged more harshly by society – I might cut myself whenever feelings get intense, use alcohol or drugs to numb myself, play video games or watch television whenever I have free time. It can be helpful to learn how to open ourselves up to the full range of emotions in ways that are not too costly for us.

A regular practice of connecting to our feelings, exploring what information they have for us, when the feelings are smaller in energy or intensity can ultimately lead to more freedom and skill in handling our emotions. Here are some tips that might help you manage the intensity of what you might experience when you open yourself to your feelings. Try them out and see which one works for you.

Be Mindful of Your Emotions

- Observe your feeling. What is it? What were you thinking or doing when it started?
- Notice it as a wave – it starts small, peaks, and recedes. Notice the flow of your feelings.
- Don't block or suppress your emotions. Don't hold on to or amplify it. Let it flow in and out.

- Don't act on your emotions immediately. They are information. Pause and contemplate the needs they point to.
- Remember you are not your emotions.
- Don't judge your emotion. Practice loving and radically accepting it.

Create Space to Access Choice in Responding

- If you are flooded, give yourself permission to let go
- Notice the difference between your internal experience and what's around you
 - Let your senses explore the environment around you. What catches your attention? Gently focus your attention there, noticing what drew you in.
- Notice your breath. Count each breath in and out. If you're breathing quickly, silently say 'I am breathing in' and breathe in as you do so, then say 'I am breathing out' and breathe out as you do so.
- Actively invite other sensations in, increasing the intensity as needed.
 - Hold a water bottle that's 2/3 full. Slowly tilt it from side to side, paying attention to the shifting weight of the water.
 - Run a strong stream of cold water on your wrists or hold a frozen water bottle, ice-pack or some ice-cubes.
 - Starting with your toes and moving up your body, tense and relax each group of muscles (e.g., squeeze your toes together tightly, hold, then release, tense calf muscles, hold it and notice the tension, release).
 - Wear a rubber band around your wrist and snap it.

Needs

The essential shift in consciousness that NVC offers us is inviting our awareness to the understanding that all human beings share the same needs. It is this understanding that allows us to transform judgments of people's behavior, to reach for our shared humanity when people speak or act in ways that are challenging for us. Unfortunately, many people from groups with less structural power in society report that the beauty of the concept of universal human needs has been used to silence and minimize their experiences.

At a retreat, I supported a conversation between two men who had experienced a break in connection. One man of Chinese and European descent – let's call him Chris - shared the pain he experienced growing up in a primarily European community. He shared the taunts he had experienced, having people use slurs and language that insulted people from Chinese backgrounds, that made fun of the shape of their eyes, the tone of their skin. He was sharing this experience with a European-descent man – let's call him Robin - to help Robin understand the needs that were going unmet for Chris around safety by Robin's lack of awareness of the ways identity can affect one's experience, among other needs.

Unfortunately, Robin was not able to empathize with Chris. Instead, Robin spoke angrily about his needs for safety being unmet in the conversation. One way that he described his need being unmet was that Chris had called Robin a “White man.” For Robin, the phrase, “White man,” was a label that did not meet his needs for being seen for his full humanity. Robin’s experience was that his needs for safety in being called a “White man” by Chris during that conversation were as equally unmet as the needs for safety Chris experienced in multiple settings in his childhood and adulthood.

Like Chris, some people have reported that when they try to bring up specific experiences related to their membership in a certain group, the depth of their pain is not acknowledged and the focus instead shifts to the discomfort of the listener hearing their pain.

From a limited NVC perspective, all needs can be seen as equal, with an emphasis on equal space and attention to any unmet needs. However, the consequences of the needs going unmet for Chris in our example, who has experienced beatings in relation to his identity, were vastly different than the consequences for Robin. The idea that all humans share the same needs can be used, tragically, to obscure the reality that some people, based solely on group membership, have certain needs go unmet to a greater extent, for a greater length of time, and with more dire consequences than others.

When we think of ourselves, we can readily realize that although we are human, and thus motivated by a full set of needs, in any given moment, some needs are not even in our consciousness while others are very much alive. If I have not eaten for ten hours while touring a museum, my needs for food and sustenance might be much more salient and urgent for me than my need for beauty. If I find myself near the museum restaurant, with only 30 minutes left before the building closes, I need to choose between meeting my needs for beauty by seeing one last exhibit, or moving into the restaurant and attending to my need for food. In that moment I would prioritize eating food rather than seeing another exhibit.

Ideally, when two people present with differing sets of needs, we can brainstorm and find new strategies that can meet everyone’s needs. But in many situations, constrained resources mean someone’s needs are met over another’s. Members of some groups have had urgent needs go unmet for an unbearably long time, relative to other groups. Just like we would likely prioritize meeting the needs for food when we are very hungry over the need for beauty, we would also prioritize caring for the needs of those whose needs are systematically ignored and unmet over those whose needs have traditionally been met. Here are some thoughts to help you decide how to proceed in such situations:

Remember: All needs matter, but not all needs are equally met.

- Strive to find a solution that works for all.
- When time, energy, resources constrain the creative spaciousness that makes such a solution possible:
 - Prioritize the needs that have gone unmet the longest.

- Prioritize the needs of those whose needs have gone unmet for longer, especially when systems are operating that contribute to needs being unmet for some over others.
- Prioritize care and safety for those whose unmet needs have or might result in significant harm.
- Remember that continuing with the status quo, even when it is to allow time for creative solutions to meet all needs, is a choice that continues to prioritize the needs of those whose needs have been traditionally met at the expense of those whose needs have not been met. Consider meeting the needs of those who have not experienced care while new strategies are explored.

Remember, when a systematic imbalance exists in whose needs are attended to, If we insist on equality - treating everyone the same and offering equal support, we are continuing to perpetuate an imbalance.

Requests

Requests in the NVC context are the strategy we employ in our attempts to meet our needs. Many believe that the essence of a true request is met when we can ask for what we need without attachment to getting the need met in the way we're asking. For many, requests are often contrasted with demands – we consider ourselves having full NVC consciousness when we have removed any urgency or insistence on a certain outcome from our requests. This insistence on removing demand energy from our requests has been a challenge for many people from communities that have been targets of oppression and hate.

For so many people, the notion of requests being equated with lack of attachment to getting our needs attended to is aversive. We want to trust that there is a space to advocate for our needs, and to advocate for strategies that might attend to our needs. It is impossible for many of us to imagine being willing to abdicate our power by allowing the person to whom we make a request to have the sole power to decide if that request would be met or not. We want to be clear that NVC allows us to stay firmly attached to our desire for change, especially in situations where systemic imbalances and harm is occurring.

NVC structures already provide a framework for thinking of how to respond when harm is happening. Protective use of force is intended to prevent significant harm from happening when one person is meeting their needs at great cost to another person. The invitation is that one uses the least amount of force in order to prevent harm. We contrast this with punitive use of force, which is not seeking only to limit harm, but also to educate and punish. Each time we use force to prevent harm, we are aware that while needs for safety and care may be met, many needs will go unmet. Those needs might include our needs for choice and autonomy for those against whom we're using force, their needs for choice, autonomy and care, and mutual needs for understanding. When we make a decision to use force to attend to needs, we are essentially demanding an action from someone and attempting to enforce that demand through force.

Instead of thinking of requests and demands as binary opposites, in which we can only use demands when there is great harm, it may be helpful to think of a field of energy that represents the intensity with which we may want something to happen. As the intensity of our need increases, or the potential for harm increases, the energy with which we want to see a change – an outcome – increases. In situations where the intensity is low, we may want to see something happen, but our attachment to that outcome might be low and we stay firmly in the request part of the field. As our need increases, including the need for safety, our attachment to outcome also increases and we move across the field to areas of more intensity. This shift from request to demand happens both when the need increases in intensity, and when the degree of harm increases.



*The Energy that Grounds Our Strategies:
Navigating the Demand Request -
Continuum*

One differentiation that's important is that one can be attached to outcome - i.e., have significant demand energy - without having an attachment to a specific strategy. I recently read of a situation at a college in the United States that illustrates this perfectly. A college professor was noted to express on his personal, but public, social media extremely painful views about people from many groups, including women and African-descent students. His postings included statements that women wanted to be controlled by men and did not belong in the workplace, that African-descent people were intellectually inferior to White students. The harm this professor could cause was immense. He had the power to affect students' grades, their beliefs in their ability, their entire futures. There was significant demand energy that the university stop this potential harm. The strong attachment in those making the demand was around the need for safety for all students, especially students from those groups targeted by this professor. The voices would not be silenced until that safety was assured.

Some people also had demand energy around a certain strategy - that the professor be fired. For others, there was an openness to the strategies by which the desired outcome - safety and respect for all students - could be met. In order to be in integrity with their commitment to free speech of all citizens and not punish the professor for using his right to free speech, while also holding a strong commitment to protecting students, the university publicly made known what the professor had written, required the professor to grade blindly any student coursework, or have grades and evaluations monitored by other professors to ensure no bias, and strongly encouraged any students experiencing negative treatment to contact university staff, using clearly defined channels, to begin processes to have the professor removed from his position. The university clearly demonstrated the difference between demand as attachment to outcome - safety for all students, and demand as attachment to strategy - that the professor be fired.

We hold our needs firmly when we have a strong belief in our needs mattering. We hold a specific outcome firmly when we don't have trust that our needs matter or can be met in any other way. It is so important for us to understand that attachment to needs being met can be a wonderful motivator. It is the energy that allows us to keep searching for strategies that honor all our needs,

not just those of one group or person. We want to use that energy to find strategies and create systems that support all people, rather than simply flip who is in power to enable a new group's needs to be met at the expense of another. And, when constraints prevent us from finding those strategies, using the guidelines in the section under needs - paying attention to whose needs we're addressing and the extent of experience with chronically unmet needs, can guide us in determining when protective use of force is necessary.

OTHER CONVERSATIONAL RESPONSES

Each of us has learned a number of different conversational styles or responses that we may tend to use habitually. Some of these are mentioned to the right.

Sometimes, these responses can lead to misunderstanding, hurt feelings, anger, disconnection, loneliness and depression, which is why, in his book, *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of the Heart*, Marshall B. Rosenberg suggests using 'NVC' style empathy, suggesting that it *is* possible to have a conversational response that leads to understanding, acceptance, connection and caring.

The below responses are NOT being implied as 'wrong' or 'bad'. Only that being aware of our conversational responses and using them as 'bells of awareness' can remind us that we have choice in how we want to interact with, and the type of responses we can hope, therefore, to receive in return from others.

As a society, we have been trained that the below conversational responses are efforts to connect, which may be why these responses are used so frequently. Knowing this, when you encounter others responding to you using one of these styles, have compassion; they may be trying to give you empathy!

NOTE: Some of these responses, such as educating or strategies, might serve the other person, *if* they are used *after* NVC empathy, and upon asking whether the person would like to hear them.

Other Conversational Responses:

1. ADVISING/STRATEGIES: "What you should do is..."
2. ANALYSING/DIAGNOSING: "You're acting schizophrenic..."
3. BLAME: "**You made me...**" or "**You hurt me when you...**"
4. CHAMPIONING: "You can do it..."
5. CONSOLING: "It wasn't your fault, you did the best you could..."
or TOUCHING the other person "There, there..."
6. CORRECTING: "That is not how it happened. I did not do that..."
7. DEVIL'S ADVOCATE: "But they work hard and they really try..."
8. EDUCATING: "You know, happened because people..."
9. EXPLAINING/JUSTIFYING: "I would have ...(e.g.: called) **but...**"
10. GUILTING OR SHAMING: "How could you do such a thing..." or "You are so selfish..."
11. 'HONESTY'; (JUDGING OR CRITISISING): "The trouble with you is..."
12. Being 'NICE': "No, I'm not upset, I'm Fine..."
13. ONE-UPPING: "That's nothing. What happened to me was..."
14. QUESTIONING: "When did this actually happen...?"
15. REALISTIC: "That will never work because..."
16. RELATING: "Oh I know how you feel **because I...**"
17. SHUTTING DOWN: "Cheer up now, you'll get over it..."
18. SYMPATHIZING: "Oh, you poor thing..."
OR: Using SYMPATHETIC EYES, TONE OF VOICE or BODY POSTURE
19. SARCASTIC HUMOR: "???"

CONVENTIONAL PATTERNS OF COMMUNICATION

Adapted from CNVC materials

1. **Diagnosis** – Criticism, Judgment, Analysis, Comparison, Blame: Implying wrongness or badness. e.g. "You are too sensitive."
2. **Demands**: Making requests which implicitly or explicitly threaten some form of blame or punishment if the request is not acted upon. e.g. "Please type up this report. I am going to be very upset if it's not ready in time."
3. **Deserves** – Justification of Reward and Punishment: Implying that certain actions merit reward and certain actions merit punishment. e.g. "He deserves to be punished for what he did."
4. **Denial of Responsibility**: Attributing the cause of our actions or feelings to anything other than our needs:
 - a. **Others' Actions**: "I fired my secretary because she didn't type my reports in time."
 - b. **Dictates of Authority**: "I misrepresented our earnings in our accounting system because my boss told me to."
 - c. **Institutional Policies, Rules, and Regulations**: "If we do it for you, we'd have to do it for everyone," or "We can't break policy."
 - d. **Group Pressure**: "I drink after work because everyone else does."
 - e. **Gender, Social or Age Roles**: "I hate going to work but I do it because I am a father and a husband."
 - f. **Uncontrollable Impulses**: "I couldn't help flirting with her."
 - g. **Diagnosis, Psychological History**: "I yell at my children because I grew up in a dysfunctional family."
 - h. **Vague, Impersonal Forces**: "We have to put people in prison because otherwise nobody would be safe in the streets."

"FIX-IT" LANGUAGE

Fix-It language (sometimes called "chicken-soup") is advice or help based mainly on one's own ideas of what's good someone else, rather than tuned to what the person in pain wants. It's advice given without first seeing (A) if it's a form of help the listener wants right then, and (B) before checking if it's being given because the speaker wants to give help, or because the listener actually wants it. (Even if advice is sound or perceptive, fix-it language is rarely healing or helpful if given unsolicited and before empathic connection, because usually a person in pain first needs empathic understanding, and can often build his/her own unique solutions if he or she gets real empathy.)

COMMON FIX-IT LANGUAGE	NEW-AGE FIX-IT LANGUAGE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Something just like that once happened to me; what I found helpful was _____. • You should hang in there. After _____, maybe things will change and improve. • Why don't you just quit! You deserve better than that and shouldn't put up with it. • You could use up your savings to have your car's motor rebuilt, and then apply for welfare. • No pain, no gain. • You're absolutely right, those bureaucrats are impossible; you might as well forget it. • If you would just take your medication, and get a good night's sleep, things will look better in • That happens to nearly everyone at one time or other. • Well, what can you expect with all those _____s running the place? • Things could be a lot worse. • Look at the bright side, Sue; some people were allergic to your cat anyhow. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I've found that strongly visualizing what I want is very helpful in a situation like yours. • Well, if you would meditate on that I'm sure you would find a solution. • This is just your karma and nothing to be ashamed of. • Oh, you have to learn to let go of your fears. • This is a wonderful opportunity to practice letting go of your judgments. • You need to trust the universe more. • You need to get out of that poverty consciousness. • Look at what you have left, not at what you've lost. • You must have created that for some reason. • Everything you think is so important is all an illusion anyway.

FIX-IT LANGUAGE COMBINED WITH EVALUATIVE-LANGUAGE	FIX-IT LANGUAGE COMBINED WITH NEW-AGE EVALUATIVE LANGUAGE
<p>What do you expect from him, he's . . .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a businessman. • a Liberal. • a right wing extremist. • a devotee. • a good family man. • from the wrong side of the tracks. • worrying about his own family. 	<p>What do you expect from her, she's . . .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a Left-brained person. • a Visual-Learner. • an unenlightened being. • an Adult-Child-of-an-Alcoholic. • a very old soul. • a first-born child and a co-dependent personality-type. • was abused as a child. • suffering from zinc, vitamin-C, and spirulina deficiencies. • only reflecting your own consciousness back to you.

CNVC KEY DIFFERENTIATIONS

This set of KDs are taken from the CNVC Certification Preparation Packet with slight modifications.

1. "Being Giraffe" vs. "doing Giraffe"
2. Giraffe honesty vs. Jackal honesty
3. Empathy vs. sympathy and other forms of response (fixing, reassuring, storytelling, etc.)
4. Protective vs. punitive use of force
5. Power with vs. power over
6. Appreciation vs. approval, compliments or praise
7. Choice vs. submission or rebellion
8. Observation vs. observation mixed with evaluation
9. Feeling vs. feeling mixed with thoughts
10. Need vs. request (strategy)
11. Request vs. demand
12. Stimulus vs. cause
13. Need-based judgment vs. moralistic judgment
14. Natural vs. habitual
15. Interdependence vs. dependence or independence
16. Life-connected vs. life-alienated
17. Shift vs. compromise
18. Persisting vs. demanding
19. Self-discipline vs. obedience
20. Respect for authority vs. fear of authority
21. Vulnerability vs. weakness
22. Love as a need vs. love as a feeling
23. Self-empathy vs. acting out, repressing, or staying stuck in feelings
24. Idiomatic vs. classical (formal) Giraffe
25. Guessing vs. knowing
26. Empathic sensing vs. intellectual guessing

Additional KDs

These Key Differentiations were added by Inbal Kashtan and Miki Kashtan

27. Attending to needs with care vs. meeting needs
28. Understanding vs. agreement
29. Self-care vs. selfishness
30. Holding everyone's needs with care vs. altruism (or selflessness)
31. Self-compassion vs. abdicating responsibility
32. Self-responsibility and self-reliance vs. self-sufficiency
33. Inner safety vs. safety dependent on others
34. Responsibility to vs. responsibility for (an original from Marshall Rosenberg that isn't included in the list above)
35. Applying NVC vs. teaching NVC
36. Offering feedback vs. wanting to be heard for a trigger
37. Radical change vs. peripheral change (an original from Marshall Rosenberg that isn't included in the list above)
38. Entrustment vs. submission
39. Conscious choice vs. rebellion
40. Conscious response vs. reaction

EMPATHY GROUPS

A guide to holding your self-led (or led) empathy groups

Empathy groups are designed for empathy and connection, not so much for practice and coaching, though of course, practice happens! During an empathy group, we encourage you to keep the focus on connecting with one individual at a time through giving that person empathy.

We're defining empathy as a quality of connection wherein we are in touch with what's going on with someone this very moment in their heart, or what we refer to in NVC as their needs – life-energy moving through a person. We also use the word empathy to refer to the actions we are taking as we move towards that quality of connection. For example, if I'm wanting to empathize with someone, one action might be that I focus my attention on trying to sense, feel, understand, see, get in touch with, connect with the person's feelings and needs. I might do this verbally or non-verbally, just with the focus of my attention. We believe that non-verbal empathy can be just as (or sometimes more) powerful an action as verbal empathy.

When someone is receiving empathy during an empathy group, sometimes the connection is found most easily if that person is receiving verbal empathy from just one person; other times deep connection occurs when the whole group participates in giving verbal empathy. To support the process, we encourage those not actively speaking at any given time to continue to actively participate through giving non-verbal empathy by focusing your attention on connecting with the speaker's feelings and needs.

To facilitate the flow of empathy, we request that all group members refrain from giving advice or discussing a person's "issue" unless 1) advice or discussion was explicitly requested, AND 2) group members have connected with the needs underlying the request and with how this will contribute to the person. We request that you check these two questions carefully because we believe very strongly that empathy can be very powerful and healing, and, since most of us have had very few, if any, role models of giving, witnessing or receiving empathy, we want to hold with care the possibility for this to happen for each group member at this retreat. While advice, discussion, and sharing one's own experience can often be helpful, we have many more opportunities in life to give and receive these – so we want to hold these Empathy Groups with a strong intention to support the rare and precious experience of receiving empathy.

We encourage you to follow the classical NVC format for giving empathy, especially if you are fairly new to NVC and are still practicing basic skills. However, we recognize that forging a connection is always more important than the format of the empathy. Reminder: the NVC form for empathy includes guessing feelings and needs and may sound something like this:

Are you feeling ...?

Because you need ...?

If you are already familiar and comfortable with connecting through NVC empathy, you may want to explore how to “naturalize” the phrasing to meet more needs for connection. For example, you can review our handout of alternative ways of framing needs (e.g. “it’s really important to you that...”), break the sentence into guessing feelings and needs separately (e.g. “So you’re feeling really lonely? Are you needing companionship?”), use 5-word needs instead of one-word needs (e.g. “Are you needing trust that your needs matter” rather than “Are you needing trust”), and the like. Feel free to consult your feelings and needs lists.

Staying with these simple guidelines is so different from our accustomed ways of speaking and thinking that it may be very hard or uncomfortable to do. Our experience is that there are many layers of depth to be discovered through this very simple tool if we stick with it longer than we could before. While you are here we hope you’ll receive a quality of support for doing so that is not usually found outside of this environment, and we encourage you to use your time at this retreat to do as much “empathy muscle-building” as you find in yourself to do.

In thinking about how to divide time in your group, you may want to consider either dividing time equally each time your group meets, or focusing more attention on one person per meeting. If you choose the latter, we suggest that you still give each person at least a few minutes to check in with what’s alive for them, then proceed with focusing on one person for the remainder of the time. We suggest this because we have confidence it will meet needs for trust, connection and belonging for all group members. However, we also trust that your group can find its way to meeting those needs, whatever format you use.

TIPS FOR LEADING EMPATHY GROUPS

Leading an empathy group whose focus is connection and empathy rather than practice requires both participating in the empathy and maintaining awareness of whether the process is supporting the person receiving the empathy. This is not a time for direct coaching, which might include expressions such as this: “Instead of focusing on the story and repeating it, focus on her feelings and needs.” Rather, it is a time for leading by example by focusing on empathy, for gentle suggestions, and for trusting one’s sense of the effect of the process on the receiver.

Here are a few guidelines we hope will support you in this role:

- a) If you sense the empathy guess is taking the person out of her or his heart and into her or his thoughts or judgments, check in by asking: “Is this connecting for you?” If not, encourage the person and the group to re-focus on the present moment with guesses of feelings and needs.
- b) If the group goes into analysis of the person’s “issue” or into advice-giving when it has not been requested, you might also redirect the flow by saying, “I really want us to stay with Sarah’s heart now,” then follow with an empathy guess that focuses clearly on the need: “Sarah, are you longing for more joy in relating to your son?”
- c) If you sense that a role-play might contribute to healing or movement, suggest that to the person receiving empathy. If one is wanted, ask whether they’d like to choose someone for the role-play, or ask others if they’d like to participate if no preference is expressed. If you have a sense your participation would be the most supportive, you could volunteer by saying, “Would you like to try a role play with me?” We encourage you to try role-plays if you feel confident about how to lead and participate in them; otherwise, stay with empathy.
- d) If the group is reticent to make guesses, you might initiate the empathy with two or three guesses, then consciously leave space for others to join the process. You can also explicitly request others to join in from the beginning so a pattern is not set where the group expects you to offer most of the empathy. However, the focus is still primarily on the person receiving, so if people are reluctant and the person receiving is struggling to stay connected without more active connection, step in to offer more connection.
- e) If the person receiving empathy touches on deeper self-connection (including crying) and others in the group continue to make guesses, this sometimes shifts the person out of self-connection. If this happens, gently offer a sign or gesture that indicates “not yet,” such as holding up a hand, or verbally express your feelings, needs and request to hold back on verbal empathy but stay in non-verbal empathy. You might check in with the person you

interrupted after the empathy time ends to see how the interruption affected her or him and connect about both your needs.

- f) At all times, be prepared to be authentic about your experience and to dialogue with people in real time about needs met and unmet. It is not uncommon for empathy groups to experience some challenge around how to connect and meet everyone's needs. If you can model and practice your "living NVC" skills, you are most likely to find the experience nourishing.
- g) If you're struggling with leading, you can ask group members for empathy. If you're still struggling, you can also ask an assistant for support, and bring your challenges to the empathy group leaders' meeting.

EMPATHY BUDDY HELP SHEET

This document offers an outline for how an “Empathy Buddy” call or meet-up might go. We recommend following it closely at first until you discover your own rhythm.

If you feel confused by any of these instructions, if you have questions or comments, please let us know. Your feedback will help to improve the clarity of the instructions. Please notice in your empathy call if any ideas come up that you or your partner are “not doing it right.” These are very valuable thoughts to explore in our sessions.

Set-Up / Logistics / Timing

- First decide how many minutes you’d like to spend on the call, in total.
- Decide who will be first Speaker and who will be first Listener.
- Give half of the remaining time to the first Speaker.

Self-Empathy / Intention

What needs are you hoping to meet on the call? We recommend making CONNECTION one of the primary needs you’re wanting to meet.

Empathy Giving

Speaker: Talk about something that’s troubling you, something you really enjoyed, or if all else fails, something neutral (e.g. what you had for breakfast).

Speaker: As often as you’d like, and at any point, you can say “Would you be willing to reflect back what you’ve heard so far (especially any feelings and needs)?” If the Listener reflects anything that you didn’t intend, take the opportunity to clarify. I like to find a way to say this which does not imply any “wrongness” on the part of the Listener. E.g. “Your reflection about X was what I intended you to hear. Your reflection about Y was not quite what I meant, let me say it again....”

Listener: listen for what is important to the Speaker. Why are they telling you this? What were their feelings and needs/motivations in the story they’re telling. At any point, and as often as you’d like, you can break in (“interrupt”) and say “Could I reflect back what I heard you say so far?” Doing this may help you stay connected if you suspect your memory is starting to fill, or if you want to get clarity. I like to present reflections in the form “This is what I heard... [observations...feelings...needs]. Is that what you intended me to hear?”

Listener: Allow your ADVICE, SUGGESTIONS, STORIES, IDEAS etc. to float away. See what happens when you attempt to stick with just reflecting what the other person is saying, especially their feelings and needs. If you feel an overwhelming urge to say/ask something other than empathy guesses, check in with the speaker that they’re open to it.

E.g. “I have some advice – would you be open to it?” or “I want to tell you what I’m thinking/feeling about this situation, would you be open to hearing that?”

FEEDBACK

Leave a few minutes during the first Speaker's time for feedback. I believe this is a very important part of the call, if the call is to support learning.

Speaker: Tell the listener what you enjoyed about their empathic listening. Try to put it in terms of observations of what they said or reflected, how you felt at that point, and what needs were met.

For example: "You listened really well" is feedback, but it is not very specific in terms of telling the other person what you really most enjoyed.

Compare that with "When you reflected back that you were hearing my need for respect, I felt a sense of relief in my body, and it really gave me a sense of clarity which I'd not had previously." In this case, you're pointing out a specific moment which you enjoyed, which will give the listener a clearer idea what worked for you and why.

Please don't give the listener suggestions on what they could have done differently without checking in with them first e.g. "I have some suggestions about things you could have done differently that I might have enjoyed more, would you be open to hearing them right now?"

Listener: This is your chance to hear how it was for the other person to experience your empathic listening. I recommend that the speaker tells you first what they enjoyed, but if you also want to hear about what they did not enjoy so much you can go ahead and request that from them.

When the first Speaker has used their time, switch roles.

RECEIVING EMPATHY SKILLS

People tend to think of empathy time that is focused on us as time to “receive.” Yet many people don’t feel completely satisfied with the empathy they “receive.” These notes aim to support you to explore how to lead your empathy time so it will be most likely to contribute to you.

1. At any moment, be ready to shift to focusing on the quality of connection between you and the other person, rather than on the content of what you’re trying to work on.
2. Consider this time as another opportunity to live NVC: within yourself, and with another person. This means exercising your self-connection and your honesty muscles.
 - a. Focus on self-connection:
 - i. How am I feeling? What am I needing? (check heart and body)
 - ii. Am I connecting with what is offered to me?
 - iii. Is there anything in my way to connecting with this person right at this moment?
 - iv. What can I do to open my heart more fully to receiving the guesses and “allow” myself to be affected by them?
 - b. Focus on honesty:
 - i. Express how the empathy (or anything else) is landing with you (feelings/needs)
 - ii. Ask for what you want:
 - more empathy guesses
 - fewer empathy guesses
 - physical proximity/distance
 - different person to offer empathy
 - silent empathy
 - different style
 - shift focus/topic (if something else is more alive, including present moment)
 - anything else?
3. Preparation for empathy time:

What feelings and needs arise in you when you consider expressing honestly when your needs are not met when you’re receiving empathy?

- a. What needs might be met by doing this?
- b. What needs might not be met by doing this?

- c. What strategies might support you in being able to shift to living NVC more fully during your empathy time?
4. During empathy time:
Check in with yourself periodically and reconsider your level of authenticity and presence to “receive” empathy.

EMPATHY IN THE WORKPLACE

A. *Attending to Cultural Norms*

In many workplaces, it is not customary to focus on emotional expression. At the same time, people, wherever they are, have the same feelings and needs as anywhere else. This gap between what people *experience* and what they may be comfortable to *express* presents a challenge when we attempt to empathize with a co-worker.

In such a context, attention to the specific choice of words by adapting the range of feelings or needs that we use to the norms of the context in which we operate as well as by choosing to empathize at a lighter level (see the earlier section on fine-tuning depth) may facilitate flow and ease for all concerned.

B. *Focusing on the Purpose at Hand*

Most of us learn NVC within the context of workshops, practice groups, or healing sessions, where the primary purpose is to establish a healing presence and connect on a deep level. In the workplace, however, as well as many other similar contexts (e.g. an action group), the primary purpose at hand is to accomplish tasks.

While NVC still invites us to focus on establishing connection, especially in times of stress, disagreement, confusion, or conflict, the focus on connection in such context is more transitory. All we need to do is create sufficient connection to return the focus to the primary purpose of the occasion.

One particular skill that is essential for this ability to calibrate the level and amount of connection is to notice momentary resting places in the process of empathy. When we are focused on healing, such pauses would be a time to invite the person to share more of their experience; within the context of a task-oriented purpose, we may ask in such moments: “Is this enough for the moment, or is there something else you want to share *before we return to the focus of our meeting?*” The reminder of the purpose supports everyone present in bringing choice to the moment.

At times, the disconnection in the moment is sufficiently strong that we may need to choose to shift our focus or purpose. This would be a conscious choice, then, rather than a default response based on a habit of viewing empathy primarily as a tool for healing.

C. *Power Differences*

In many workplaces, power differences are associated with fear and mistrust. In such contexts, offering empathy across power differences can be particularly challenging.

In particular, people with less power may feel disinclined to open their hearts to the full humanity of someone with power. This is an opportunity to explore dealing with enemy images (see above under empathy in conflict). In addition, people are afraid that their empathy would lead to awkwardness, or even retaliation. In such cases, offering empathic expression, or using more

naturalized forms of NVC empathy (see earlier in this document) can support us in breaking barriers and creating a human connection with a person in power.

Conversely, people with more power are often reluctant to offer empathy for fear of being seen as weak and struggling to assert their authority, especially in times of conflict. The section above about empathy vs. agreement may be particularly helpful in such situations. It also helps to remember that one of the most common experiences of people with less power in the workplace is an unmet need for mattering, and that empathy from a person in power can go a long way toward establishing that kind of trust.

D. Empathy for Decision-Making

Since decision-making becomes more efficient and robust when we shift focus from negotiating to shared holding of needs and letting strategies arise from the needs, any process of decision-making, whether between individuals or within a group, can benefit from a particular form of empathy that is designed to identify the relevant needs for that decision.

In this case the purpose of empathy is simply for everyone to reach a level of shared ownership of all the needs. The relevant skill is discussed earlier under “Balancing Brevity and Connection:” finding a full phrase that describes the need *in context*. This both allows the person to have a more nuanced sense of being understood, as well as provides more guidelines for identifying strategies later.

E. Empathy while Running Meetings

During meetings, people express opinions, suggestions, and other ideas. They do this in response to items that are on the agenda, in response to what others say, or because something is important to them and has not been added to the agenda.

Empathy in this context allows for a smoother flow within a meeting. As each person speaks, a short reflection of the essence of what they want while relating it to the meeting’s purpose or to the current discussion can achieve the following purposes:

1. Giving the person a sense of being heard and allowing them to trust that they matter and therefore to settle
2. Continually focusing on the overall meaning of the meeting and making everyone’s contributions relevant to that meaning
3. Making it easier for others to hear what was said and reducing the chances of others reacting to what was said, thereby minimizing conversations that diverge from the core purpose or that are less helpful to achieving goals, including connection
4. Managing flow and allowing the group as a whole to move forward together more easily

FOUR EARS[®]

When what they're saying is hard to hear, can we get clear on which ears to wear?

A difficult-to-hear message:

"How can you call yourself my friend when you sneaked in and read my journal without permission!"



Practice your 4 ears with these difficult-to-hear messages:

1. "You are always talking."
2. "Just ship those immigrants back where they came from!"
3. "If you were a good parent, your kids wouldn't be like that."
4. "It's useless talking to you."
5. "It's boring to be with you."
6. "What you said just now was really hurtful to me."
7. "How come you're always making things up?"
8. "You should drop out of our team if you can't keep up."
9. You're such a know-it-all."
10. "It's not your business."

(1) With **Jackal ears turned outward**, we hear blame or criticism – and disagree with it.

"Look who's talking! What kind of a friend would write the things she did about me in her journal!"



(2) With **Jackal ears turned inward**, we hear blame or criticism – and we agree with it.

"She's right. It was terrible, what I did. I guess I just don't deserve her friendship."



(3) With **Giraffe ears turned inward**, we hear our own feelings and needs.

"When I hear her say that, I feel hurt, because I need some recognition for all the times I've been there to offer friendship and support."



(4) With **Giraffe ears turned outward**, we hear the other person's feelings and needs.

"I wonder, when she recalls my reading her journal without permission, whether she feels upset because she needs to trust that her privacy will be respected."



TRANSLATING HABITUAL RESPONSES

Imagine each of the following examples is something someone says to you. Write down what you might say habitually. Then write your feelings and needs which give rise to this response. Then guess and write down the feelings and needs in the other person that might lead them to say what they are saying. The last example is left blank so you can fill in your own situation.

- a. Your child says to you: "You can't tell me what to do."

Habitual response:

Self empathy: I feel... because I need...

Empathy Guess: Are you feeling ... because you need... ?

- b. Your partner says to you: "You just don't care about what I want."

Habitual response:

Self empathy: I feel... because I need...

Empathy Guess: Are you feeling ... because you need... ?

- c. A stranger pulls into your lane closer to your car than you like.

Habitual response:

Self empathy: I feel... because I need...

Empathy Guess: Are you feeling ... because you need... ?

- d. A friend tells you: "I don't want to be your friend any more."

Habitual response:

Self empathy: I feel... because I need...

Empathy Guess: Are you feeling ... because you need... ?

- e. _____ says to you: _____

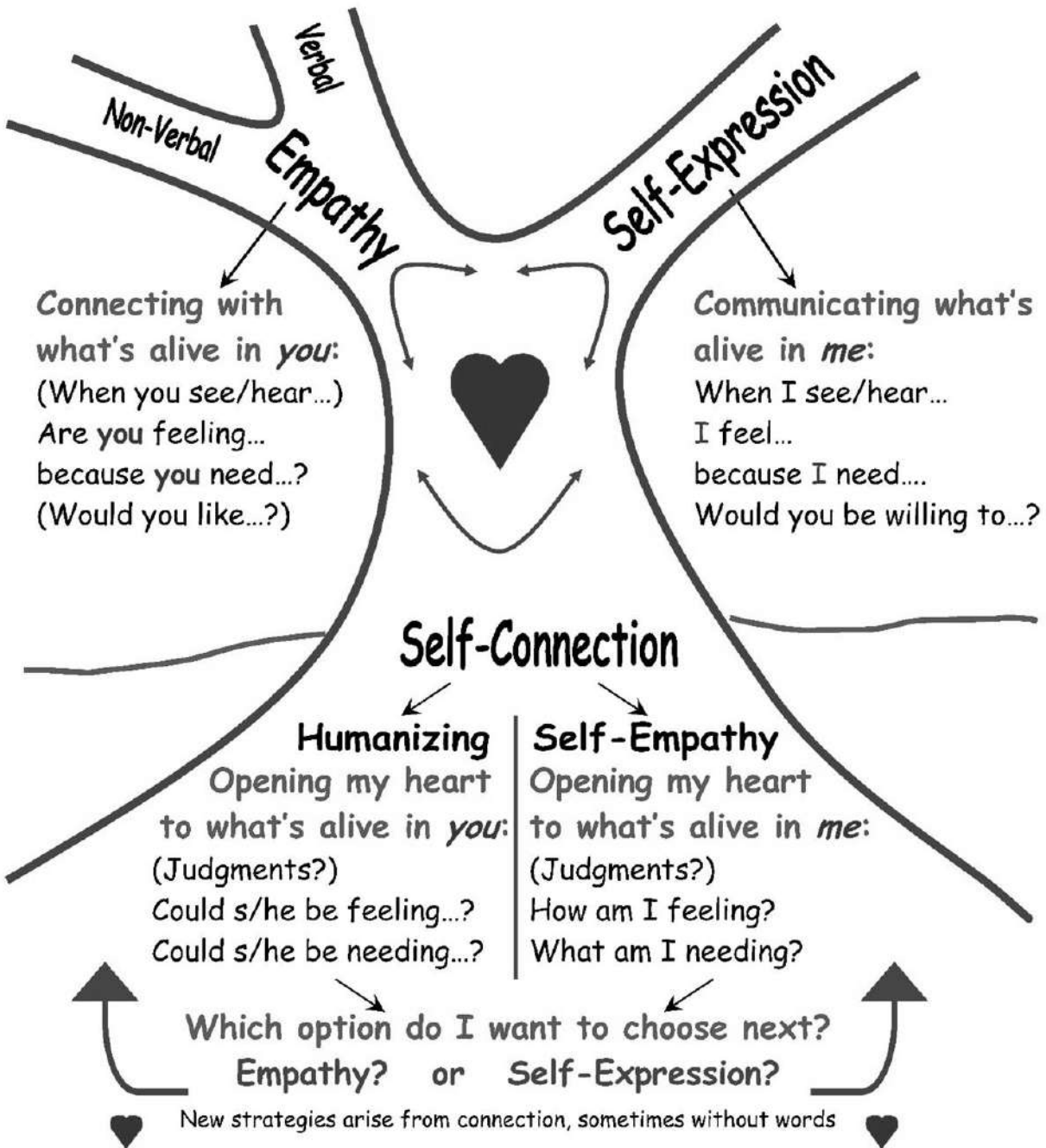
Habitual response:

Self empathy: I feel... because I need...

Empathy Guess: Are you feeling ... because you need... ?

The NVC Tree of Life

Three Focus Options for Connection



NVC TREE OF LIFE: 3 FOCUS OPTIONS FOR CONNECTION

Written Practice in Conjunction with the NVC Tree of Life

A. Trigger

Someone says/does:

B. Self-Connection

Self-Empathy:

Judgments? Thoughts? (Write them down if that's what comes up first, to help you connect with feelings and needs.)

I feel _____

because I need _____

What I would like to do next is _____

Humanizing the Other Person (guess, and try to connect with a real human experience):

What could s/he be feeling? _____

What could s/he be needing? _____

C. Self-Expression

When I see/hear _____

I feel _____

Because I need _____

Would you be willing to: _____

?

D. Empathy

Are you feeling _____

?

Because you need _____

?

(If/when ready for strategy, might also include:)

Would you like _____

EVALUATIONS MASQUERADING AS FEELINGS

When you say:	what might you be feeling?	what might you be needing?
abused	angry, frustrated, frightened, vulnerable	caring, nurturing, support emotional or physical well-being, consideration, need for all living things to thrive
attacked	scared, angry, vulnerable	safety
belittled	angry, frustrated, tense, distressed	respect, autonomy, to be seen, acknowledgement, appreciation
betrayed	angry, hurt, disappointed, enraged	trust, dependability, honesty, honor, commitment, clarity
blamed	angry, scared, confused, antagonistic, hostile, bewildered, hurt	accountability, causality, fairness, justice
coerced	angry, frustrated, frightened, thwarted, scared	choice, autonomy, freedom, act freely, choose freely
criticized	in pain, scared, anxious, frustrated, humiliated, angry, embarrassed	understanding, acknowledgement, recognition, accountability, acceptance
harassed	angry, frustrated, frightened	respect, space, consideration, peace
ignored	lonely, scared, hurt, sad, embarrassed	connection, belonging, inclusion, community, participation
insulted	angry, embarrassed	respect, consideration, acknowledgement, recognition
intimidated	scared, anxious, vulnerable	safety, equality, empowerment
invisible	sad, angry, lonely, scared	to be seen and heard, inclusion, belonging, community
isolated	lonely, afraid, scared	community, inclusion, belonging, contribution
left out	sad, lonely, anxious	inclusion, belonging, community, connection
let down	sad, disappointed, frightened	consistency, trust, dependability, predictability
manipulated	angry scared, powerless, thwarted, frustrated	autonomy, empowerment, trust, equality, freedom, free choice, connection, genuineness

When you say:	what might you be feeling?	what might you be needing?
misunderstood	upset, angry, frustrated	to be heard, to be understood, clarity
neglected	lonely scared	connection, inclusion, participation, community, care, to matter, consideration
patronized	angry, frustrated, resentful	recognition, equality, respect, mutuality
pressured	anxious, resentful, overwhelmed	relaxation, clarity, space, consideration
put down	angry, sad, embarrassed	respect, acknowledgement, understanding
rejected	hurt, scared, angry, defiant, vulnerable	belonging, inclusion, closeness, to be seen, acknowledgement, connection
taken for granted	sad, angry, hurt disappointed	appreciation, acknowledgement, recognition, consideration
threatened	scared, frightened, alarmed, angry, agitated, defiant, vulnerable	safety, autonomy
unloved	sad, bewildered, frustrated	love, appreciation, empathy, connection, community
unsupported	sad, hurt, resentful	support, to be understood
unwanted	sad, anxious, frustrated	belonging, inclusion, caring, to be cherished
used	sad, angry, resentful	autonomy, equality, consideration, mutuality
victimized	frightened, helpless, vulnerable	empowerment, mutuality, safety, justice

COLLOQUIAL GIRAFFE OPTIONS

KEYS:

- a. Fluency in our use of NVC rests on the foundation of connecting with compassion for self and other, and with a deep authenticity within us, and allowing the words we choose to arise from this connection. This means prioritizing the principles over the form.
- b. Our goal in switching to colloquial giraffe is the same goal we have whenever we use NVC: to support the flow of connection.
- c. The main question to explore in choosing our words: what is likely to be connecting for this person to hear, especially if they are not trained in NVC?
- d. As much as we want to support a natural flow, our second intention is to ensure that we maintain focus on NVC principles instead of slipping into speech that is so “natural” sounding that it reinforces the assumptions and stories we are working to transform.

OPTIONS:

1. Eliminating the words “feeling” and “need” from our speech even while maintaining a close focus on feelings and needs. This shift, for many people, results in being able to hear what we say without thinking that we are being “touchy-feely.”

E.g. instead of saying: *“Are you feeling frustrated because you need respect?”* we might say: *“Are you frustrated because you want respect?”*

2. Shifting from the “one-word” needs to the “full-phrase” needs. This shift supports a greater sense of flow and provides a more specific context to what we are saying while still maintaining the distinction between need and strategy.

E.g. in the previous example, we might expand the “one-word” need respect into the “full-phrase” need as follows: *“Are you frustrated because you want to be respected for your point of view even when there is disagreement?”*

3. Eliminating the explicit link between feelings and needs through the use of the word “because” in the classical template construction. In this case it’s a conceptual barrier, not simply a linguistic one. The understanding that feelings arise from needs is not widespread, and the use of this language often renders the speech awkward and confusing to others. A solution could either be dividing the expression into two sentences, or dropping the focus on feelings altogether and focusing only on the needs.

E.g. in the previous example, we might drop the word “because” as follows: *“[Are you frustrated?] Do you want to be respected for your point of view even when there is disagreement?”*

4. Narrowing the list of needs, and especially feelings, to suit the cultural norms of the environment in which we are operating. Certain feelings words may invite others to a level of vulnerability, or presence with our own vulnerability, that is beyond what they are willing to experience in that context even if they would be open to it in another context.

E.g. in many work settings it would work better and likely contribute to more trust to say: *“Are you concerned about John leaving the office?”* instead of saying: *“Are you scared about John leaving the office?”*

5. Increasing flow with requests language by having additional phrases aside from “would you be willing to...”

E.g. *“Would you mind ...”* or *“Are you comfortable with ...”* or *“Would it work for you...”* or others depending on context and ease.

6. Increasing flexibility with regards to connection requests by expanding the range of connection requests beyond habitual ones and by providing the reason for the request, especially in contexts where connection is not an obvious priority.

E.g. *“I would like to make sure I really got what you are saying. Would it work for you if I reflected what you just said?”*

7. Creating more ease and flow by making empathic expressions rather than empathic reflections/guesses. This increases our own vulnerability because we are exposing our own heart. It’s also a more familiar form of speech for those not versed in NVC. While technically this is not empathy, it is an expression that’s infused with empathy and thus tends to convey empathy implicitly to the other person without challenging their comfort around conversation style.

E.g. *“I am really struck by the depth of care I am hearing in your words.”* Or *“I truly get just how much you want our family to flourish.”* Or *“I am touched hearing of your commitment to protect our department and your willingness to take risks for that.”*

COLLOQUIAL EXPRESSION OF NEEDS

The phrases below are some suggestions for how you can expand the range of options available to you for expressing your needs and for guessing those of others (instead of always using the word “need”). On the dotted line you can insert any word from the needs inventory in the previous page. All of these phrases can be used as long as the consciousness we bring to them is that of needs. Otherwise we run the risk of blurring the distinction between needs and strategies.

I love..... is fun for me
I thrive on.... matters to me
I really enjoy.... is meaningful to me
I would be nourished by.... is so important to me
I value.... makes my life feel worthwhile
I want.... helps me feel well/good/whole/happy
I long for	

SELF-EMPATHY JOURNAL

This journal invites you to explore self-empathy, a process for self-discovery and self-connection. At the heart of this process is full connection to your own feelings and needs. Take your time with each question so you really have a sense of having made contact with your heart. You may want to close your eyes and actually ask yourself the questions, giving the answer space to emerge, to help you shift from focusing on thoughts to focusing on deeper, emergent insight. The journal explores a particular challenge, as well as reflecting on the process of self-empathy itself.

1. Think of a challenge you are experiencing that you'd like to connect with yourself about. Write down briefly what the challenge is.
2. Are there any thoughts or judgments that arise in response to this situation? If so, note them. We find it helpful and important to acknowledge thoughts and judgments, as they are part of our experience and often give us clues to the feelings and needs behind them.
3. How are you feeling in relation to this challenge? The words of the feelings might arise immediately. If so, go beyond just naming the feeling and invite yourself to actually experience the feeling fully. If the words do not come, ask yourself: What might I be feeling? Open your heart to sense the answer. You might even put your hand on your heart, or anywhere on your body where you experience a strong sensation. The sensation can be your clue toward connecting with the feeling. You can name both sensations and feelings here.
4. What needs are these feelings pointing to? What are you longing for, what is most important to you in this situation? Again, the words for the needs might arise immediately, or might be hard to find. Use the same processes as with discovering the feelings above to explore your needs.
5. Are there any additional feelings and needs you'd like to connect with about this situation? If so, repeat the process of exploring your feelings and needs.

6. When you have a sense of connection with your feelings and needs about this particular challenge, consider: How are you feeling at this moment, after making contact with these feelings and needs?
7. At this point, are you content and ready to shift focus to something else, or do you want to explore making a request of yourself? Making a request can be a part of self-empathy, or self-empathy can take place without this part. If you want to make a request of yourself, proceed to the next question. Otherwise, go to the last question.
8. What request of yourself would like to make right now? Check with yourself whether it is clear to you what you would do if you said yes to this request. Don't address yet whether or not you will actually agree to this request, just make the request to yourself.
9. Now check: are you willing to say yes to this request? Don't push yourself. Be honest. If you're not willing to say yes, what needs are in the way?
10. If you said no to your own request, check: is there another request you would like to make of yourself? Then check again to see whether you have a yes. You can try different requests until one of them resonates as one you'd like to say yes to.
11. How are you feeling at this time? What needs have you attended to by exploring this process of self-empathy? Are there needs unmet as well? Do you have any insights from doing this journal that you would like to write down? Anything you've learned? Any requests of yourself about this process (not the content of the challenge)?

TRANSFORMING SELF-JUDGMENTS

KEYS:

- a. Any action that we judge ourselves about is, like all actions, an attempt to meet our needs. The judgment alerts us to the fact that some of our needs are not met.
- b. The action of judging ourselves is itself an attempt to meet needs.
- c. Connecting fully with all our needs enables us to meet needs for self-acceptance, understanding and connection, even before we find new strategies that may meet more of our needs.

1. Write down a judgment you have of yourself that you would like to explore. This may be something you think about yourself that you completely believe is true.
2. Think of a time or situation when you are likely to have this self-judgment come up, and write an observation of what you are actually doing at that time.
3. What needs of yours are not met through these actions? (The judgment alerts you to the fact that some of your needs are not met by this action.)
4. Focus your attention on those needs instead of the judgment. How are you feeling when you focus on the needs?
5. All our actions are attempts to meet needs. Which needs of yours are you trying to meet in the action you are judging? Are you successfully meeting those needs?
6. Read through all of the needs you have identified and connected with. Are there any needs of yours that are met by spending this time connecting with your needs? Is there any internal shift in your energy about the judgment?

7. If the judgment still seems as alive to you, consider the following question: Which needs of yours are you trying to meet by holding on to the judgment you have of yourself? How do you feel when you connect with these needs?

8. If your attention is going to potential strategies to meet your needs, write down any ideas you have that you can imagine may meet more of your needs than you have been able to meet previously.

SELF-JUDGMENTS: LEARNING FROM “MISTAKES”

KEYS:

- a. Any action that we judge ourselves about is, like all actions, an attempt to meet our needs. The judgment alerts us to the fact that some of our needs are not met.
- b. The action of judging ourselves is itself an attempt to meet needs.
- c. Connecting fully with all our needs enables us to meet needs for self-acceptance, understanding and connection, even before we find new strategies that may meet more of our needs.

1. Think of a time or situation when you did something you evaluated as a “mistake,” or an action that you judged in some way. Write an observation of what you are actually doing at that time.

2. What needs of yours were not met when you took the action you just described? (The judgment alerts you to the fact that some of your needs were not met by this action.) What feeling arises in relation to those needs?

3. All our actions are attempts to meet needs. Review the action you took that you are judging yourself about (the observation from #1 above). Which needs of yours were you trying to meet by taking this action? And what feelings do you have in relation to this set of needs?

4. Reflect: are you actually succeeding in meeting these needs by taking these actions? (Whether your answer is yes or no, this is important information to have as you consider your options for how to act in the future.)

5. Read through all of the needs you have identified and connected with so far. Are there any needs of yours that are met by connecting with your needs right now? Is there any internal shift in your energy about the judgment? Any learning for you?

6. If the judgment still seems as alive to you, consider the following question: Which needs of yours are you trying to meet by holding on to the judgment you have of yourself? How do you feel when you connect with these needs?

7. Reflect on your feelings, needs, and any requests you have of yourself in this moment. If your attention is going to potential strategies to meet your needs, write down any ideas you have that you can imagine may meet more of your needs than you were able to meet previously.

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR FEELINGS

KEYS:

- a. Every feeling we experience is related to a need that we have. Identifying those needs is key to taking responsibility for our feelings.
- b. Just stating the observation is not sufficient to acknowledge responsibility, because it still implies that what happened caused the feelings. Instead, we look for the meaning we assign to the action as a clue to the underlying need that is alive in us.
- c. When we cannot identify our needs that are causing the feeling, we can still take responsibility by recognizing, owning and articulating the thoughts or images that lead to the feeling. This includes, in particular, acknowledging to ourselves that it is an interpretation and not the “truth” about this person.
- d. We can take full responsibility by shifting both the way we think and the way we express ourselves.

1. Think of a situation in which you have attributed your reaction to what the other person did (“She made me angry” or “It’s not safe for me to be around this person” or something else to that effect. The rest of this journal is about working with this situation.
2. Write down a pure description of what it is that this person did. Move away from generalizations and characterizations into just stating exactly what the person said or did in a way that a video camera could record.
3. Write down as fully as possible all the thoughts and reactions that you have to this person’s actions or words.
4. As you contemplate these thoughts, what feelings arise in you? If you are not habituated to connecting with your feelings, consider which of the following four most matches your experience: sad, glad, mad, scared. Most common feelings are some variation on one of these four themes.

5. Take one of these reactions and use it to complete one of the following sentences. They are all equivalent, only providing different paths to the deepening into yourself that this journal is aimed for:
 - a. I have the reaction I have because I care deeply about _____
 - b. I have the reaction above because _____ matters to me
 - c. I have the reaction above because I have a longing for _____

If you anticipate that some other sentence that gets to this level would work better for you, by all means use it.

6. When you focus your attention on what you identified above, what feeling most closely comes to awareness? (often people experience shifting from “mad” to “sad” or “scared” – a move from blame to self-connection)
7. Shift your attention back and forth between the initial thought and the new awareness of your deeper needs that give rise to it. Watch and see if your feelings shift back and forth, too.
8. Now aim to find an entirely different way of making sense of what the other person did or said, one in which their actions make sense to them based on what their needs are, needs that are no different from your own. See if you can identify possible needs or values in a manner similar to what you did for yourself in question #4. Take a moment to rest internally with this possibility, so as to open your heart to this person’s humanity.

Note: if you are imagining needs that you are not resonating with, you haven’t gone deeply enough. Then ask yourself what could be a deeper need that would underlie the need you are not “approving” of. Continue in this vein until you can open your heart.

9. Now return to your own feelings. Has anything shifted as a result of focusing on other interpretations of the other person’s action?
10. Take a moment to write down any insights, learning, ideas, feelings and needs that arise in response to this process.

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR FEELINGS - PRACTICE

In each of the following statements, does the speaker acknowledge responsibility for his or her feelings? Does he or she express a feeling and a need? If not, does he or she express the thoughts that lead to the feeling? If, in your assessment, the speaker is not acknowledging responsibility for his or her feelings, re-write the statement so that responsibility for feelings is acknowledged.

1. You irritate me when you leave your clothes on the floor of your room.
2. I feel angry when you say that because I take it as an insult.
3. I feel scared when you raise your voice.
4. I am very moved by your kindness.
5. I feel frustrated when people don't call me back because I need consideration.
6. I'm so impressed by how smart you are!
7. When you used that tone of voice I felt happy because my need for gentleness was met.
8. I feel grief because people are dying for no good reason.
9. I'm sad that you won't be coming for dinner because I was hoping we could spend the evening together.
10. I feel disappointed because you said you would do it and you didn't.
11. I feel horrified because these people are being treated unjustly.

TRANSFORMING JUDGMENTS AND ENEMY IMAGES

KEYS:

- a. Judging someone is an indication that a need of ours is not met. The first step in transforming judgments is to recognize and connect with our unmet needs.
- b. The action we're judging is itself an attempt to meet needs. The second step is connecting with the needs of the person we're judging so we can open our hearts with compassion.
- c. When we experience challenge in transforming our judgments, we can reflect on what needs we might be trying to meet by holding on to our judgments. Connecting with this set of needs may be essential to enable the previous two steps to proceed.

1. Write down a judgment you have of someone else that you would like to explore. This may be something you think about that person that you completely believe is true. You may pick someone in your personal life, or someone who is in some position of political or economic power whose actions affect you.
2. Think of a time or situation when you are likely to have this judgment come up, and write an observation of what this person is actually doing at that time.
3. What needs of yours are not met in relation to that person's action? How do you feel when these needs are not met? Explore this sufficiently to experience the relief of self-connection.
4. Explore the possibility of opening your heart to this other person. What needs do you imagine this person might be trying to meet by taking this action? How might this person be feeling? Explore this sufficiently to experience the relief of compassion.
5. Check in with yourself about your original judgment. Is it still alive? If yes, return to connecting with your own needs or with the other person's needs – wherever you're experiencing a "charge." If the judgment is still alive after that, consider: What needs might you be trying to meet by holding on to this judgment? What feelings arise in relation to this? Again, connect with yourself sufficiently about these needs to experience some relief.

6. Check in with yourself again about the judgment. If it's still alive, consider the following questions:
 - a. Is there any way in which you believe the judgment to be "the truth"? If so, explore what needs might be met by this belief, and what needs might be met by letting go of this belief.
 - b. Are you afraid to express this judgment? If yes, what needs are you afraid would not be met by sharing it, and what needs might be met?
 - c. Are you judging yourself for having this judgment? If yes, explore any way in which you're telling yourself that you should not have this judgment. Connect with your choice about whether or not to work any further on transforming this judgment, and explore any needs that might be met by continuing to work on transforming the judgment, or letting go of working on it. (You may also want to work with the "Self-Judgments: Mourning and Self-Compassion" worksheet.)
 - d. Reflect on your feelings, needs, and any requests you have of yourself or of the other person in this moment.

INTERDEPENDENCE: EXPRESSION FOR CONNECTION

Purpose:

To find a way to shift the intention of expression from being heard and/or getting relief to offering the expression as a way to support connection with another.

Think of a moment when you were unhappy with someone's actions, and reflect on the following questions:

1. If you absolutely didn't censor yourself, what would be your reaction?
2. What can you learn from that reaction about yourself? What are the key needs you identified? Take a moment to connect fully with each of the needs you identify before moving to additional needs.
3. What is your best guess of the other person's needs in the behavior that isn't meeting your needs?
4. What would you like to request of this person that you imagine might also meet her/his needs?
5. What of your experience and what you discovered about yourself would you want to express to this person for the purpose of creating connection? Consider if you notice any right/wrong thinking still present in your expression. If so, return to step 2 and redo this exercise until you find a way of expressing your needs and requests without any judgment.

POWER, RESOURCES, AND CHOICE

Our mission is to contribute to a world where everyone's needs matter and people have the skills for making peace. We choose to explore issues of power, resources, and choice because they address two passionate commitments we have: first, to including *all* people both in mattering and in peace making skills development, and second, to working toward social transformation in a way that embodies the values we seek to create. (These values are delineated in a separate document called *NVC Assumptions and Intentions*.) In particular, we aim for transformation that does not create new enemies.

We invite you to explore the definitions at the heart of this document as a way to engage your mind and heart with some of the most challenging issues facing people at this time: How do we communicate when we have different life experiences or different interpretations of what we see around us? Are there ways to foster connection and trust even across the biggest divisions in our cultures? And to begin with, how do we make sense of power and choice, and how can we speak about them without getting lost in judgments of ourselves or of others?

Note: since Inbal's death in 2014, this document is being developed with ongoing consultation with Uma Lo and with Roxy Manning.

Power

The capacity to mobilize resources to attend to needs.

Note: While attending to needs in the attempt to meet them may or may not result in actually meeting them, having resources and being able to mobilize them increases the likelihood of needs being met.

Exercise I:

Check in with yourself about this definition of power.

1. What feelings and needs arise in you?
2. Are there any observations or thoughts connected to these feelings and needs?
3. Do you have a different definition that addresses your observations, feelings and needs more fully?

Resources

Strategies, ideas, behaviors, things – anything that can be used to meet needs.

External Resources

Aspects of life that are available to access such as money (or any other medium for obtaining physical resources, services, space, time, etc.), social support for our decision-making power (e.g. laws and social customs), information, education, time, physical strength, health, connections (e.g. mentors and social networks), access to nature, social or organizational structures that prioritize some people's needs over others (e.g. lending practices that favor or deny certain groups), etc.

A sub-section of external resources are **relational resources**, including *other* people's habits, choices and values, such as habits of compliance or deference (more resources for us) and rebellion (fewer resources for us), value for meeting everyone's needs (more resources for us), etc.

Internal Resources

Aspects of our inner experience and capacities such as knowledge, cultural capital (behavior in accordance with cultural norms and values), beliefs about our entitlement to resources, level of self-connection, access to compassion, awareness of choice, capacity to make choices that meet our own and others' needs, flexibility about how we interpret life (e.g. developing stories and belief systems about life that may be different from our upbringing), critical thinking, our constitutional, learned, and nurtured resources, etc.

NOTES:

1. The degree to which we have access to internal resources is greatly influenced by our life circumstances (i.e. the external resources that we've had access to) but it is not determined by them.

Example a: Children who arrive in school having been raised in families with access to certain cultural resources are more likely to be familiar with school norms and expectations, and thus more likely to do well.

Example b: Meditation and NVC practice tend to increase internal resources such as inner peace and the capacity for presence. People with more access to external resources are more likely to have access to such options.

Example c: People who advocate for themselves with the medical system are more likely to receive the care they are seeking. The capacity to advocate for oneself is influenced by one's access to education and to a sense of entitlement.

2. Some internal resources contribute to the ability to function and thrive in the system we are born into or live in. And some contribute to greater capacity for flexibility, adaptability, and

transformation whether or not we are aligned with the values and norms, and regardless of our actual access to external resources.

Example: Prisoners who have access to NVC classes often find themselves able to negotiate better with parole officers and with their families despite continuing to have no access to physical autonomy.

Exercise II a:

Check in with yourself about these definitions of resources and internal and external resources.

1. What feelings and needs arise in you?
2. Are there any observations or thoughts connected to these feelings and needs?
3. Do you have different definitions that address your observations, feelings, and needs more fully?

Exercise II b:

Consider the following questions in relation to one area of your life; your responses might be different in relation to different areas. Choose a role you have (e.g. parent, employment status) or a particular relationship, ideally one where you believe you and another person have different access to resources. If the first area doesn't yield responses that you find satisfying, try another area. You may then want to complete the questions about other areas of your life as well.

In relation to _____

1. What external resources can you identify that you have?
2. What external resources can you identify that you do not have?
3. What internal resources can you identify that you have?
4. What internal resources can you identify that you do not have?
5. Identify 1-3 internal resources that you would like to develop. For each one, note how NVC might support you in developing these resources.

Exercise II c:

In relation to the same area of your life that you chose in IIb, check in with yourself about the other person's (or people's) access to resources.

1. What external resources can you identify that the other person has?
2. What external resources can you identify that the other person does not have?
3. What internal resources can you identify that the other person has?
4. What internal resources can you identify that the other person does not have?
5. Identify 1-3 internal resources that you would like to support this person to develop. For each one, note how NVC might support you in supporting the other person in this area.

Exercise II d:

Take a few moments to connect with your responses to the questions above. What feelings and needs arise? Any reflections?

Power-over and Power-with

Power-over:

Focus: Attending to one's own needs, possibly including the need for contribution to the person or people over whom we are using our power.

Action: Mobilizing resources to attend to our needs whether or not others' needs will be attended to. In particular, even if some needs may be met for another person, the need for full choice would not be met for that person. The choice to use our power over others can be unconscious or conscious.

Unconscious power-over includes all the ways in which we use our greater access to resources habitually, without awareness and conscious choice about this fact. This use of power-over may contribute to meeting a variety of needs, but has a high cost in terms of relationship, trust, synergy, well-being of the people affected and their ultimate freedom.

Conscious power-over can take the form of protective force or of unilateral, functional force.

Protective force includes all the ways in which we use our greater access to resources with the motivation of protecting life or safety (without intention to punish).

Protective force would be used for the minimum amount of time necessary to achieve safety and return to exercising power with others.

Unilateral, functional force includes all the ways in which we use our greater access to resources to effect the outcome we want without including other people's autonomous choice, simply because we do not have the internal (e.g. imagination, spaciousness) or external resources (e.g. time flexibility) to make the choice to share power. The motivation is to meet needs such as movement, ease, resolution, etc., and does not entail any punitive intention. Recognizing that this type of force is not truly protective is a first step to taking responsibility for our choice to use power over. Over time, we may develop greater internal resources and therefore choose to use our power with others in more circumstances.

Example: Parents may set bedtime routines or going to school routines and handle daily conflicts around them with rewards and consequences because they simply don't recognize other options for how to meet everyone's needs. Their intention is not punitive; their intention is to survive and manage daily life.

Power-with:

Focus: Supporting autonomous choice for both people and attending to both people's needs.

Action: Holding everyone's needs fully precious, without assigning more value for one's own or for others' needs; mobilizing resources to create sufficient connection for everyone to trust that their needs matter.

NOTE: In writing these definitions we are attempting to be descriptive, not implying in any way that we anticipate that a time could come when everyone, all the time, would be attending to everyone's needs and attempting to make sure everything works for everyone. The issue is more about what happens when we become aware of new information, such as the effect of our actions on others. Do we then open up to dialogue and the willingness to change our strategies and approach in order to include the needs we were not aware of before? What needs would we include or not? When might unilateral force meet more needs for more people than dialogue?

Exercise III a:

Check in with yourself about these definitions.

1. What feelings and needs arise in you?
2. Are there any observations or thoughts connected to these feelings and needs?
3. Do you have different definitions that address your observations, feelings, and needs more fully?

Exercise III b:

Identify a situation in which you have more power (access to more resources) than someone else.

1. Are there any ways in which you are using power over this other person to get what you want? Include observations for each kind of power over that you are aware of:
 - a. Conscious – protective force:
 - b. Conscious – unilateral, functional force:
 - c. Unconscious (This may be difficult to identify and bring to awareness.)
2. For each of these types of power-over, what needs are you trying to meet in using this kind of power? Are those needs met? What feelings arise in relation to these needs?
3. For each of these types of power-over, are there additional needs that are met that are different from the needs you are trying to meet? What feelings arise in relation to these needs?
4. For each of these types of power-over, what needs are not met? What feelings arise in relation to these needs?
5. Do any insights arise for you as you consider your responses so far?
6. Do you have any requests of yourself in relation to what you've discovered so far?
7. If you consider shifting to power-with, what needs do you notice arising that may be met? What feelings arise in relation to these needs?
8. What needs arise that may be unmet? What feelings arise in relation to these needs?
9. Connecting with your responses to considering shifting to power-with, what feelings and needs emerge for you? Take a few moments to connect with yourself.
10. Consider: Do you want to transform your use of power? You may want to connect to needs that would lead you to say yes and needs that would lead you to say no.
11. If you do want to transform your use of power, what might you do differently? Identify resources you might need within yourself or from outside yourself that would help support this choice. If you want, create a concrete plan to support you in making this transformation.

The Two Axes of Power

It may be helpful to note that there are two different factors that can get confused in regards to use of power. One is care: does the person with power care about the needs of the person with less power? The other is autonomy: does the person with power engage with the autonomy of the person with less power? Does the person with less power participate in the decisions?

Below is a table that might help shed light on this complexity. One of the results of not separating out these two factors is that people who care about others can be unaware of using power over them and believe themselves to be in collaboration just because they care even though they don't involve the other person in the decisions that affect them.

Note, as you look at the table below, that it is possible to create systems and relationships in which collaboration (full sharing of power) does not depend on caring, and is only about how decisions are made.

	Engaging Autonomy	Not Engaging Autonomy
Actively Exercising Caring	Full power-with: e.g. collaborating on making decisions that affect everyone	Benign power-over: e.g. parents designing and enforcing what they trust is best for their children
Not (Necessarily) Actively Exercising Caring	Embedded power-with: e.g. systems such as holacracy that are designed to invite people into decision-making regardless of whether people in power personally seek it	Authoritarian power-over: e.g. traditional command-and-control structures in corporations, designed to maximize profits without attention to employee well-being and meaningful participation

Structural Power

Having sufficient external resources within a system (e.g. workplace, government, family, court) that carry social, cultural, or legal power or legitimacy, usually by assignation of role or job title but sometimes by membership in a group.

Example a: Police officer, judge, manager, etc.

Example b: All fathers and husbands (in many cultures) before women had the right to own property.

When we have structural power, the choice about what will happen ultimately resides with us. We may choose to use our power *with* others or *over* others, but the choice is ours.

Structural power includes the power to restrict others' access to resources, the power to limit others' options, and the power to create and deliver consequences for others' actions.

Whether or not we use our power over others when we have structural power, the fact that we have access to structural power may affect the people who do not have that structural power, including the beliefs they may have about themselves, about people who have that structural power, or about others who do not have that structural power.

Example a: We lead an annual Leadership Program. As leaders of the program, we ultimately get to choose who gets into the program, even if we choose to have the decision be participatory.

Example b: Parents have legal and social support to determine most of their children's choices around type of schooling, activities, friendships within the home, food in the home, access to money and other resources, parenting style and "discipline" strategies, and more.

Note: We find it useful to make a distinction between *having* power and choice of *using* power. We see this as significant for two reasons. One is that when we recognize that it is entirely possible to have structural power and use it *with* others, we can release some of the fear of power that we have, and more people with an awareness of power sharing might end up being willing to step into leadership. The other is a point of humility: recognizing that the habit of using power over others is deeply ingrained in our social conditioning, and therefore shifting our social structures entails also transforming habits of how power is used.

Exercise IV a:

Check in with yourself about this definition.

1. What feelings and needs arise in you?
2. Are there any observations or thoughts connected to these feelings and needs?
3. Do you have a different definition that addresses your observations, feelings and needs more fully?

Exercise IV b:

1. Write down at least 2 examples where you have acknowledged structural power in your life:
 - a. What choices do you make in relation to having this structural power? Do you use this power? In what ways?
 - b. How do you feel as you notice where you have structural power? What needs arise for you?

2. Write down at least 2 examples where you don't have structural power in your life, or have actual structural barriers:
 - a. What choices do you make in relation to not having this structural power?
 - b. How do you feel as you notice where you do not have structural power? What needs arise for you?

Structural Privilege (Social-Structural Power)

Invisible structural privilege

Forms of access to resources that result from legal or social norms having to do with membership in a group, without any particular action, inaction, or even awareness on the part of the people who have that access of the existence of the disparity, the potential benefits to them, or the costs to others.

Structural privilege is societally given, not chosen, and is independent of attitude or belief system; believing in equality between the races in the US, for example, does not cancel the privilege of a white person. At the same time, having structural privilege often leads to certain behaviors through socialization, normative models, and the tendency to justify privilege that has existed in human societies since social stratification started around the time of agriculture.

Structural power such as boss in relation to employee exists when individuals are within a particular relationship, and ends when they are not. Within that relationship, the person in power has the ability to exercise their power over the other person (see the beginning of section D). Structural privilege is different in that the power difference is inherent in the societal social structures. It exists independently of the relationship between the two people. As a result, structural privilege is often invisible to the people who have it. It often appears often as the "norm" rather than a disparity. A boss knows that they can make decisions that others cannot, and that this difference is inherent in the structure of the organization. White people in the US, on the other hand, can easily see their privilege as simply "being fortunate" without even being aware that it is not available to others, or that there is a relationship between their "fortune" and another's "misfortune."

It is not the specific resource that makes it a privilege. Rather, it is the fact that only some groups of people have it and others don't.

Example: In the existing health care system in the US, many people don't have adequate access to health care. That makes adequate access to health care a privilege, because it is only available to some.

Note: The assumption that the difference in access to resources has to do with membership in a group is highly interpretive, even though it is also supported by many observations and studies. The task of representing privilege within a framework of power, resources, and choice that relies on making observations rather than interpretations remains an ongoing challenge. Being able to express ideas about privilege in language that is as close to observational as possible is one strategy for connecting across all differences.

Example a: Most schools are structured around verbal and written work and the ability to sit quietly and attend to classroom instruction. Homeless children are more likely to have moderate to severe acute and chronic health problems, hyperactivity/inattention, behavior problems, anxiety, and depression. This can affect emotional and cognitive development, as they are thus more than twice as likely as other children to repeat a grade, be suspended or expelled, or drop out of high school. In this sense, children with stable homes in which their physical and emotional needs can be met have a structural privilege that makes it more likely they will meet the expected behavioral norms in the classroom.

Example b: When white people in the US walk into a store to buy something, they are rarely if ever followed around by security guards to ensure they don't steal. Black people, on the other hand, and especially young Black men, are routinely followed around like that.

Levels of Privilege

Although privilege is structural in its origin, it operates in a variety of ways at the cultural, interpersonal, and personal levels as well as structurally. Overall, being able to go through daily life without experiencing, seeing, or even being aware of the day-to-day effects of privilege on others is itself a form of privilege.

Structural example: Being more likely to receive better medical care in an emergency room; lower sentences for criminal behavior; being protected by the police rather than harmed by them; etc.

Cultural example: Being able to buy food, clothing, or hair products at any store, rather than needing to spend time and money to drive further to go to the "ethnic" shops, is a form of privilege available to most European-Americans.

Interpersonal example: Being able to speak and rely on being taken seriously is a form of privilege that accrues to white middle- and upper-class men in particular.

Personal example: Seeing one's own physical form as consistent with beauty norms is far more available to white women than to women of any other race or ethnicity.

Effects of Privilege

The cumulative effects at the structural, cultural, interpersonal, and personal levels of experiencing others' privileged access to resources and our own lack of access to the same resources, over time, is the closest definition we can come up with, for now, to the term "oppression".

Structural example: Being significantly more likely to be stopped by police, arrested, harmed, or killed; receiving higher sentences in the criminal justice system; being denied mortgage application more often; and so forth.

Cultural example: Rarely seeing one's group members represented in meaningful, positive ways in mainstream media; being a closeted homosexual, and adjusting language, volume, mode of dress, or expression in order to avoid ridicule or violence.

Interpersonal example: Being interpreted as "overreacting" when expressing intensity during a cross-race conflict; being ignored or unacknowledged when expressing opinions

Personal example: Internalizing messages about being underqualified, unreliable, etc.

Exercise V a:

Check in with yourself about these definitions (not the examples).

1. What feelings and needs arise in you?
2. Are there any observations or thoughts connected to these feelings and needs?
3. Do you have different definitions that address your observations, feelings, and needs more fully?

Exercise V b:

Check in with yourself about the examples that accompanied the definitions.

1. What feelings and needs arise in you?
2. Are there any observations or thoughts connected to these feelings and needs?
3. Do you have different examples that address your observations, feelings, and needs more fully?

Exercise V c:

1. Write down at least 2 examples where you have invisible structural privilege in your life. Include observations:
 - a. What choices do you make in relation to having this structural privilege? Do you use this privilege? In what ways?

- b. How do you feel as you notice where you have structural privilege? What needs arise for you?
2. Write down at least 2 examples where you don't have structural privilege in your life. Include observations:
 - a. What choices do you make in relation to not having this structural privilege?
 - b. How do you feel as you notice where you do not have structural privilege? What needs arise for you?

Exercise V d:

1. As you reflect on your responses to all the questions above, do any insights arise?
2. Do you have any requests of yourself or of others in relation to these issues?
3. Are there any strategies you would like to consider for increasing your awareness about structural power or privilege that you have? Anything you'd like to do differently?

Choices about Responding to Structural Power Differences

External choice

Limited by our willingness to live with certain consequences of our choices. We don't always have access to resources to exercise our preferred strategies. Some of our options are constrained by our unwillingness to live with certain consequences of the choices we would rather make.

Example: You want to bring your children to an NVC event. The leaders have decided not to offer a children's program. You have choice about how to respond, but you don't have the option of bringing your children and have a program set up for them. You may not have the option of staying on the premises if you bring your children without prior agreement with the leaders. If you choose to stay when you are being asked to leave, you may not have the option of staying if a police officer comes to escort your family off the premises. You may not have the option of not going to jail if you refuse.

Exercise VI a:

Think of an area where you're experiencing limited external choice (you perceive someone else as having structural power).

1. What is the situation?
2. What are the consequences you don't want to live with that are leading you to make the choices you're making? In other words, what needs are you trying to meet in these choices?
3. What are the consequences of making these choices? In other words, in what ways are they not aligned with your preferred strategies and what needs are not met therefore?
4. Given full awareness of the consequences you're choosing to live with – and not live with (needs met and unmet) in your current choice, would you like to stay with this choice, or make a different choice? Articulate what is leading you to stay with/change this choice and connect with yourself to a place where you are at peace about this choice.

Internal choice

Limited only by our internal resources. In principle, we always have internal choice about how to respond, even if our external options remain limited. There are several types of internal resources within us that support internal choice.

Inner peace: the more we can live in peace with our unmet needs and emotional challenge, the more we can maintain a sense of choice in how to respond rather than be reactive.

Courage: the more willingness we have to face consequences that might arise if we exercise choice in ways that those in positions of structural power may not like, the more options we could consider in how to respond, including in particular standing up for what's true for us even if it means losing a job, or even our life.

Capacities: the more internal capacities we have such as empathy and dialogue skills to create connection with the people in power or the capacity to inspire and motivate others to create communities of strength, the wider the range of responses we can muster.

Ultimately, our response to power will depend on the needs we are trying to attend to, including attempting to transform the very conditions of power that affect us in the first place.

NOTE: If we are structurally in a position of having less access to external resources and less structural power, we will need more internal resources to be able to shape the course of our lives. At the same time, the lived experience of ongoing limited access to external resources often leaves us with less access to internal resources and to choice, both because cultivating internal resources often requires external resources (e.g. money and leisure), and because

reduced access to external resources often results in trauma and ongoing stress, both of which reduce our access to internal choice.

Exercise VI b:

In relation to the situation from exercise V a:

1. What is your internal choice about how to respond? (Notice in particular any habits of submission or rebellion)
2. What needs does this choice meet? What needs are not met? Are you experiencing any self-judgments in relation to your internal choice? If so, connect with yourself sufficiently to have clarity about your underlying needs. You may want to use other journals to fully transform these judgments.
3. If there is a specific person with structural power involved, are you struggling to meet this person with compassion? If so, what prevents you from creating a full human connection with this person? (If there is not, create a “representative person” to work with. E.g., don’t work with a “government” but with person x who is in role y within a government.)
4. What needs are you aware this person is trying to meet?
5. What might make it hard for them to use power with - what needs might not be met if they use power with?
6. As you connect with awareness of your own and the other person’s needs, what feelings and needs arise within you?
7. Do any insights arise for you?
8. Are there any new internal choices that you can imagine making? What might support you in expanding the range of your internal choices?

NVC in Relation to Power, Resources, and Choice

Since our full power reflects both our access to external resources and our access to internal resources, the less access to external resources we have (the less structural power), the more internal resources we need in order to have sufficient power to affect the course of our lives.

Hence, NVC can make a significant contribution to increasing our power by increasing our internal resources and therefore our capacity for authentic, empowered choice.

If we have less structural power, NVC supports us in increasing our internal resources. Specifically, NVC supports us in transcending the impulse to submit or rebel, and choosing instead the kind of response we want to have to people with more power based on seeing everyone's humanity, our own as well as theirs. With that, we can aim to forge the quality of connection, through dialogue, that can create shifts in people with more structural power. When dialogue is not available, NVC supports us in having the courage and the love necessary for engaging in other actions, including nonviolent resistance and civil disobedience, while maintaining a fully open heart. NVC also supports us in having full self-acceptance when we choose, in order to attend to some needs, to continue to accept conditions that don't meet some other needs, or even to numb out in order to survive at all.

If we have more structural power, NVC supports us in having internal resources for choosing and knowing how to share our power. For example, it may mean encouraging people to say "no" to us instead of saying "yes" out of fear of consequences, in order to achieve a quality of trust that everyone's needs matter.

Finally, NVC can also provide us with tools and vision to support people who have less access to external resources by supporting them to increase their internal resources and, through that, their capacity for creating the life and world they want to live in.

Exercise VII:

1. How has NVC contributed to more internal resources for you?
2. How might you focus more attention on developing internal resources with NVC?
3. What choices might you make differently if you keep NVC in mind as an option for transforming power relations?
4. Are any other reflections arising for you in response to this segment?

Systemic Considerations Regarding Structural Power

Our vision is a world where everyone's needs matter and people have the skills for making peace. To move toward such a vision entails exploring the possibility of a full partnership system with no structural power. We see a difference between systems that have a commitment to a benevolent use of structural power and systems which are set up not to have structural power. The former rely on people with structural power to use their power *with* others, and are thus vulnerable to change of personnel. The latter are set up in such a way that no one can exercise

power over others. For one example of a thorough investigation, with examples, of self-managing organizations, look at the book *Reinventing Organizations* by Frederic Laloux.

Our current observation of the world is that systems that fully institutionalize shared power are the rare exception. Examples are the company Semco in Brazil, and, to some extent, B-corporations, a new legal form of incorporating in the US, which has more options for power sharing than other forms. We are actively interested in examples of such systems. Additional examples are described in Frederic Laloux's book.

Exercise VIII:

1. Are you aware of any systems, small or large, that operate on the basis of shared power?
2. Reflect on the variety of definitions in this document to check: is this shared structural power or benevolent use of structural power?
3. What feelings and needs arise as you consider these questions?
4. Do you have any vision or insight into how to institutionalize shared power?
5. Do you have any requests of yourself or others that you'd like to explore toward this vision?

SELF-JUDGMENTS: MOURNING AND SELF-COMPASSION

1. Think of something you've done that you feel regret about. Write down what it is in observations (without judgments).
2. What are judgments you have of yourself in relation to what you've done? Write them down, as much as possible without editing.

A. Mourning:

1. How do you feel in relation to what you did? Notice and note both emotions and physical sensations in your body.
2. Identify which needs of yours were not met in choosing this action:
 - a. Needs related to your own values
 - b. Needs related to the unhappy results even if your choice is aligned with your values (connect with the other person's unmet needs)
3. Take some time to fully connect with each of the needs you identified until you feel your heart open in full.
4. Take a moment to breathe and check in with yourself. Do you notice more judgments? If yes, write them down.
5. Again, identify feelings and needs behind these judgments. Pause each time you identify a feeling or a need to experience it as much as possible.

B. Self-Compassion:

1. Now shift your attention to the needs you were trying to meet when you did the thing you've regretted. Write them down and give your attention to connecting with them. You may also recall feelings from that time.
2. How do you feel as you notice the needs you were trying to meet? Again, connect as much as you can with both emotions and physical sensations.
3. Take a moment to breathe and check in with yourself again. How are you feeling now? What needs are met or not met in this moment?
4. Do you have any requests of yourself at this moment that may support you in meeting your needs?
5. If you notice any self-judgments arise, connect once again with the feelings and needs behind them. Continue to shift back and forth between mourning and self-compassion until the mourning is free from self-judgments.

C. Self-Connection in the Moment:

1. Read through all of the needs you have identified and connected with so far. Are there any needs of yours that are met by connecting with your needs right now? Is there any internal shift in your energy about the judgment? Any learning for you?
2. If the judgment still seems as alive to you, consider the following question: Which needs of yours are you trying to meet by holding on to the judgment you have of yourself? How do you feel when you connect with these needs?
3. Connect with your feelings and needs in this moment. Do you have any requests yourself in this moment? Any insights that you want to jot down to remember?

REQUESTS IN NVC

In order to meet our needs, we make requests to assess how likely we are to get cooperation for particular strategies we have in mind for meeting our needs. Our aim is to identify and express a specific action that we believe will serve this purpose, and then check with others involved about their willingness to participate in meeting our needs in this way. In a given moment, it is our connection with another that determines the quality of their response to our request. Therefore often our requests in the moment are "connection requests," intended to foster connection and understanding and to determine whether we have sufficiently connected to move to a "solution request." An example of a connection request might be: "Would you tell me how you feel about this?" An example of a solution request might be "Would you be willing to take your shoes off when you come in the house?"

The spirit of requests relies on our willingness to hear a "no" and to continue to work with ourselves or others to find ways to meet everyone's needs. Whether we are making a request or a demand is often evident by our response when our request is denied. A denied demand will lead to punitive consequences; a denied request most often will lead to further dialogue. We recognize that "no" is an expression of some need that is preventing the other person from saying "yes". If we trust that through dialogue we can find strategies to meet both of our needs, "no" is simply information to alert us that saying "yes" to our request may be too costly in terms of the other person's needs. We can then continue to seek connection and understanding to allow additional strategies to arise that will work to meet more needs.

To increase the likelihood that our requests would be understood, we attempt to use language that is as concrete and doable as possible, and that is truly a request rather than a demand. For example, "I would like you to always come on time" is unlikely to be doable, while "Would you be willing to spend 15 minutes with me talking about what may help you arrive at 9 am to our meetings?" is concrete and doable. While a person may assent to the former expression ("Yes, I'll always come on time"), our deeper needs – for connection, confidence, trust, responsibility, respect, or others - are likely to remain unmet.

If someone agrees to our request out of fear, guilt, shame, obligation, or the desire for reward, this compromises the quality of connection and trust between us. When we are able to express a clear request, we raise the likelihood that the person listening to us will experience choice in their response. As a consequence, while we may not gain immediate assent to our wishes, we are more likely to get our needs met over time because we are building trust that everyone's needs matter. Within an atmosphere of such trust, goodwill increases, and with it a willingness to support each other in getting our needs met.

Learning to make clear requests and shifting our consciousness to making requests in place of demands are very challenging skills for most people. People often find the request part to be the hardest, because of what we call a "crisis of imagination": a difficulty in identifying a strategy that

could actually meet our needs without being at the expense of other needs. Even before considering the needs of others, the very act of coming up with what we call a positive, doable request is challenging. We are habituated to thinking in terms of what we want people to stop doing (“don’t yell at me”), and how we want them to be (“treat me with respect”) rather than what we want them to do (“Would you be willing to lower your voice or talk later?”). With time, and a deeper connection to our needs, our creativity expands to imagine and embrace more strategies.

This fourth step is critical to our ability to create the life we want. In particular, shifting from demands to requests entails a leap in focus and in faith: we shift from focusing on getting our needs met, to focusing on the quality of connection that will allow both of our needs to truly matter and ultimately also to be met.

As you read each scenario below, answer the following questions:

1. What are my needs in this situation?
2. What are the other person’s needs in this situation?
3. What are the needs for the relationship?
4. What request do I want to make to support connection?
5. What request do I want to make to support movement?

1. I just got home from a very hard day at work and I want a few minutes of quiet to clear my head, but when I walk in, my daughter has the music cranked up high while they wash dishes.
2. I want to go out for a walk at the ocean with my spouse who is often busy working on the weekends.
3. My support group meets on the one day of the week I always work out of town. I would like to participate in the meetings occasionally.
4. My neighbor leaves an angry phone message telling me not to let my son park in front of his house. The next time I see my neighbor I speak with him about it.
5. I return an item to the store where I bought the item last night; the clerk says without much interest, "We don't give refunds without the receipt."

Practices for Requesting

1. Consider something you would like in your life right now. Consider a request you could make of yourself or another. Refine this to a next step which is:
 - Stated in the positive, i.e. what you do want rather than just the absence of something.
 - Concrete and specific (Doable)
 - Something can be done right now (Present moment)
 - Flexible (Open to outcome)

Write your request here: _____

Write another request here. Having more than one request often reduces our sense of urgency or demand about a yes response.

Write another request here. Having more than one request often reduces our sense of urgency or demand about a yes response.

2. Requesting becomes easier as one refines the intention to connect. We naturally reach out in connection with two requests:

a. **Reflection:** What I've said is authentic and important to me. I long to have a mutual understanding with you...

"Would you be willing to tell me what you heard is important to me?"

b. **Feedback:** What you feel and think is important to me. I long to have a mutual understanding with you...

"Would you be willing to tell me how you feel about what I've said?"

Write each of these requests in your own words for your situation.

Reflection Request: _____

Connection Request: _____

MAKING REQUESTS

Purpose:

To understand the variety of layers of awareness and skill involved with making requests. Pick a situation in which someone is doing something that is not in harmony with your own needs.

1. Write down your observations, feelings, and needs with regard to this situation
2. What would you like this person to do (solution request)?
3. Is your request specific? If not, revise it.
4. Is your request in the present (are you asking for a reply NOW)? If not, revise it.
5. Is your request in positive action language (what you DO want)? If not, revise it.
6. Do you predict your needs will be met if this action is taken? (Reconnect with clear purpose about this strategy)
7. Can you imagine other strategies for meeting your needs other than agreement to your request? (If you cannot, you may have a hard time holding your request as a request and not a demand. In this case, you may want to enter into a deeper connection with your needs to help you open to more strategies. See separate journals on this topic.)
8. How do you feel and what needs come to life for you when you imagine that the person would say no and not shift, or that your need may not be met in this situation? (This question begins an exploration of the shift from having to meet our needs to being present with our needs. See Needs: Facets of Self-Connection, a separate journal, for deeper engagement with this process.)
9. If you shift from trying to find a solution to the situation, to trying to connect, what might you request from this person (connection request)?
10. What need of yours would be met by this request? What feelings arise?
11. Having explored these various layers of making requests, do any insights or reflections arise for you? Feelings and needs? Take a few moments to connect with yourself.

CONNECTION REQUESTS: MOTIVATIONS AND EXAMPLES

Connection requests focus on the quality of connection between people instead of on any particular strategy or solution. While the core motivation for a connection request may be connection with the other person, varied internal states and needs may help guide us toward different types of connection requests.

Self-connection and understanding of our motivation in making a connection request can therefore greatly support our capacity for discovering and articulating what specifically we want from the other person that we believe may contribute to moving our dialogue forward toward an outcome that attends to both of our needs.

Simply put, connection requests emerge from whatever thoughts we have about what we want to know in order to navigate this conversation. When coming from an experience of 100% responsibility, the goal of the requests would be to attend to:

1. the other person understanding us;
2. us understanding the other person;
3. the other person trusting that we understand and care about them;
4. us trusting that they understand and care about us;
5. getting us to a place of having a mutual commitment to a solution that works for both of us.

We are the ones navigating all of this, especially if the other person doesn't have the skill or intention to participate in that kind of dialogue, in support of getting what we want, which, in the NVC frame, means not at cost to the other person.

When your focus is on the quality of connection, after you express feelings and needs, pause to consider the needs that arise within you in the moment. As much as you are able, focus on the needs in relation to the moment of this interaction rather than the content of what you expressed to the person. We call this a shift from *content* to *quality of connection*. Use the options below to check what is true for you, and share your authenticity as vulnerably as you are open to. If what you share is indeed different from the original content, reveal the needs behind the request you make.

In a certain sense, if your motivation truly is to further the dialogue and you are not attached to outcome in any way, you can ask just about anything in the world that invites the other person to look inside themselves and respond. In most cases, it is easiest for them if you provide a yes/no question rather than an open-ended one: "Is there any part of you that hears what I just said as criticism?" ... "Is there any part of you that now has a bit more compassion for me given what I said?" ... "Did I go on longer than you would want to hear?" ... "Is there something you would like to repeat or elaborate?"

Accordingly, the five specific types of connection requests presented below are not intended to be exhaustive, but rather to offer a range of possibilities among which you may find your own truth.

1. **Asking for reflection of what we said** – for confidence that we were understood for our intentions

Asking for reflection is often challenging for us and for the other person, principally when people interpret such requests to mean that we think they don't understand us. This can trigger self-judgments or judgments of us ("You think I'm stupid?!").

As always when making a request, revealing the need behind the request can nurture connection and clarity. In this case this would mean prefacing the request for reflection by sharing what leads us to ask for reflection. For example, after expressing what you want to be heard about, and before making the request, you might say:

- Sometimes I'm not as clear as I want to be...
- I'm worried I'm not making sense...
- I talked more than I intended, and I want to make sure the essence of what I was saying was clear...
- I'm a little anxious about what I said, and it would help me to hear...

The request itself can take any number of forms, such as:

- i. Would you tell me what you just heard me say?
- ii. Would you tell me what you hear is important to me (or what is the essence of what I shared)?

2. **Asking for empathic connection with us** – for empathic support, care, mattering, revealing our humanity

We may feel vulnerable to ask for empathic connection with us in the midst of a dialogue, and if so, consider sharing that vulnerability first (see above for examples of a similar focus on sharing the vulnerability about asking before making the request). It may also be challenging for the other person when they don't know what exactly we want from them. If you are asking a person with NVC experience for empathic connection, you can simply name a request for empathy. But if the person does not have experience, consider what would give you a sense that the person is empathically present with you, and whether this is even doable for that person. For example:

- i. I'd love to know whether you get the feelings and needs I'm trying to express. Would you tell me what you're getting?
- ii. I'm wondering whether you have a sense of what's in my heart? [If yes...] It's helpful to me to hear how others sense my heart – can you tell me what you sense?
- iii. Do you have a sense of your heart being open to me and present with me?

3. **Asking to hear about the impact of our words** – out of care and/or for clarity on how to proceed

Two primary motivations can lead us to want to hear about the impact of our words:

a. We want to *shift focus* and connect with the other person

In this case, our connection requests are straightforward, though it's still helpful to reveal what leads us to ask the question. For example:

- I'd love a sense of how you feel about what I'm saying.
- It matters to me to connect with what's up for you.

Followed by a request, such as:

- i. Would you tell me how you're feeling about what I just said?
- ii. What's this bringing up in you?
- iii. How is it for you to hear this?
- iv. How are you doing right now?
- v. I just noticed [your breathing]. Can you tell me what's going on in you?
- vi. I'm really curious to know what's happening in you. Are you willing to share that?

b. We want to know how we are received, but our focus is still on *ourselves*. We may feel vulnerable, nervous, etc., and hearing from the other person can help us get clarity and choose how to continue the conversation.

If this is the case, instead of just asking about what's going on in the other person, we could, again, reveal the feelings and needs behind our request. Unacknowledged fear may easily be interpreted as aggression or disconnection by the other person, so by revealing our own vulnerability we make it more likely that we will be accurately understood. Additionally, when we ask the other person about what is going on for them, we invite *them* to vulnerability. By sharing our own vulnerability first we increase the likelihood that the other person will experience willingness to share their vulnerability.

For example, we might say one of the following:

- I feel pretty vulnerable about what I shared and want to have a sense of how I'm heard. Would you tell me...
- I am a little nervous about what I just shared, and I want to have clarity and honesty between us. Would you tell me...
- I want to make sure that hearing me is not at cost to you. Would you tell me...
- I'm worried I've been talking longer than you enjoy listening. Would you tell me...

Then follow with one of the requests listed above.

Sometimes, instead of using open-ended questions like the ones above, we may be hoping for or concerned about a particular effect of our expression. In those cases, it may be helpful to make this hope or concern explicit. For example:

- i. I want to check whether you are hearing any blame or judgment because it's not my intention. Would you tell me whether that's coming up for you?
- ii. I am feeling quite vulnerable, and hoping that my expression is supporting a sense of connection between us. Would you tell me if you are feeling any closer to me hearing what I shared?

4. **Supporting connection towards solution** – to establish partnership in moving to strategies for solution

Sometimes, when we have some confidence in the quality of connection and we want to try to move towards a solution, we may want to begin the shift toward solutions by establishing an intention of caring for both people's needs together. For example:

- i. I want this to work for both of us. Would you tell me what are your concerns about the strategy I am proposing?
- ii. Would you tell me what might not work for you about what I am requesting?
- iii. Would you brainstorm together to come up with solutions that would work for both of us?
- iv. Would you tell me if you are open to exploring other options to work this out?
- v. Would you tell me if you imagine any other strategies that would meet both of our needs?

5. **Checking about openness to dialogue or to listening**

At times, we are not even confident that the other person is ready to hear us or to have a conversation. Instead of starting directly with the content we want to bring up, we can begin with expression about our desire for dialogue and inquire about the person's availability for that. For example:

- i. Would you be willing to listen to me talk about my experience?
- ii. Are you open to having this conversation now?

As with other elements of NVC, making connection requests invites us to offer our presence, authenticity, and compassion to others. Our own honesty, vulnerability, and self-understanding will more likely contribute to the quality of connection we want than any particular form or wording. Yet by recognizing the variety of needs that lead us to want to connect, and the variety of requests we may make to support those needs, we can more easily attend to our own and to others' needs for clarity, trust, and connection.

GOALS OF CONNECTION REQUESTS

Exercise 1:

Think of a request you're making of someone, maybe one that has you feeling frustrated, one you've been stuck on.

- a. Share the issue in your small group, get two or three lines of empathy.
- b. What kind of request was it?
 - i. Solution request – focused on the content of the issue and finding a solution?
 - ii. Connection request – focused on the quality of the connection between you and the other person?

Goals

1. Getting us to a place of having a mutual commitment to a solution that works for both of us.
 - a. Are you open to connecting about this right now?
 - b. Are you willing to hear what's been up for me?
1. The other person understanding us
 - a. Ask for a reflection of what we said
2. Us understanding the other person
 - a. Can I tell you what I'm understanding?
(sometimes mirroring is important)
3. The other person trusting that we understand and care about them
 - a. Ask to hear the impact of our words on the other person
4. Us trusting that the other person understands and cares about us;
 - a. Ask for empathic connection with us
 - i. Can you tell me what you understand is most important to me right now / what's in my heart?
5. Getting us to a mutual commitment to a solution that works for both of us.
 - a. What might not work about the plan we came up with?
 - b. Can we brainstorm ideas that would work for both of us?

Exercise 2:

Return to your small group. If you moved from finding a solution to connecting, what would you ask for? Which goal would you be trying to meet?

Roleplay a few lines and notice what comes up

REQUESTS: EXAMPLES

Requests for Dialogue

- Would you be willing to listen to me talk about my experience?
- Are you open to having this conversation now?
- Would you be willing to take some time to talk with me about... [topic]?"
- Could we sit down together and look at what we both need to see if we can find a way to work this out?

Yes / No Requests:

- Is there any part of you that hears what I just said as criticism or blame?
- Is there anything in what I said that you see differently?
- Do you feel a little bit more compassion or openness given what I just said?
- Are you feeling any more open to my request after hearing that?
- Did I go on longer than you wanted to hear?
- Is there something you'd like to say more about or elaborate on?
- Is there anything getting in the way of listening to me with an open mind?

Requests for a Reflection:

You might begin by naming the need or context:

- Sometimes I'm not as clear as I want to be...
- I'm worried I'm not making sense...
- I talked more than I'd intended, and want to make sure my main concerns/point came across...
- I'm a little anxious about what I said, and it would help me to hear...

Then make a request:

- ...Can you tell me what you're getting (from what I said)?
- ... What are you understanding?
- ... Would you tell me what you heard?
- ...Would you tell me what the key points are you heard?
- ...What are you hearing matters to me (about all of this)?

Requests for Empathy:

- I'd love to know whether you get who I'm feeling and why. Would you tell me what you're getting?
- I'm wondering whether you have a sense of what's in my heart? [If yes..] It'd be meaningful for me to hear more. What are sensing?
- Do you have a sense of your heart being open to me and present with me?
- What I just said is really important to me. Would you be willing to tell me what you're getting?

Requests for Information:

To shift focus to the other person or ask for a response:

- How is it for you to hear this? [or] How are you doing right now?
- What comes up for you when you I share this?
- What do you think about that? How do you feel about that?
- How do you feel about what I just said?
- How this is for you matters to me. What's coming up for you now?
- I'm curious to know what's happening for you. Are you willing to share?
- Is there anything else you'd like me to understand about this?
- Could you tell me one or two things I might say or do right now that would help you to feel more understood / more heard?"

For information about how we're being received, but keep the focus on ourselves:

- I feel pretty vulnerable about what I shared and want to have a sense of how you're hearing me. Would you tell me...
- I'm a little nervous about what I just shared. Would you tell me...
- I want to make sure that listening isn't at cost to you. Would you tell me...
- I'm worried I've been talking longer than you enjoy listening. Would you tell me...
- I want to check whether you're hearing any blame or judgment, because that's not my intention. Would you tell me what's coming up for you?
- I'm hoping that all of this might bring us closer together. Would you tell me if you're feeling any closer to me after hearing what I just shared?

Requests to get information about collaborating:

- Is there anything else you'd like me to understand about that?
- Do you have any ideas about what might work for both of us?
- Are there any concerns you have that you think would prevent this from working?

Requests to move towards a solution:

- Could we brainstorm some solutions that would work for both of us?
- Are you open to exploring other options to work this out?
- Can you imagine any other strategies that would meet both of our needs?
- I want this to work for both of us. Would you tell me what are your concerns about the strategy I am proposing?
- Would you tell me what might not work for you about what I am requesting?

ENRICHING LIFE WITH REQUESTS

KEYS:

- a. We hold connecting as a priority and a means to collaboration, so we may want to begin with connection requests to be sure we have a connection before making action (solution) requests. We want to cultivate an atmosphere that supports joyful giving in both parties and where both people's needs are included.
- b. In making requests, remember that we can't do "don't." Have different ideas in mind for what action(s) we actually would like the other person to take.
- c. When making requests, keep them present, positive, clear and do-able.

In each situation below, identify your needs. Then write an OFNR statement to ask for what you would like to see happen. Consider making a connection request first.

1. You are a volunteer board member who is very angry and upset. A staff member did not send a report on time, and it looks like the organization is going to lose one of their biggest donors.
2. You are dismayed when your spouse says your 5-year old can watch TV after you told the child he has to do his homework before watching TV.
3. You are the customer service representative speaking with a customer who is angry about your tone of voice.
4. You are a school principal talking to a teacher who wants another teacher to be fired for negligence.
5. You are a supervisor speaking to employee about unsatisfactory work habits during the employee's performance review.

6. Your 6 year old child says, “I don’t want to go to school! I hate school!”

7. You are a committee chairperson speaking to a committee member who did not bring in his work when he said he would.

8. You are a waitress speaking to the cook who has put out the wrong order for the third time in a row.

9. You are a summer camp counselor complaining about a disruptive camper to the Camp Director.

10. You are a tourist yelling at the desk clerk in a hotel where the reservation has been lost.

11. You are a customer who is not happy with the sound of your engine after a scheduled tune-up, speaking to the mechanic.

12. You are calling your romantic partner and saying you are lonely and want to see the other person tonight.

LINKING CONNECTION REQUESTS TO NEEDS

In this activity we will try to connect “connection requests” directly to the needs that we are hoping to meet by making those requests.

1. Think of a situation in which you are having trouble getting the understanding you want about your needs. Write down the situation or share it with another person.
2. Write or say to another person your observations, feelings and needs in relation to the situation.
3. What may be a connection request you would want to make?
4. What need do you predict this request would meet?
5. If the need in relation to the situation and the need in relation to the request are not the same, consider again how you might express your needs and requests.

REQUESTS INCLUDING BOTH PEOPLE'S NEEDS

KEYS:

- a. A core intention in NVC is “caring equally for everyone’s needs.” We can practice this by developing requests (strategies) which attend both to my needs and to the other person’s needs.
- b. Situations which call us to practice this intention include:
 - i. inner conflict – between two sides in myself
 - ii. outer conflict between others
 - o informal -- spontaneous, unrequested
 - o formal – mediation
 - iii. when I am one of the people in a conflict
 - iv. when I say “NO”
 - v. when I hear a half-hearted “YES”
 - vi. in groups (best to work with representatives who will bring all the needs to the table and can also assess which needs are most pertinent to the discussion.)

1. Choose one of the situations when we want to include everyone’s needs from the list in b (above). Think of an example and write a short sentence about the situation.
2. What are your feelings and needs in the situation? (self empathy)
[If inner conflict: What needs are your actions trying to meet?]
3. What are the other person’s feelings and needs? (empathy)
[If inner conflict: What needs are the “inner educator” trying to meet?]
4. What request can you make that will include both your needs and the other person’s needs?
[If inner conflict: What request can you make that will include both sets of needs inside you?]
5. If you are working in a group, read your responses to questions 1-4, and open the floor to hear other requests which might meet both people’s needs. (If you like any of the suggested requests, you may want to write them down here.)

REQUESTS: CONNECTING REQUESTS TO NEEDS

Purpose: Becoming aware of the variety of feelings connected to needs of ours that are met or unmet in response to a situation, discerning which need to address, and which request is more or less likely to get our needs met.

Examples: Review the examples below (which are in “classical” NVC) before the practice.

1. When you say you’re going to wash the dishes by 9pm and then you don’t, I feel frustrated because I need understanding for my needs. Would you be willing to tell me what you understand are my needs in relation to the dish washing?
2. When you say you’re going to wash the dishes by 9pm and then you don’t, I feel concerned because I need trust in our understanding of each other. Would you be willing to tell me what you just heard me say?
3. When you say you’re going to wash the dishes by 9pm and then you don’t, I feel annoyed because I need support. I’m wondering whether you’d be willing to wash the dishes now?
4. When you say you’re going to wash the dishes by 9pm and then you don’t, I feel confused and uncomfortable because I need trust that people will follow-up on their commitments. Would you be willing to tell me what went on for you that led to your not washing the dishes?
5. When you say you’re going to wash the dishes by 9pm and then you don’t, I feel angry because I’m telling myself that you don’t care about my needs, and sad because I want my needs to matter to others. Would you tell me how you feel about my needs around washing dishes? [OR: how you feel in relation to what I’m saying?]
6. When you say you’re going to wash the dishes by 9pm and then you don’t, I feel overwhelmed because I need support and also ease in managing daily life. Would you be willing to tell me any ideas you have that may make it more likely that my needs might get met?
7. When you say you’re going to wash the dishes by 9pm and then you don’t, I feel concerned because I want confidence that people make choices to do things based on wanting to meet everyone’s needs. Would you be willing to tell me what need of yours you were hoping to meet by agreeing to wash the dishes? [AND/OR: what needs you were meeting by not doing it? AND/OR: whether you considered both our needs in making the choices you’ve made?]

Practice 1: Review the examples above. After reading them, for one or more, write down how you might express the same message in a more colloquial, authentic way.

Practice 2: Review the examples above. After reading them, write down an observation of something someone else is doing or saying that is challenging for you, then write down at least three different continuations of the sentence with different feelings and/or needs leading to different requests. Choose a situation that is sufficiently charged that you are likely to have multiple feelings and needs in response to it.

1.

2.

3.

4.

REQUESTS IN A GROUP

Preparation Sheet

Part 1: Clarity on Needs

1. What's the strategy (request) that you would like to bring to the group's attention?
2. Is this strategy a response to something happening right now that you are not satisfied with? (If not, skip questions 3 & 4)
3. Write down any judgments you have about what is happening.
4. What are the feelings you have about what is happening?
5. What needs are alive in you in this moment? For each need you identify, take a moment to connect with the need before proceeding to another one. You may want to work with the Deepening Needs journal before proceeding.
6. Pick one of the above needs that you would like to work towards meeting right now. Check to see if the need is related to the original request. If not, and that request is still alive for you, consider which need that request is most connected to and work with that need.

Part 2: Stretching Beyond Attachment to Outcome

1. Write down a strategy that could meet this need aside from the original request you made. This could be a request of yourself or others, something that could happen now or later, etc.
2. Write down another strategy that could also meet this need, same as in question 1.
3. Write down yet another strategy that could also meet this need, same as in question 1.
4. How do you feel and what needs are alive in this moment as you consider the above strategies?

5. Do you now want to bring any of these strategies to the attention of the group (the original or any of the three additional ones you just identified)? What needs do you imagine would be met by bringing a request to the attention of the group at this point? What needs would not be met? Take a moment to connect with the needs before proceeding.
6. Imagine you are bringing this strategy to the consideration of the group, and that through a group process the decision is made not to proceed with your strategy. Connect with your feelings and needs in this moment. You may want to use the “Working with No” journal to explore your feelings and needs more fully before proceeding.

Part 3: Formulating the Request

1. Write down the strategy you now want the group to consider.
2. What information would you like to get from the group to know if you would be comfortable proceeding with your strategy? Consider the threshold of partnership that you want to achieve: Do you want to proceed only if everyone actively wants to, or are you comfortable with at least some people being willing even though they don't actively want to? How much stretching are you comfortable to invite others to make to support your needs getting met?
3. Write down the request you would like to make now.
4. Assess the do-ability of your request: How will you know people's answers? (Show of hands? A different way?) Is there a clear 'yes' or 'no' to your question? Is your threshold clear so people can assess how to respond? If not, revise your request here.
5. Take a moment to connect with yourself again before proceeding. How are you feeling and what needs are alive in this moment?

6. What needs of mine might be met if I shift and completely let go of my request? (This is not a recommendation of what you might want to do, but rather only a suggestion for reflection that might increase self-understanding.)

7. If I imagine that the person would not shift, how do I feel and what needs of mine come to life?

8. If I imagine not getting my original needs met in this situation, how do I feel and what are my needs?

9. What is alive in me right now (my feelings and needs)? Have I gained any insights from reflecting on these questions?

HEARING "NO" IN NVC

KEYS:

- a. "NO" can be an opening to further dialogue.
- b. We can continue to dialogue by connecting with what needs are being met by saying "NO." Another way to think about this: What needs is this person saying "YES" to when they say "NO" to my request? This is the key to my capacity to stay in dialogue. Example: If someone says "no" to my request to talk about something, they might be saying "yes" to meeting their need for autonomy, space, respect, play, etc. Connecting with these needs and empathizing with them can open the door to further dialogue.

1. Think of someone whose "NO" you are having a hard time hearing. Who is this person? Write down the situation.
2. What are your feelings and needs when you hear or think about the "NO?" (self-empathy)
3. Think of the person who is saying the "NO." What may be their feelings and needs? Or, what are they saying "YES" to? What needs are they trying to meet? (empathy)

In writing or in dyads, use NVC in the following dialogue format, beginning with an empathy guess about the person's "NO":

You: Are you feeling _____ because you need _____?

Other person: _____.

You (empathy): Are you feeling _____ because you need _____?

Other person: _____.

You (expression): I feel _____ because I need _____.

Would you be willing to _____?

Other person: _____.

You (choose expression or empathy): _____

Continue for 2-3 more rounds in the same manner.

SAYING "NO" IN NVC

KEYS:

- a. "NO" can be expressed in NVC in three steps: 1) Connect with the need of the other person that is expressed in their request; 2) Connect with your need that is preventing you from saying "YES" to the request; 3) Come up with a request that's designed to help meet both your needs and the needs of the other person.
- b. We can reach a mutual "YES" through a commitment to meeting everyone's needs: not just ours, not just others'. When others in our life trust this commitment, they will be more open to considering our needs.

1. Think of someone to whom you have a hard time saying "NO". It can be a friend, your child, boss, or anyone else. Who is this person, and what are they requesting of you?
2. What needs of theirs are being expressed in the request? (Empathy)
3. What are you saying "yes" to by saying "no" in this situation? (Self-empathy: What needs are you trying to meet? What prevents you from saying "yes" to their request?)
4. What would you like to request at this point that might contribute to both people's needs being met?
5. What might you like to tell this person using NVC? Consider your observations, feelings, needs and requests and use the following format for the dialogue.

You (expression): I feel _____ because I need _____.

Would you be willing to _____ ?

Other person: _____.

You (empathy): Are you feeling _____ because you need _____ ?

Other person: _____.

You (empathy): Are you feeling _____ because you need _____ ?

Other person: _____.

You (choose expression or empathy): _____

Continue for 2-3 more rounds in the same manner.

UNIQUE FEATURES OF NVC AS A FEEDBACK-GIVING TOOL

Evaluation-Based Feedback	NVC-Based Feedback
Purpose: creating change in behavior	Purpose: Connection; understanding and trust as the basis of deciding whether and which change will take place
Source of Authority: Facilitator	Source of Authority: Shared between facilitator and receiver
Outcome: Pre-determined	Outcome: Emerges from dialogue; mutual understanding of the issues
Mode: Fact setting without necessarily consulting the receiver and considering their situation	Mode: Dialogue and inquiry about the receiver's feelings, needs, values, and conditions
Form: Evaluation and generalization, including about personality	Form: Description of the moment; specific observations of behavior
Response to Reaction: Debate, argument, criticism; assumption of knowledge on the part of facilitator and "resistance" on the part of the receiver	Response to Reaction: Empathy; attempt to understand and give voice (through questions) to the feelings and needs of the receiver, acknowledging his/her difficulties
Level of Engagement: Assumption of neutrality; inner experience not considered relevant	Level of Engagement: Transparency; willingness to share inner experience in the service of connection
Stance: Commitment to "What's right"; reluctance to incorporate new input	Stance: Flexibility; openness to shift position on the basis of potentially unexpected responses or information
Closure: Vague conclusions; lack of clarity about what's wanted from receiver in the moment or in future interactions	Closure: Clear requests at end, both in the moment and for future interactions
Consequences: Positive for implementing feedback, negative for not acting on feedback	Consequences: Needs met or needs unmet; intention to continue dialogue to increase chances of need-meeting

FEEDBACK GIVING

I. Purpose of Providing Feedback

The primary intention of providing feedback is to contribute to another person's capacity to support a shared purpose. Within an organizational context, this intention is usually clear to the person receiving the feedback as well as the person giving it.

The more we are able to remain within this intention, the easier it would be for the person receiving the feedback to make use of what we offer. If we are angry, upset, disappointed, or full of criticism, we are likely to express ourselves in ways that will implicitly require a lot of listening capacity on the part of the other person. This is because in those states we are unable to focus clearly on the intention to contribute to the shared purpose, and instead unwittingly create an expectation that the person receiving the "feedback" will provide the relief that comes from being heard.

A. Distinguishing Feedback from Personal Trigger

	Feedback	Personal trigger
Key needs behind expression	Contribution	Honesty, integrity, connection, hope for relationship, healing, etc.
Outcome	Learning for other person (and possibly for me)	Learning for me (and possibly other person)

When the person giving feedback is aligned with the intention of providing feedback rather than personal trigger it makes it easier for the other person to receive the feedback. Put differently, sharing a personal trigger implicitly requires a much higher skill level and willingness level from the other person.

B. Aligning with the Intention to Provide Feedback

The first step to create this alignment is to identify and transform any personal trigger that may interfere with the intention to contribute. Here are some questions that can be useful in finding this clarity:

1. Am I holding right/wrong?
2. Am I buying into the "truth" of my assessment?
3. Am I seeking to create healing or reconciliation? Am I wishing to be seen?

4. If the answer to any of the above is “yes” there is probably some inner work necessary before any feedback would be useful to the other person. .

The second step is to seek support in the form of empathy from a colleague, journaling, meditation, or any other process that supports an inner shift. The outcome of such work is one of three:

1. The intensity drains completely, and there is ease in finding the intention to contribute
2. The intensity shifts, and the feelings that were present can now be included in the feedback as information for the other person
3. The intensity remains, and a different process than feedback is initiated with the other person.

II. Steps of Feedback Giving

The steps below are schematic and designed to maximize the possibility of the feedback being useful to the person receiving it. Actual conversations are likely to flow back and forth between different steps.

A. Engaging Willingness to Receive Feedback

Even though some relationships have an implicit agreement that feedback giving is part of the relationship (e.g. employer and employee; teacher and student), that doesn't mean that the person is equally ready and willing to receive feedback every time the person giving feedback wants to offer it. Checking to see if the willingness is there, and especially being willing to postpone the offering until a time when the willingness is there is likely to contribute to more openness because the person receiving the feedback gets confirmation that their needs and timing matter, too.

Note: this step is particularly important when you want to offer feedback outside the context of a relationship that tends to include feedback.

B. Inviting the Person to Provide Feedback to Self

This practice has several benefits:

1. It establishes a collaborative relationship which creates more openness.
2. It enhances a sense of responsibility and empowerment, especially if the self-feedback includes concrete steps for moving forward (see below).
3. It provides an opportunity to experience the level of awareness and frame the feedback accordingly.

4. Note: this step would rarely make sense outside the context of a formal feedback giving session.

C. Offering Feedback

The notes below provide guidelines for how to make the feedback giving most likely to be useful to the other person once the willingness and openness have been established.

1. **Specific and Concrete Observations:** Use of vague generalizations tends to diminish the amount of learning. Connecting feedback to tangible moments plays a key role in helping the person receiving the feedback understand the feedback and connect with it. This level of specificity is equally important for both expressions of satisfaction as well as expressions of dissatisfaction.

Example: Instead of saying “You are not a team member” a concrete statement can be “For the last three weeks in a row I don’t remember you once saying ‘yes’ to a request to stay overtime and support your co-workers when we had a crunch in delivering our product.”

2. **Why This Matters:** Letting the person receiving feedback know the significance of the actions provides the motivation for creating change. Rather than expressing this in terms of what “should” happen, this means linking the feedback to what the person giving feedback wants to create, either personally or for the team or organization.

Example: In the above example this could be conveyed in a variety of ways, such as: “I want everyone on the team to have trust that we work together” or “It’s important to me that we create a sense of community in times of stress” or “The team’s sense of collaboration is essential for everything we do here.”

3. **Emotional Effect of the Actions:** Sometimes letting the person receiving the feedback know the emotional effect of their actions can help the connection with the person giving feedback. However, in many cultural contexts expressions of emotion are not commonly accepted, and thus this step is often omitted from feedback meetings, especially in organizational settings.

Example: In the above example the emotional effect would likely be omitted, or could be expressed if the person giving the feedback wants to emphasize the significance. One way of expressing it could be “I’m really concerned about how this will affect our team.”

4. **Suggestions:** Another important element for feedback is concrete and doable suggestions (if we have any) for what to do about the specific observation. The more concrete, the more helpful to someone who wants to learn. Suggestions work best when offered as the beginning of a search for solutions rather than as commands. Suggestions

can also be offered when the feedback expresses satisfaction as a way to enhance what is already working.

Example: In the above example, several suggestions arise: “I’d like you to talk with others in the team and work this out with them.” or “What might support the team is if you find at least one day a week that you have enough flexibility to stay and help out as needed.”

5. **Understanding of Person Receiving Feedback:** There are a variety of challenges that arise for a person receiving feedback. One of the key elements that make for collaborative feedback is the openness to hear from the person receiving feedback. Empathy may be critical for to be able to integrate it and make use of any suggestions. Some of the common challenges:

- a) Difficulty in taking in appreciations (only applicable to expressions of satisfaction)
- b) Difference in perception about what happened or what it means
- c) Factors not known to the person giving feedback can result in significant experience of not being understood
- d) Shame or self-judgment about the action taken
- e) Obstacles in being able to implement suggestion.

Each of the above can easily lead to reactions such as defensiveness, surface compliance that will not result in any change in action, discouragement, or resignation. Empathy would mean making room for the person receiving feedback to be understood in all the above ways. The person receiving feedback often wants to be seen for their intentions and efforts, and to experience care in the process. Empathy in those moments can shift the dynamic and make for fruitful dialogue designed to find solutions that work for everyone.

Example: In the above example, the person receiving feedback may say something like: “My wife has a chronic illness and I can’t stay after work ever.” The empathic response to that could be something like: “Is it that you want some understanding about how you wish you could support others in the team and that there are difficult circumstances in your life?” Or the person could say something like: “That’s not true; I always help out. I don’t know what you are talking about.” And the empathic response (which would precede any reference to timesheet) could be: “It sounds to me like you want to be trusted for your care and willingness to help. Is that right?”

D. Action Plan:

Once mutual understanding is complete, the two parties can work together to find ways of addressing what matters most in a way that works for everyone. The key in this step is for the person giving feedback to maintain a clear focus on what matters and the overall goal while at the same time making sure that whatever plan is implemented has a real chance of working and is accepted with full willingness.

What follows applies only to situations in which the feedback expresses dissatisfaction.

1. If the person giving feedback believes that the situation is not remediable and the issues are significant enough to end the relationship, that decision can be made unilaterally, or the two parties can work together towards a collaborative process of bringing the relationship to an end.
2. If the person giving feedback is interested in continuing the relationship, then the point is to come up with steps to move towards greater satisfaction. Satisfaction is more likely to occur if both parties are included in the plan of action and are both clear that it's workable. Otherwise the action plan can be a recipe for further frustration or an unwitting step towards ending the relationship without making a clear decision that this is what's wanted.

Example: In the above example, the person may accept the suggestion as provided initially. Or, in the case of having difficult life circumstances, the team may come around to accepting the person's challenges and work without that person's support in time crunches. Or, in the case of having a difference in perception, the two people can work out a plan for documenting what happens so they can reach a shared understanding.

GIVING FEEDBACK

<p>1 Feedback or Trigger</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do you have judgment? e.g., “I’m right and you’re wrong!” ▪ Do you unconditionally believe the truth of your assessment? ▪ Do you want to be seen/acknowledged? ▪ Do you want healing or reconciliation? <p>If yes to any of the above, pause and get support.</p>
<p>2 Check Willingness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is the timing good? ▪ Is the person receptive to feedback? ▪ Consider: workload, energy, physical needs other stressors
<p>3 Ask for Self-feedback</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establishes collaborative relationship ▪ Assesses level of awareness in preparation for next step ▪ Enhances self-responsibility and empowerment
<p>4 Offer Your Feedback</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Specific and Concrete Observation ▪ Why it Matters (Needs Met or Unmet) ▪ The Emotional Impact of Their Actions ▪ Doable, Concrete Suggestions
<p>5 Check for Understanding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is the feedback received without deflection, defensiveness or minimization? ▪ Is there shared perception about what happened? ▪ Is there agreement about what it means? ▪ Are there factors they know that are unknown to you? ▪ Are they experiencing any shame or self-judgment?
<p>6 Co-Create Action Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does it address the needs identified in Step 4? ▪ Are there barriers to successful implementation? ▪ Do they have full willingness to implement it?

DAILY PRACTICE OPTIONS

Some of the options below are just internal, and others call for reflection. You can do this in writing to yourself, by sending an email to a buddy, recording to a tape, meditating, walking in nature and contemplating, or in any other way that suits your temperament.

All these suggestions are designed to support the deepening of your individual practice.

1. **Checking in:** set an alarm clock to go off every hour or so. Each time it goes off, stop whatever you are doing (we usually CAN, and that in itself is quite liberating), sit quietly with yourself for a moment, and connect with your feelings and needs which are alive in you in that very moment. Then make a choice about whether you want to continue doing what you were doing, or change course based on your self-connection.
2. **Gratitude:** at the end of the day or in the morning, whichever works better for you, write down (or in one of these other methods) a few things you are feeling gratitude for that have happened that day (or the day before if you do this in the morning). For each thing you write, translate fully into observations, feelings, and needs: what exactly happened? What is the specific feelings that arise in you about it? What needs are met? Spend a moment sinking into those needs and allowing the gratitude to nourish you. For some of these, you may also choose to share your gratitude with another person who may have been the one who did what you feel grateful about. Make sure to include at least one piece of gratitude to yourself for choices you made that are nourishing to you.
3. **Post-hearsal:** review the day, and see if there is anything you did or said that was not aligned with your practice of NVC. Then do a post-hearsal in writing. Write a full imaginary dialogue of how you might have expressed yourself differently, what you imagine the other person would have said to that, and how you might have responded to that, etc. Do about 3 rounds of that.
4. **Translating jackal thinking:** in the course of the day, jot down judgments that arise in you in response to various events. At the end of the day take a few of those and translate them fully, both to what are your own observations, feelings, needs and what request you would make if you spoke with this person, and make your best guess as to what the feelings and needs of the other person.
5. **Meditating on needs:** you can develop a meditation practice that focuses on connecting with needs. The object of focus is the line "I have a need for ____." Just as with any other form of meditation, your mind will likely wander. You will likely hear internal responses, such as: "But this need cannot be met; why bother?" or, "Yeah, but this person is not going to change," or, "I should just grow up and get over this petty wish of mine," or, "This is not just about some personal need of mine. This is about everyone's right to dignity." The aim of the practice is to

bring your attention back to the need you are meditating on, without harshness. Rather than punishing yourself for wandering, just gently bring your attention back.

Encountering and connecting with needs is different from naming them as checklist items. Whenever we do this practice, we can take a moment to breathe, to really experience the flavor of that need being inside of us – exactly what it feels like, what the sensations of having this need are, and what this need means to us.

6. **Power:** This practice can be particularly useful in the morning. You can review your day, what you know of what's coming, not counting the unannounced, unplanned forceful flow of life. For each piece of your coming day that you remember, you ask: "What can I do to be more powerful in that situation? What would bring more leadership? How can I be more intentional about attending in the moment to everyone's benefit?"

You can also answer the following questions in addition to the broad reflection I suggested earlier. In order to make use of these questions, it's important that you know yourself clearly and gently enough to recognize your own habitual responses when your access to power is blocked.

- a. Describe an upcoming situation during the day in which you anticipate being challenged in terms of maintaining your sense of power.
 - b. Imagine yourself in the situation. Imagine the other players. Imagine the actions others might take that would be particularly challenging for you.
 - c. How might you wish to respond in the moment you imagine? What would be the inner obstacle? What are the messages that you tell yourself that create the obstacle (e.g. "There is nothing I can do;" "I am not adequate for this challenge;" or, "I will be kicked out of this meeting if I speak up")?
 - d. Once you've identified the message, look inside for what you most want in that moment (e.g. a vision of what to do, sufficient skill to pull it off, or courage to meet the consequences).
 - e. What do you want to remember to tell yourself in the moment that might help you overcome the inner obstacle and act powerfully?
7. **Choice:** this is likely an end of day practice.
 - a. Review the day, and identify moments in which you are satisfied with the degree of choice you experienced (regardless of your satisfaction with the actual choice you made in the moment). You can focus on one particular area, or on your overall capacity to exercise choice.
 - b. What contributed to your ability to make a conscious choice?
 - c. Pick a moment in which you didn't bring as much consciousness to your choice as you would like. What kept you from making a fully conscious choice?

- d. What would you have wanted to do in the situation you picked? What might have contributed to your ability to bring more consciousness to the moment? What needs might have been attended to by making a different choice?
8. **Additional practices:** If these practices are not sufficient for your particular needs related to your self-development into the person you want to become, you can use more practices which appear in *Spinning Threads of Radical Aliveness: Transcending the Legacy of Separation in Our Individual Lives* (Miki Kashtan), or use instructions in that book for creating your own.

LIST OF PHYSICAL SENSATIONS

<u>Pressure / Weight</u>	<u>Texture</u>	Shaky	<u>Density</u>	<u>Size / Shape</u>
Breathless	Bumpy	Straight	Airy	Big
Floating	Even	Streaming	Dense	Blob-like
Light	Itchy	Tickling	Empty	Circular
Lifting	Jagged	Tingling	Expansive	Flat
Soft	Metallic	Throbbing	Hollow	Huge
Spacey	Prickly	Trembling	Light	Large
Supported	Rough	Twitchy	Loose	Lines
Touching	Sandpapery	Queasy	Open	Miniscule
Uplifting	Soft	Upward	Solid	Round
Crushing	Silky	Vibrating	Steady	Small
Hard	Smooth	Vital	Spacious	Tiny
Heavy	Uneven	Wobbly		
Pressing			Blocked	<u>Degrees</u>
Pulling	<u>Movement /</u>	<u>Speed</u>	Closed	Cellular
Pushing	<u>Direction</u>	Brisk	Clenched	Deep
Sinking	Bubbly	Easy	Congested	Dull
Suffocating	Buzzy	Fast	Constricted	Gentle
Weighed down	Dizzy	Moderate	Contracted	Gross
	Downward	Slow	Dense	Immense
	Draining	Still	Full	Large
<u>Temperature</u>	Electric	Quick	Knotted	Mild
Chills	Energized		Tight	Microscopic
Clammy	Erratic	<u>Tone</u>	Thick	Shallow
Cold	Effervescent	Agreeable	Tense	Slight
Cool	Flowing	Bitter	Viscous	Subtle
Freezing	Fluid	Pleasant	Wooden	Teeny
Frozen	Fluttery	Comfortable		Tender
Icy	Inward	Disagreeable	<u>Painful</u>	Tiny
Boiling	Nauseous	Neutral	Achy / Aching	Vast
Burning	Nervy	Unpleasant	Bruised	
Warm	Opening	Uncomfortable	Numb	<u>Absence</u>
Inflamed	Outward	Soothing	Sore	Blank
Fiery	Pounding	Sour	Sharp	Disconnected
Sweaty	Radiating	Sweet	Sensitive	Empty
Hot	Releasing		Stabbing	Nothing
	Roiling		Tender	Numb
	Shivery		Twisting	

This is a partial list. Sensation is a subjective experience and can include synesthesia: physical sensation experienced as or with color, image, smell, taste... (dark, bright, sour, bitter, sweet). Sensations may also occur or be expressed through metaphor or simile (“like a hard rock”).

FEELINGS INVENTORY

(internal sensations, without reference to thoughts, interpretations)

PEACEFUL

tranquil
calm
content
engrossed
absorbed
expansive
serene
loving
blissful
satisfied
relaxed
relieved
quiet
carefree
composed
fulfilled

LOVING

warm
affectionate
tender
appreciative
friendly
sensitive
compassionate
grateful
nurtured
amorous
trusting
open
thankful
radiant
adoring
passionate

GLAD

happy
excited
hopeful
joyful
satisfied
delighted
encouraged
grateful
confident
inspired
touched
proud
exhilarated
ecstatic
optimistic
glorious

PLAYFUL

energetic
effervescent
invigorated
zestful
refreshed
impish
alive
lively
exuberant
giddy
adventurous
mischievous
jubilant
goofy
buoyant
electrified

INTERESTED

involved
inquisitive
intense
enriched
absorbed
alert
aroused
astonished
concerned
curious
eager
enthusiastic
fascinated
intrigued
surprised
helpful

MAD

impatient
pessimistic
disgruntled
frustrated
irritable
edgy
grouchy
agitated
exasperated
disgusted
irked
cantankerous
animosity
bitter
rancorous
irate, furious
angry
hostile
enraged
violent

SAD

lonely
heavy
troubled
helpless
gloomy
overwhelmed
distant
despondent
discouraged
distressed
dismayed
disheartened
despairing
sorrowful
unhappy
depressed
blue
miserable
dejected
melancholy

SCARED

afraid
fearful
terrified
startled
nervous
jittery
horrified
anxious
worried
anguished
lonely
insecure
sensitive
shocked
apprehensive
dread
jealous
desperate
suspicious
frightened

TIRED

exhausted
fatigued
inert
lethargic
indifferent
weary
overwhelmed
fidgety
helpless
heavy
sleepy
disinterested
reluctant
passive
dull
bored
listless
blah
mopey
comatose

CONFUSED

frustrated
perplexed
hesitant
troubled
uncomfortable
withdrawn
apathetic
embarrassed
hurt
uneasy
irritated
suspicious
unsteady
puzzled
restless
boggled
chagrined
unglued
detached
skeptical

Feelings likely to be present when our needs ARE or ARE NOT being met. This list is neither exhaustive nor definitive. It is meant as a starting place to support anyone who wishes to engage in a process of deepening self-discovery and to facilitate greater understanding and connection between people.

UNIVERSAL HUMAN NEEDS – PARTIAL LIST

(without reference to specific people, time, actions, things)

SUBSISTENCE AND SECURITY	CONNECTION	MEANING	
PHYSICAL SUSTENANCE	AFFECTION	SENSE OF SELF	TRANSCENDENCE
Air	Appreciation	Authenticity	Beauty
Food	Attention	Competence	Celebration of life
Health	Closeness	Creativity	Communion
Movement	Companionship	Dignity	Faith
Physical Safety	Harmony	Growth	Flow
Rest / sleep	Intimacy	Healing	Hope
Shelter	Love	Honesty	Inspiration
Touch	Nurturing	Integrity	Mourning
Water	Sexual Expression	Self-acceptance	Peace (internal)
	Support	Self-care	Presence
	Tenderness	Self-connection	
SECURITY	Warmth	Self-knowledge	
Consistency		Self-realization	
Order/Structure	TO MATTER	Mattering to myself	
Peace (external)	Acceptance		
Peace of mind	Care	UNDERSTANDING	
Protection	Compassion	Awareness	
Safety (emotional)	Consideration	Clarity	
Stability	Empathy	Discovery	
Trusting	Kindness	Learning	
	Mutual Recognition	Making sense of life	
FREEDOM	Respect	Stimulation	
AUTONOMY	To be heard, seen		
Choice	To be known, understood	MEANING	
Ease	To be trusted	Aliveness	
Independence	Understanding others	Challenge	
Power		Consciousness	
Self-responsibility	COMMUNITY	Contribution	
Space	Belonging	Creativity	
Spontaneity	Communication	Effectiveness	
	Cooperation	Exploration	
LEISURE/RELAXATION	Equality	Integration	
Humor	Inclusion	Purpose	
Joy	Mutuality		
Play	Participation		
Pleasure	Partnership		
Rejuvenation	Self-expression		
	Sharing		

This list builds on Marshall Rosenberg's original needs list with categories adapted from Manfred Max-Neef. Neither exhaustive nor definitive, it can be used for study and for discovery about each person's authentic experience.

NEEDS INVENTORY FOR THE WORKPLACE

RESOURCES

PHYSICAL NEEDS

Air / Food / Water
Comfort, Ease
Consistency
Equipment, Tools
Health
Movement, Exercise
Privacy
Respectful Physical Contact
Rest / Relaxation
Safety, Security
Supplies
Time, Efficiency

COMMUNICATION

MENTAL NEEDS

Awareness
Clarity, Direction
Data, Research
Decision Making
Discernment
Education, Training
Information
Reflection
Stimulation, Challenge

AUTHORITY

EMPOWERMENT

Autonomy
Choice
Co-creation of strategies
Collaboration
Discipline
Freedom (emotional,
spiritual and physical)
Individuality
Solitude

ACCOUNTABILITY

INTEGRITY

Authenticity
Contribution
Effectiveness, Progress
Feedback, Tracking
Honesty
Humility, Self-reflection
Morality
Punctuality
Quality
Self-worth
Sincerity

INTEGRATION

INTERDEPENDENCE

Acceptance
Appreciation
Clarity
Closeness
Community
Compassion
Connection
Consideration
Cooperation
Emotional Safety
Empathy
Harmony
Inclusion
Intimacy
Love
Reassurance
Respect
Support
Trust
Understanding
Validation
Warmth

SELF-EXPRESSION

CREATIVITY

Creating, Generating
Growth, Process
Learning, Mastery
Meaning
Play, Fun, Laughter
Teaching

SELF-ALIGNMENT

NATURAL ENERGY

Beauty
Equality, Mutuality
Harmony, Peace
Inspiration
Order
Purpose, Meaning
Respect

MARKING OF TRANSITIONS

CELEBRATING BEGINNINGS

Ceremony, Ritual
Delight
Enjoyment
Excitement
Healing
Humor
Passion

ACKNOWLEDGING ENDINGS

Accept Learnings
Accept Limitations
Acknowledge Regrets
Grieve Dreams Unfulfilled
Mourn Lost Relationships