

Workshop Packet

Heart-Mind Communication

–skills for clear, compassionate, conscious, and authentic communication–

(Based largely on Marshall Rosenberg's Nonviolent Communication Model)

Lead by Tom Murray and Victoria Yoshen.



CONTENTS

page

- Workshop Description 2
- Principles (Core Beliefs) of NVC 3
- The NVC Model -- OFNR 4
- Feelings Inventories:
 - Feelings when your needs are satisfied 6
 - Feelings when your needs are not satisfied 7
- Needs inventory 8
- OFNR: Differentiation skills for expressing ourselves 9
- Giraffe language, Jackal language, and Roadblocks 10
- Shifting from stuck 11
- More applications of the NVC Model 12
- Bibliography and Resources 13



Heart-Mind Communication

—skills for clear, compassionate, conscious, and authentic communication—

(Based largely on Marshall Rosenberg's Nonviolent Communication Model)

Two 2-hour interactive workshops
Lead by Tom Murray and Victoria Yoshen.

These workshops will focus on Marshall Rosenberg's system of Nonviolent Communication. NVC is a model for expressing one's core needs while prioritizing connection and relationship. It embodies a consciousness of compassion and clarity to transform habitual communication patterns such as blaming, criticizing, withdrawing, defending, complaining, and demanding. It provides productive ways to express ourselves and also to respond to others whose communication is difficult to listen to.

NVC teaches conflict resolution and conscious communication skills by showing how to skillfully differentiate observations, interpretations, feelings, needs, and strategies as we talk and listen. These skills are applicable to intimate relationships, parenting, work situations, and "self empathy." NVC demonstrates productive alternatives in expressing anger, making requests, compromising, saying "no," apologizing, mourning, appreciating, and problem solving.

<p>Part-1: Introduction to the NVC Model</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction to the principles of Nonviolent Communication (NVC)• Identifying communication Road-blocks• Overview of the model: Observations, Feelings, Needs, and Requests; Expression and Empathy• Understanding Self-Empathy• Expanding our vocabulary of feelings and needs• Differentiating: observations from interpretations and judgments; feelings from thoughts; needs from strategies; requests from demands• Using NVC to express appreciation without judgment	<p>Part-2: Using NVC Concepts at Home and Work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• NVC in extended dialog• Negotiating and problem solving using NVC• Making Connecting Requests• Using NVC for relationships, parenting, workplace• Using NVC to apologize or mourn• Hearing and expressing "no" using NVC
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About the Facilitators:

Tom Murray is a software consultant and research scientist and Victoria Yoshen is a financial manager—they also lead workshops and classes in Heart-Mind Communication and Nonviolent Communication. Tom and Victoria have been together for 16 years and have used these skills extensively in their relationship, in parenting, in formal conflict resolution sessions, and in the workplace. They enjoy helping others learn, heal, and deepen family, collegial, and friendship relationships. They have been inspired by the works of Marshall Rosenberg, Byron Katie, Sandra Boston, Ondrea & Stephen Levine, Harvey Jackins, and Ken Wilber. They live in Westhampton, Massachusetts, and can be contacted at (413) 529-2120.

Principles (Core Beliefs) of NVC

1	WE ALL HAVE THE SAME NEEDS and ALL OF OUR NEEDS MATTER	See the list of Universal Needs You can be upset with someone and still hold that their needs matter.
2	ALL BEHAVIOR IS AN ATTEMPT TO MEET NEEDS and NO NEEDS ARE EVER IN CONFLICT (though <i>strategies</i> can be in conflict)	This is where suspending judgment comes in. This requires a belief in sufficiency - that there are enough resources to meet Universal Needs
3	EACH INDIVIDUAL IS SOLELY RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS/HER FEELINGS AND NEEDS	No one can make us feel something; once we are aware of our need (feelings are clues) many strategies arise to meet it.
4	PRIORITIZE CONNECTION OVER SWIFT RESOLUTION OF A CONFLICT	This is a re-training for most of us; in every conversation there is a choice point - to choose connection rather than being "right" or "resolved".
5	AS A SPECIES WE ARE HARDWIRED TO GIVE JOYFULLY	The most consistent universal needs seems to be our need for contribution.

(Based on a presentation by Pat Arcady)

The NVC Model -- OFNR (page 1)

The NVC Model uses four elements: Observations, Feelings, Needs, and Requests (OFNR). The OFNR model can be used when Expressing one's own needs in a clear and connecting way, and also for Empathetically or 'actively" listening to another person, reflecting back our understanding of them using OFNR to show our caring and to check for whether we understand. (Note: Observation and Request are in parentheses below because they are optional).

Expression	Empathy
<i>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...?)

[Continued on next page...]

The NVC Model -- OFNR (page 2)

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

Expression: Using "I" statements, clearly separating data or observations from interpretations, and developing skills in being aware of and expressing one's feelings are common suggestions. The NVC model adds two things to this important set of communication habits: identifying and focusing on ones core needs, and making clear requests.

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.

(adapted from Bay Area NVC, www.baynvc.org)

Feelings Inventories

The following are words we use when we want to express a combination of emotional states and physical sensations. This list is neither exhaustive nor definitive. Most people use a limited vocabulary when expressing feelings, and this list can be used as a vocabulary builder. 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.

There are two parts to this list: feelings we may have when our needs are being met and feelings we may have when our needs are not being met.

Feelings when your needs are satisfied

<p>AFFECTIONATE compassionate friendly loving open hearted sympathetic tender warm</p> <p>ENGAGED absorbed alert curious engrossed enchanted entranced fascinated interested intrigued involved spellbound stimulated</p> <p>INSPIRED amazed awed wonder</p> <p>JOYFUL amused delighted glad happy jubilant pleased tickled</p>	<p>EXCITED amazed animated ardent aroused astonished dazzled eager energetic enthusiastic giddy invigorated lively passionate surprised vibrant</p> <p>EXHILARATED blissful ecstatic elated enthralled exuberant radiant rapturous thrilled</p> <p>GRATEFUL appreciative moved thankful touched</p> <p>HOPEFUL expectant encouraged optimistic</p>	<p>CONFIDENT empowered open proud safe secure</p> <p>PEACEFUL calm clear headed comfortable centered content equanimous fulfilled mellow quiet relaxed relieved satisfied serene still tranquil trusting</p> <p>REFRESHED enlivened rejuvenated renewed rested restored revived</p>
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(from Center for Nonviolent Communication, www.cnvc.org)

Feelings when your needs are not satisfied

<p>ANNOYED aggravated dismayed disgruntled displeased exasperated frustrated impatient irritated irked</p> <p>ANGRY enraged furious incensed indignant irate livid outraged resentful</p> <p>AVERSION animosity appalled contempt disgusted dislike hate horrified hostile repulsed</p> <p>CONFUSED ambivalent baffled bewildered dazed hesitant lost mystified perplexed puzzled torn</p>	<p>AFRAID apprehensive dread foreboding frightened mistrustful panicked petrified scared suspicious terrified wary worried</p> <p>DISCONNECTED alienated aloof apathetic bored cold detached distant distracted indifferent numb removed uninterested withdrawn</p> <p>TENSE anxious cranky distressed distraught edgy fidgety frazzled irritable jittery nervous overwhelmed restless stressed out</p>	<p>DISQUIET agitated alarmed discombobulated disconcerted disturbed perturbed rattled restless shocked startled surprised troubled turbulent turmoil uncomfortable uneasy unnerved unsettled upset</p> <p>VULNERABLE fragile guarded helpless insecure leery reserved sensitive shaky</p> <p>FATIGUE beat burnt out depleted exhausted lethargic listless sleepy tired weary worn out</p>	<p>PAIN agony anguished bereaved devastated grief heartbroken hurt lonely miserable regretful remorseful</p> <p>YEARNING envious jealous longing nostalgic pining wistful</p> <p>EMBARRASSED ashamed chagrined flustered guilty mortified self-conscious</p> <p>SAD depressed dejected despair despondent disappointed discouraged disheartened forlorn gloomy heavy hearted hopeless melancholy unhappy wretched</p>
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Needs inventory

(from Center for Nonviolent Communication, www.cnvc.org)

The following list of needs 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.

<p>CONNECTION</p> <p>acceptance affection appreciation belonging cooperation communication closeness community companionship compassion consideration consistency empathy inclusion intimacy love mutuality nurturing respect/self-respect safety (emotional) security stability support to know and be known to see and be seen to understand and be understood trust warmth</p>	<p>HONESTY</p> <p>authenticity integrity presence</p> <p>PLAY</p> <p>joy humor</p> <p>PEACE</p> <p>beauty communion ease equality harmony inspiration order</p> <p>PHYSICAL WELL-BEING</p> <p>air food movement/exercise rest/sleep sexual expression safety (physical) shelter touch water</p>	<p>MEANING</p> <p>awareness celebration of life challenge clarity competence consciousness contribution creativity discovery efficacy effectiveness growth hope learning mourning participation purpose self-expression stimulation to matter understanding</p> <p>AUTONOMY</p> <p>choice freedom independence space spontaneity</p>
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OFNR: Differentiation skills for expressing ourselves

In the NVC model observations, feelings, needs, and requests have specific meanings. This table is a reference sheet to help refine each element and differentiate it from other types of speech we often use.

NVC Model ("Giraffe speak")		VS. ("Jackal speak")	
Observations	objective, agreed upon, specific to time/place/who	<i>judgments, interpretations</i>	<u>Roadblock signals:</u> "is", "always", "never", "whenever", "if you ...then",
Feelings	universal, internal & present moment, self-revealing & vulnerable;	<i>thoughts</i>	"that", "you", "like", "as if", "is", "we", "they"
Needs	"basic", values, desires, never in conflict, related to feelings	<i>strategies</i>	<i>specific to time/place/who</i> , "you", "them", "us",
Requests	specific (time/place/who/what), related to needs, optional ("no" is OK), (get to them quick!)	<i>demands</i>	"have to", guilt-tripping, negatives e.g. don't); should/supposed to, "I deserve"

EXAMPLES:

O - "You *always* come home from work late" -- is not an observation. Try "Every night last week you came home after 7:30."

F - "I feel *that* you spent too much money on the vacation" -- that is a thought, not a feeling. Try "When you told me how much you spent on the vacation I felt worried..." (go on to identify a need and request).

N - "I need *you* to come to the *movies with me tonight*" -- that is not an NCC 'basic human need.' Try "I'm wanting some fun, relaxation, and companionship. Would you be willing to go to the movies with me tonight?"

R - "Could you please keep the kitchen clean *from now on*?" -- this is not specific enough to agree upon when and if its done. Try "Would you be willing to wash all of your dishes after meals--lets say for the next month, and then we can check in about it."

Giraffe language, Jackal language, and Roadblocks

Marshall Rosenberg uses the terms **Giraffe-In, Giraffe-out, Jackal-In, and Jackal-Out** to refer to the life enriching (Giraffe, or OFNR) and life inhibiting (Jackal, or roadblocks) messages we give to ourselves ("In") and others ("Out"). See if you can recognize these patterns in yourself and others. Try to translate Jackal language into Giraffe language, But, don't be harsh on yourself or others for not perfecting Giraffe--"enjoy the Jackal show" as Marshall says. (We are trained from birth to use Jackal language, so its inevitable that we will encounter it. Relate to it with it with a sense of humor and equanimity.)

Roadblocks: Obstacles to empathetic listening and expression:

--Alienating expressions of unmet needs; obstacles to nonviolent communication--

- judgments, comparisons, interpreting, analysis, diagnosing, explaining
- criticism, blame, shame
- moralizing, lecturing
- demands, ordering, threatening
- denial of responsibility, justifications
- avoiding; withdrawing, shutting down
- ridiculing, attacking
- humoring, distracting, story telling
- reassuring, sympathizing, consoling
- questioning, interrogating
- advising, educating, fixing, correcting
- one-upping (my situation is even worse..)

Are there some of these that is your favorite or habitual roadblocks to use? Or certain ones that most trigger when others use them? Learn to translate roadblocks into NVC language.

Shifting from stuck

1. Pause; 2. Self-empathy; 3: Curiosity; 4. Compassion

NVC is more a state of mind, a compassionate type of consciousness, than it is a set of procedures or rules. The aim in listening to another is to be able have an open heart, or "soft belly" and experience a deep compassion for and connection with the feelings and needs that they present. (You can actually check in with your body and feel if you have the soft open feeling in your belly to help you know whether you are there.) This can be VERY hard to do during conflicts. So we have a suggestion for four steps of increasing "difficulty," or increasing connectedness actually, that you can try. We have found that using this simple formula can be very useful during those times that the brain and heart seem to shut down, when we want or wish we could use NVC consciousness but are triggered or stuck in our emotional state.

Here are the four steps. Just get as far as you can, don't judge yourself for not being able to be at "#4." In challenging situations, just doing #1 is a big step.

1. **Pause.** Stop, breath, feel and center in your body. Note the simple and natural reaction you are having: an oh!, oops!, wow!, yikes!, no!, yuck! ouch! ...

2. **Self empathy.** Take a moment to focus in. What am I feeling and needing right now? Try not to judge yourself. I care, my needs matter. What do I need to be 'present'?

3. **Find curiosity.** If you can become a bit more centered from #2, now you may have the space to address the other. (If not, it may be wise to say something like "I'm feeling very emotional and overwhelmed right now and need some space to cool down before talking any more. Would you be willing to let me take 10 minutes and come back?") When hot-button issues come up, it can be very difficult to create a compassionate state (#4 below) where our hearts and bellies feel open. But we may still be able to put a bit of a lid on our emotional reactions and let our *minds* be curious. Try to shift from judging or reacting to the other person to a place of curiosity. Find how you are really curious to know what's going on for them.

4. **Speaking from connection, and compassion** (and curiosity). The soft belly place where we can listen empathetically to the other without being overwhelmed by our triggers—the place where we know the sheer joy of contributing to the other person's happiness.

More applications of the Nonviolent Communication Model

Here are a list of further topics for applying NVC to common situations. Each one could be the focus of a class and practice session.

Appreciations

When we commend someone with, for example, "you are great!", we put ourselves in the position of a judge who can also pronounce "you are not so good." OFNR can be used to express appreciation in a more connected and less judgmental way.

Connecting requests

Ending OFNR with requests like "could you tell me how you feel after hearing that?" or "could you tell me what you heard me say?"

Self-empathy

Using OFNR for self-compassion and to counter negative self-talk.

Saying No; Hearing No

Practice using OFNR to say "No"; using OFNR hear the "yes" behind someone's "no."

Mourning and apology

"I'm sorry" is often used as a way to avoid connection with another and with one's feelings, or responsibility. OFNR can be use to express regret and make restorative amends. We can notice what need our strategy was trying to meet, and what needs it did not meet.

The "dance" of NVC and negotiating solutions

Introductory NVC focuses on short communications, but in real situations people dialog back and forth looking for a solution that meets as many needs as possible of both (or all) parties. You express your needs and requests and the other party does the same. Once everyone's needs are on the table you can begin the work of brainstorming solutions that meet multiple needs.

Using NVC in parenting and with children

The NVC model is a powerful parenting tool. You can use it in communicating and listening to children. It focuses on connection and understanding as effective and efficient communication tools, and reevaluates "power over" styles of communication.

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Web Resources:

- Co-Intelligence Institute (Tom Atlee): www.co-intelligence.org
- National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation: www.thataway.org
- Nonviolent Communication (Marshall Rosenberg): www.cnvc.org/ and www.nonviolentcommunication.com
- Program on Negotiation, Harvard Law School (Fisher, Stone...): www.pon.harvard.edu
- SpiritSite.com* (Stephen and Ondrea Levine)

Local Resources:

- Greenfield: Conscious Communication Institute (Sandra Boston): www.ccitraining.org
- Amherst: Communicating with Compassion and the Institute for Peaceable Communities (Jerry Koch-Gonzales): communicatingwithcompassion.org
- Boston: nvcboston.org; New York: www.nynvc.org
- Watertown: Public Conversations Project: www.publicconversations.org