

What is Violent Communication?

If “violent” means acting in ways that result in hurt or harm, then much of how we communicate – judging others, bullying, having racial bias, blaming, finger pointing, discriminating, speaking without listening, criticizing others or ourselves, name-calling, reacting when angry, using political rhetoric, being defensive or judging who’s “good/bad” or what’s “right/wrong” with people – could indeed be called “violent communication”.

What is Nonviolent Communication?

Nonviolent Communication is the integration of 4 things:

- 1 - Consciousness:** a set of principles that support living a life of compassion, collaboration, courage, and authenticity
- 2 - Language:** understanding how words contribute to connection or distance
- 3 - Communication Skills:** knowing how to ask for what we want, how to hear others even if in disagreement, and how to move towards solutions that work for all
- 4 - Means of Influence:** sharing “power with others” rather than using “power over others”

NVC serves our desire to do three things:

- 1 - Increase our ability to live with choice, meaning, and connection**
- 2 - Connect empathically with self and others to have more satisfying relationships**
- 3 - Sharing of resources so everyone is able to benefit**

"Human beings have enormous power to enrich life. We can use words to contribute to people's enjoyment, their wisdom. We can use words that can make life miserable for people. So our words are very powerful. We can touch people in ways that give great pleasure, great nurturing, support. We are powerhouses, and there's nothing we enjoy doing more than to use that power we have to enrich lives. So isn't it wonderful that we have this power and the joy it brings when we use it? That's to be celebrated. Wow! And the more we celebrate that, the less we will be willing to do anything else."

– Marshall B. Rosenberg, PhD

Why do people find value in learning NVC?

Most of us are hungry for skills that can improve the quality of our relationships, to deepen our sense of personal empowerment or simply help us communicate more effectively. Unfortunately, most of us have been educated from birth to compete, judge, demand and diagnose; to think and communicate in terms of what is “right” and “wrong” with people. At best, the habitual ways we think and speak hinder communication and create misunderstanding and frustration. And still worse, they can cause anger and pain, and may lead to violence. Without wanting to, even people with the best of intentions generate needless conflict.

NVC helps us reach beneath the surface and discover what is alive and vital within us, and how all of our actions are based on human needs that we are seeking to meet. We learn to develop a vocabulary of feelings and needs that helps us more clearly express what is going on in us, and understand what is going on in others, at any given moment. When we understand and acknowledge our needs, we develop a shared foundation for much more satisfying relationships. Join the thousands of people worldwide who have improved their relationships and their lives with this simple yet revolutionary process.

Marshall Rosenberg provides us with the most effective tools to foster health and relationships. Nonviolent Communication connects soul to soul . . . It is the missing element in what we do.”

- Deepak Chopra, author,
How to Know God and Ageless Body, Timeless Mind

The Life-Changing Benefits of NVC

Conflict Resolution

- Resolve conflicts peacefully—personal or public, domestic or international
- Get to the heart of conflict and disputes quickly
- Improve cooperation—listen so others are really heard
- Transform criticism and blame into compassionate connection
- Prevent future pain and misunderstanding

Personal Relationships

- Deepen your emotional connections
- Transform judgment and criticism into understanding and connection
- Listen so others are really heard
- Get what you want more often without using demands, guilt or shame
- Hear the needs behind whatever anyone does or says

Parenting and Families

- Reduce family conflicts and sibling rivalry
- Move beyond power struggles to cooperation and trust
- Create a quality of connection that embodies unconditional love
- Protect and nurture the autonomy of children
- Motivate using “power-with” rather than “power-over” strategies

Education and Schools

- Maximize the individual potential of all students
- Strengthen students’ interest, retention and connection to their work
- Improve safety, trust and connection in your classroom
- Improve classroom teamwork, efficiency and cooperation
- Strengthen classroom and teacher-parent relationships

“Schools in which parents and teachers relate as partners — where Nonviolent Communication is part of every interaction — are communities of learning, rather than top-down, impersonal factories.”

- Riane Eisler, author,
The Chalice and the Blade,
Tomorrow’s Children and
The Power of Partnership

How You Can Use the NVC Process



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

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

OBSERVATIONS

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

“When I (see, hear) . . . ”

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

“When you see/hear . . . ”

(Sometimes unspoken when offering empathy)

FEELINGS

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

“I feel . . . ”

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

“You feel . . . ”

NEEDS

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

“ . . . because I need/value . . . ”

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

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

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

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

REQUESTS

4. The concrete actions I would like taken:

“Would you be willing to . . . ?”

4. The concrete actions you would like taken:

“Would you like . . . ?”

(Sometimes unspoken when offering empathy)



Feelings Inventory



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. 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

AFFECTIONATE

compassionate
friendly
loving
open hearted
sympathetic
tender
warm

ENGAGED

absorbed
alert
curious
engrossed
enchanted
entranced
fascinated
interested
intrigued
involved
spellbound
stimulated

HOPEFUL

expectant
encouraged
optimistic

CONFIDENT

empowered
open
proud
safe
secure

EXCITED

amazed
animated
ardent
aroused
astonished
dazzled
eager
energetic
enthusiastic
giddy
invigorated
lively
passionate
surprised
vibrant

GRATEFUL

appreciative
moved
thankful
touched

INSPIRED

amazed
awed
wonder

JOYFUL

amused
delighted
glad
happy
jubilant
pleased
tickled

EXHILARATED

blissful
ecstatic
elated
enthralled
exuberant
radiant
rapturous
thrilled

PEACEFUL

calm
clear headed
comfortable
centered
content
equanimous
fulfilled
mellow
quiet
relaxed
relieved
satisfied
serene
still
tranquil
trusting

REFRESHED

enlivened
rejuvenated
renewed
rested
restored
revived

Feelings when your needs are not satisfied

AFRAID

apprehensive
dread
foreboding
frightened
mistrustful
panicked
petrified
scared
suspicious
terrified
wary
worried

ANNOYED

aggravated
dismayed
disgruntled
displeased
exasperated
frustrated
impatient
irritated
irked

ANGRY

enraged
furious
incensed
indignant
irate
livid
outraged
resentful

AVERSION

animosity
appalled
contempt
disgusted
dislike
hate
horrified
hostile
repulsed

CONFUSED

ambivalent
baffled
bewildered
dazed
hesitant
lost
mystified
perplexed
puzzled
torn

DISCONNECTED

alienated
aloof
apathetic
bored
cold
detached
distant
distracted
indifferent
numb
removed
uninterested
withdrawn

DISQUIET

agitated
alarmed
discombobulated
disconcerted
disturbed
perturbed
rattled
restless
shocked
startled
surprised
troubled
turbulent
turmoil
uncomfortable
uneasy
unnerved
unsettled
upset

EMBARRASSED

ashamed
chagrined
flustered
guilty
mortified
self-conscious

FATIGUE

beat
burnt out
depleted
exhausted
lethargic
listless
sleepy
tired
weary
worn out

PAIN

agony
anguished
bereaved
devastated
grief
heartbroken
hurt
lonely
miserable
regretful
remorseful

SAD

depressed
dejected
despair
despondent
disappointed
discouraged
disheartened
forlorn
gloomy
heavy hearted
hopeless
melancholy
unhappy
wretched

TENSE

anxious
cranky
distressed
distraught
edgy
fidgety
frazzled
irritable
jittery
nervous
overwhelmed
restless
stressed out

VULNERABLE

fragile
guarded
helpless
insecure
leery
reserved
sensitive
shaky

YEARNING

envious
jealous
longing
nostalgic
pining
wistful

Needs Inventory



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.

CONNECTION

acceptance
affection
appreciation
belonging
cooperation
communication
closeness
community
companionship
compassion
consideration
consistency
empathy
inclusion
intimacy
love
mutuality
nurturing
respect/self-respect

CONNECTION continued

safety
security
stability
support
to know and be known
to see and be seen
to understand and
be understood
trust
warmth

PHYSICAL WELL- BEING

air
food
movement/exercise
rest/sleep
sexual expression
safety
shelter
touch
water

HONESTY

authenticity
integrity
presence

PLAY

joy
humor

PEACE

beauty
communion
ease
equality
harmony
inspiration
order

AUTONOMY

choice
freedom
independence
space
spontaneity

MEANING

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

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Do you have a boundary you need to communicate? Outline it below:

Observe the **Facts** of the situation. (What is happening without your judgments about it?)

Get in touch with your **Emotions**. (Where are they in your body?) State these feelings.

Clarify Your **Needs**. Become clear about what you value. (What are your priorities right now?)

Make a **Request**. (These must be realistic, doable, appeals!) Yes or no answers are really nice.