

Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life

What is Nonviolent Communication & Why is it Important?

Nonviolent Communication (NVC) is a process of communicating that significantly improves all relationships because it espouses a way of communicating that strengthens our emotional and social intelligence.

Emotional Intelligence is the ability to be in control of our emotions, and understand from where they arise.

Social Intelligence is to be empathetic, and aware of other people's energy, and how this energy interacts with others, and how to effect group energy.

“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, communicating and thinking this way can create misunderstanding and frustration. At worst, it can lead to anger, depression, and even emotional or physical violence.” Marshall Rosenberg

“NVC guides us in reframing how we express ourselves & hear others. Instead of habitual, automatic reactions, our words become conscious responses based firmly on awareness of what we are perceiving, feeling, and wanting.” Marshall Rosenberg

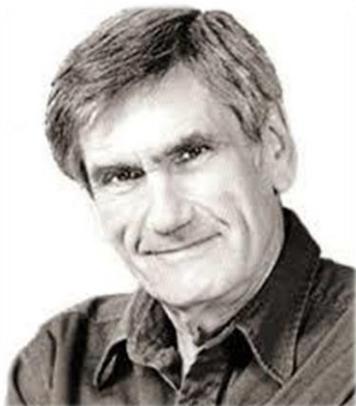
Marshall Rosenberg, creator of the Non-Violent Communication process, pioneered it in the 1960's, using it in federally funded school integration programs to provide mediation & communication skills training. The Center for Nonviolent Communication now has hundreds of certified NVC trainers and supporters teaching NVC in more than sixty countries around the globe. His book has been translated in more than 30 languages. The NVC process has and is being used with educators, managers, peace makers, health care providers, lawyers, prisoners, police, government officials, & individual families.

He very much believed that **humans are naturally compassionate**, but have been conditioned away from this compassion. In his studies, he was struck by the crucial role of language and our use of words in remaining compassionate. He identified...

“...a specific approach to communicating-both listening and expressing-that leads us to give from the heart, connecting us with ourselves and each other in a way that allows our natural compassion to flourish.

The NVC process is a 'needs based' model of communicating. If you or someone is upset, a deep need of yours/theirs is not being met.

The Process



Marshall Rosenberg

The concrete actions we **observe** that affect our well-being

How we **feel** in relation to what we observe

The **needs**, values, desires, etc. that create our feelings

The concrete actions we **request** in order to enrich our lives

The 4 components of NVC: *Observations* *Feelings* *Needs* *Requests*

- The 2 parts of NVC:
1. **Expressing honestly through the 4 components.**
 2. **Receiving empathically through the four components.**

Step 1: *Observing*

For most, it is difficult to make observations, especially of people and their behavior, that are free of judgment, criticism, evaluation, or other forms of analysis. People often mix up observing with evaluating. “John talks too much” is an evaluation, where as “During the last meeting, John told 3 personal stories” is an observation. The first step in NVC is observing, not evaluating.

Step 2: *Identifying & Expressing Feelings*

Most people are not adept at expressing feelings, and often times are actually expressing thoughts, instead of how they feel. A common confusion, generated by the English language is our use of the word 'feel' without actually expressing a feeling. “I *feel* like a failure.” “I *feel* Amy slighted me...” “I *feel* like they should know better...” etc.

2nd step is distinguishing what we are feeling, from what we are thinking.

4 ways to respond to a negative message:

1. Blame ourselves
 2. Blame others
 3. **Sense our own feelings & needs**
 4. **Sense others' feelings & needs.**
- 3 & 4 are imperative for NVC.

Step 3: *Identify the Need or Value that is not being met*

Judgements, criticisms, diagnoses, and interpretations of others are all alienated expressions of our needs. The moment people begin talking about their needs rather than what's wrong with one another, the possibility of finding ways to meet everyone's needs is greatly increased. The following are some basic human needs we all share:

Autonomy Integrity Celebration Interdependence Play Physical Nurturance

Step 4: *Clearly Requesting that which would Enrich our lives without demanding*

Use positive language. Saying “I don't want you to do this or that,” is not stating what you would like, but what you would not like someone to do. Making requests in clear, positive, concrete action language reveals what we really want while vague language contributes to internal, & external confusion.

Exercise: Think of a time you weren't getting along with someone, what needs were not being met?

I promise, that if you use NVC, **you will be able to see through drama and misunderstandings, and see the root of your, and anyone else's distress.** I have not had drama or an argument with anyone for over 10 years. Another book that is very helpful in reaching that end, is 'The 4 Agreements' & habitually practicing meditation. Every time I see someone having issues with anyone, I wish they knew about this process! It is extremely useful. I hope you find it helpful!

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