

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)



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.

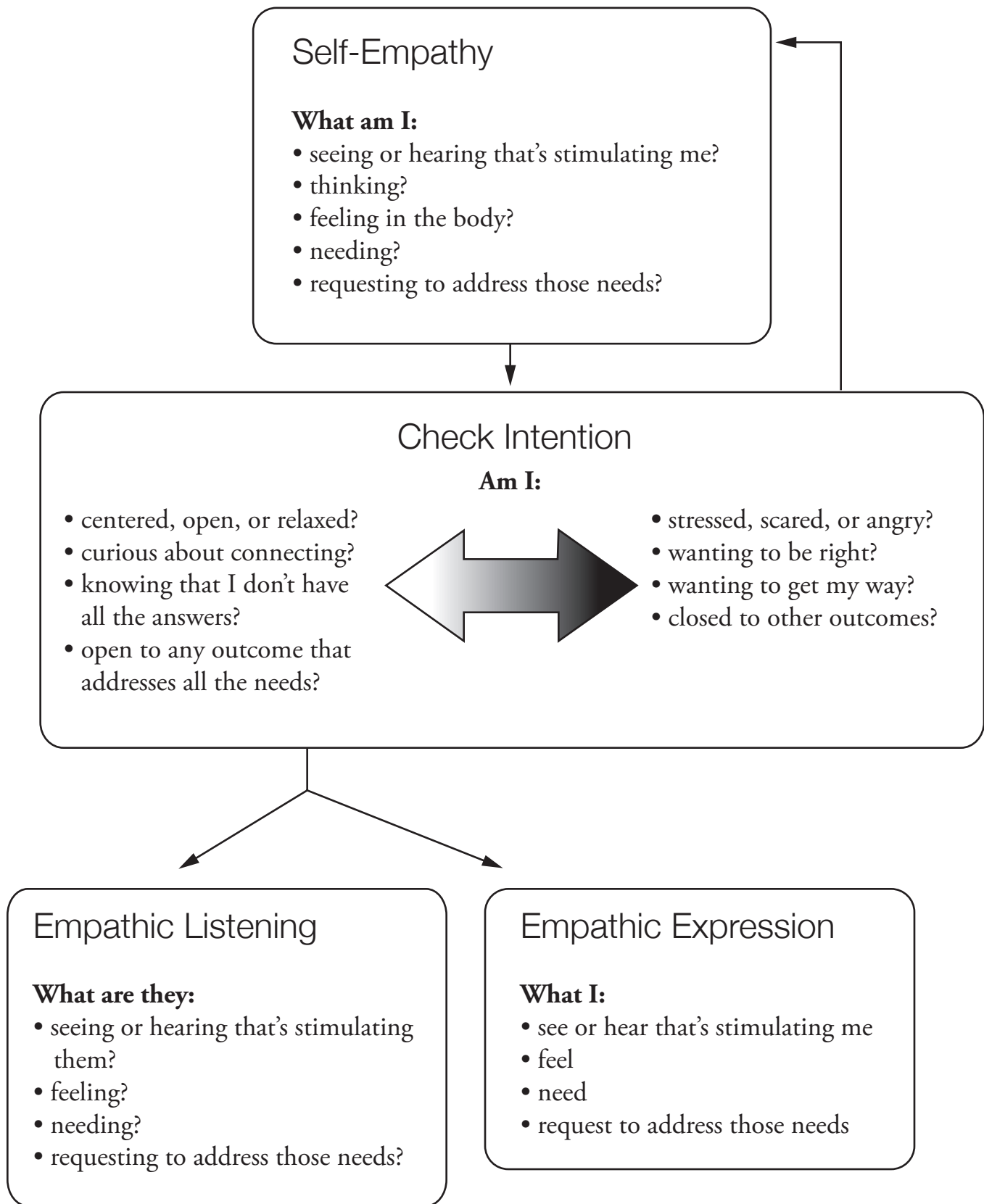
Needs: Feelings are caused by needs, which are universal and ongoing and not dependent on the actions of particular individuals. State *your need* rather than the other person’s actions as the cause. For example, “I feel annoyed *because I need support*” rather than “I feel annoyed *because you didn’t 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 requests 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.

Communication Flow Chart



Self-Empathy

(aka "What We're Bringing into the Room")



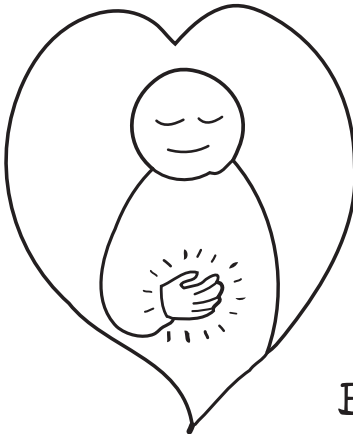
1. Thoughts - Touching our head and Naming stories, judgments, interpretations, and beliefs we're holding.

Take a DEEP breath!

2. Feelings - Touching our heart and Naming the present body sensations and emotions we feel.



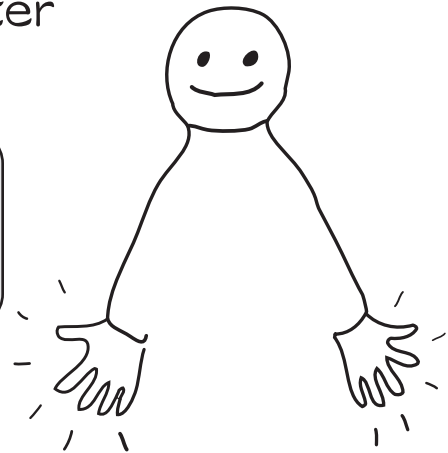
Take a DEEP breath!



3. Needs - Touching our belly and Naming the Needs underlying and being expressed through the Thoughts and Feelings.

Breathe and center

4. Requests - With hands open to receive, Naming any Request for Action that arises out of connecting to the Needs.



List of Universal Needs

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

<u>Subsistence</u>	Pleasure	<i>Community</i>	<i>Understanding</i>
<i>Physical sustenance</i>	Rejuvenation	Belonging	Awareness
Air, Food, Water		Celebration	Clarity
Shelter	<u>Connection</u>	Cooperation	Discovery
Health, Medicine	<i>Affection</i>	Equality	Learning
Physical Safety	Appreciation		Making sense of life
Rest / Sleep	Attention	Inclusion	
Movement	Closeness	Mutuality	
	Companionship	Participation	<i>Meaning</i>
<i>Security</i>	Harmony	Self-expression	Aliveness
Consistency	Intimacy	Sharing	Challenge
Stability	Love		Contribution
Order/Structure	Sexual Expression	<u>Meaning</u>	Creativity
Safety (emotional)	Support	<i>Sense of Self</i>	Effectiveness
Trust	Tenderness	Authenticity	Exploration
	Warmth	Competence	Integration
<u>Freedom</u>	Touch	Confidence	Purpose
<i>Autonomy</i>		Creativity	
Choice	<i>To Matter</i>	Dignity	<i>Transcendence</i>
Ease	Acceptance	Growth	Beauty
Independence	Care	Healing	Communion
Power	Compassion	Honesty	Faith
Space	Consideration	Integrity	Hope
Spontaneity	Empathy	Mastery	Inspiration
	Kindness	Marking transitions	Mourning
<i>Leisure / Relaxation</i>	Mutual Recognition	Self-acceptance	Peace (inner)
Adventure	Respect	Self-care	Presence
Fun	To be seen	Self-connection	
Humor	To be heard	Self-knowledge	
Joy	To be understood	Self-realization	
Laughter	To be trusted	Self-worth	
Play			

Additional Needs for the Workplace *(Some may lean more towards strategies)*

<i>Resources</i>	<i>Communication</i>	<i>Accountability</i>	<i>Empowerment</i>
Education, Training	Data, Research	Feedback	Freedom
Equipment, Tools	Clear Roles	Humility	Reassurance
Information	Clear Decision-	Integrity	Validation
Supplies	making	Morality, Ethics	Accept limitations
Time	Collaboration	Quality	Acknowledge loss
		Accept learnings	Honor ending

Feelings/Emotions – Partial List

(internal sensations, without reference to thoughts, interpretations)

This list is a collaborative effort of many, and adapted from Marshall Rosenberg's original list

The following are words we use when we want to express a combination of mental 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.

A. Feelings we may experience when our needs are being met

AFFECTIONATE

Compassionate
friendly
loving
openhearted
sympathetic
tender
warm

CONFIDENT

empowered
open
proud
safe
secure

ENGAGED

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

EXCITED

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

EXHILARATED

blissful
ecstatic
elated
enthralled
exuberant
radiant
rapturous
thrilled

GRATEFUL

appreciative
moved
thankful
touched

HOPEFUL

expectant
encouraged
optimistic

JOYFUL

amused
delighted
glad
happy
jubilant
pleased
tickled

INSPIRED

amazed
awed
wonder

PEACEFUL

calm
clearheaded
comfortable
centered
content
equanimity
fulfilled
mellow
quiet
relaxed
relieved
satisfied
serene
still
tranquil
trusting

REFRESHED

enlivened
rejuvenated
renewed
rested
restored
revived

B. Feelings we may experience when our needs are not being met

AFRAID

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

ANNOYED

aggravated
dismayed
disgruntled
displeased
exasperated
frustrated
impatient
irritated
irked

ANGRY

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
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
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

Empathy: Mindful Compassionate Dialogue Competency 2

There are so many benefits of cultivating empathy in your relationships. When you can give and receive empathy, each person has a deep sense of being heard. Knowing you can be heard, defensiveness relaxes and connection becomes possible. Empathy contributes to healthy differentiation, as well as emotional security. With empathy, you can truly be a companion and support for another without taking on their struggles as your own.

Empathy is a heart-based response to a heart-based expression of another. Empathy means giving your compassionate curiosity to another's experience without having an agenda. It often involves verbally guessing another's feelings and needs. For example, when someone shares about a difficulty at work, instead of trying to problem-solve you can make an empathy guess like, "Are you feeling discouraged because you need support?" In this way, empathy makes space for being present with feelings and needs so that the door to wisdom and compassion opens naturally.

1. Empathy is most essentially a deep acknowledgment and acceptance of our shared humanity and a form of attunement.
2. Empathy is the act of directing your attention to another with compassionate curiosity.
3. Verbal empathy means guessing or reflecting specific aspects of another's experience, especially feelings and needs. For example, it might sound like this, "Do you feel discouraged because you need support?" A formal empathy guess follows this structure: "**Do you feel ___ because you need (value) ___?**"
4. Empathy is a heart-based response to a heart-based expression of needs met or unmet.
5. Empathy could be offered and received through a variety of experiences. Verbal empathy requires feelings and needs vocabulary.
6. Empathy is *not* about agreement or disagreement.
7. Empathy is a form of responsiveness that depends on an internal sense of spaciousness, equanimity, and healthy differentiation..
8. Empathy requires you to maintain awareness of your own experience and stay centered and self-connected. You know when you don't have more energy for offering empathy. You can offer empathy without taking responsibility for the other person's feelings and needs.
9. Empathy often requires the ability to be comfortable with uncomfortable emotions and witness the suffering of others without trying to get them out of it. This means letting go of any agenda for the other person. (Requests about the behavior of others occur in your direct and honest expression, not in empathy).
10. Offering empathy often means being okay not understanding content when it serves the connection. You are able to let go of your own need for mental clarity regarding the facts and details of what someone is sharing if it doesn't serve the connection.
11. Empathy is grounded in the knowledge that when someone is heard deeply, they have greater access to wisdom and compassion.
12. Empathy is not always the best response for every encounter. Empathy is useful when the other person has a need for empathy.

Not Empathy

These are responses that you might offer in response to someone's expression of emotion or difficulty. Usually when someone is expressing difficulty, empathy is the need they want met first. The following responses may meet needs, they are simply not empathy. Ideally, you can become conscious of these habitual responses and ask the speaker what they want back from you when they share something.

SYMPATHY: Bring attention back to yourself. *"Oh, I am so sorry, I feel terrible for you."* This may meet a need for caring.

ADVICE: You assume the other person wants to know what you think they should do. *"Well, what you could do is..."* This may meet a need for support after empathy is received.

EXPLAIN/ANALYZE: You believe that if you tell someone why they feel the way they do, they will feel better. *"You just feel bad because ..."* This may meet a need for clarity after the need for empathy is met.

CORRECT: You try to point out someone's mistake in interpreting. *"He didn't do that to hurt you, he was just in a hurry."* This may meet a need for groundedness after the need for empathy is met.

CONSOLE: *"It will be okay. You're okay, everything will work out."* This may meet a need for emotional regulation.

TELL A STORY: *"The same thing happened to me. This one time ..."* This may meet a need for acceptance or belonging.

PUSH AWAY FEELINGS: You might be uncomfortable so you tell others not to feel what they feel. *"Come on smile, don't be sad."; "Just calm down and take a deep breath."; "It's not that big of a deal, just let it go."* This typically doesn't meet any needs.

INVESTIGATE/INTERROGATE: *"Why did you do that? What made you feel that way?"* This may meet a need for clarity after the need for empathy is met, but typically is about the listener's need for clarity and information and arises out of anxiety.

EVALUATE: You decide if another's emotional response is appropriate or not. *"You are overreacting. This is no big deal."* This typically doesn't meet any needs. All emotional responses are inherently valid because they exist and are simply a part of the flow of experience.

EDUCATE: *"What I see about the situation is ... The reason you feel like that is..."* This may meet a need for learning and support after the need for empathy is met.

ONE-UP: *"That's awful, but something even worse happened to me and I was devastated."* This typically doesn't meet any needs.

DIAGNOSE: *"Sounds like you had a panic attack. I know some good herbs for anxiety."* This may meet a need for learning and support if it is consent based and offered after the need for empathy is met.

DEMAND: *"If you don't get control of your emotions, I'm leaving!"* This typically doesn't meet any needs.

DENIAL OF CHOICE: *"It's a hard thing, but we all have to do it."* This typically doesn't meet any needs.

NOD & SMILE: You feel uncomfortable and just want to get out of the situation. Or you lose track of yourself and become completely lost in the experience of the other person. This typically doesn't meet any needs.

COLLUSION: You agree and add to judgments and blame. *"You're right he really is a jerk!"* This is a tragic strategy that may meet a need for support or being seen/heard in the moment, but then escalates or entrenches reactivity.

SILVER LINING: Move past what's happening toward some possible positive outcome. *"You will learn so much from this experience!"; "You probably lost this job so you can get one that's really right for you."* This may meet a need for hope or encouragement, after the need for empathy is met.

CHEERLEADING: You assume the need is for hope or reassurance. *"You're a strong person, you can get through this."; "You've been through worse and made it."; "I believe in you."* This may meet a need for hope or encouragement, after the need for empathy is met.