



Power, Love and Empathy for Advocacy

An Introduction to Nonviolent Communication

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Sunday, Mar 23, 2014, 3:15 & 4:15 pm

*"Judge not, that ye be not judged." Matthew 7: 1-3, Christian Bible (KJV)
"There is a field beyond right and wrong, [left and right???], I will meet you there." –Rumi*

ABOUT NVC NVC was developed by psychologist-mediator Marshall Rosenberg in the 60s-70s, based on the work of Mahatma Gandhi, Carl Rogers, Martin Luther King, Jr., Paolo Friere, Walter Wink, and other liberative, egalitarian, healing & spiritual traditions.

SEVEN BASIC ASSUMPTIONS (adapted from www.BayNVC.org)

- 1. Needs Consciousness:** All human beings have the same basic, deep needs (longings/values/life-energy.) All actions are attempts to meet these same universal needs--even those of folks who attack, challenge or annoy us.
- 2. Interdependence/Compassion are Natural:** We are born social--with connection and choice, we want to give. Many needs cannot be met alone, such as for safety, mattering, or belonging.
- 3. Everyone's Needs Matter:** When anyone's needs are disregarded, we are all at risk. And everyone's needs can be met with co-operation and creativity. There are enough resources to meet the basic needs of everyone—beware of scarcity thinking. (Which serves what—beyond sustainability?)
- 4. Beyond the Right/Wrong Domination Paradigm:** Instead of the violence of labels and judgments and "Power-Over" systems and roles, we can choose Power-With others, lived as respect, the dignity of choice and connection.
- 5. Beware of Habits of Disconnection (Power-Over) (NB: Activists!):** 1) Demands (instead of choices/requests); 2) Diagnosing/judging others (instead of concrete observations/facts we can meet on; 3) Denial of Responsibility with "shoulds" and "have tos" (instead of self-responsibility); 4) Deserving or comparisons (instead of believing we ALL matter).
- 6. Our Feelings/Body Wisdom Help Indicate When Needs are Met or Not.** When our needs are met, we tend to feel relaxed, open, joyous; when needs are not met, we experience fear, anger, impatience, confusion, grief etc. These are powerful guides to connecting to what Life/Spirit is needing/longing for.
- 7. How We Listen May Be More Important than What We Say:** We can choose to hear and react to labels, blame, criticism and anger OR hear and support and build on the feelings & life energy/needs that most matter--hence, *the power of empathy for advocacy.*

FOUR NVC SKILLS FOR ADVOCACY (101)

1. BRIDGE-BUILDING w/HUMAN NEEDS: Try to empathize/stay connected to the humanizing feelings and universal needs (i.e. core values longings or life-energies) that both we and even our opponents, or “enemies”, have and share.

Exercise#1: Brainstorm: the world we want is based on what values/needs?

Worksheet: Take five minutes to fill out the EAD/Advocacy worksheet—we will demonstrate and then practice/work through the steps with a neighbor.

Exercise #2: Pair with a neighbor. “A” share your nightmare of what a legislator might argue tomorrow. Take 30-60 seconds to express that to B. B, take a breath, reflect back generally what you heard A say and guess empathically what A is feeling or needing, what matters most. (NB “wrong” guesses help them find their need too.) Focus on the need. Switch so B shares what would be difficult to hear, and A reflects/guesses the wanting/needs. Shifts?

2. BRIDGE-BUILDING w/CONCRETE OBSERVATIONS: Check that your observations are concrete enough to be video-able (inc. stats, historical facts, etc.) so that they are not “loaded” with your evaluations or interpretations—toward common ground. Also include truthful, personal stories geared toward specific pending legislation/actions.

Exercise #3: Share one or two observations with neighbor who is on alert for any interpretations/stories that have crept into your objectivity. Adjust toward building common ground. Switch roles.

3. BRIDGE-BUILDING w/DOABLE REQUESTS: Make a few doable, timely, positive (“you can’t do a don’t”) requests that move both relationships and work for justice along (avoid demands--we all crave the dignity of choice or vague wishes).

Exercise #4: On your own, imagine making a request *for connection*: Ex. “Would you be willing to let me know how what I’ve said lands with you?”

Then, imagine a request *for action*: Would you be willing to.... [ex. vote for this legislation or let me know your decision?]

4. DEPTH-BUILDING w/SELF-RESPONSIBILITY/SELF-EMPATHY: 1) Own your feelings (and judgments/stories) as about your deepest needs/values, not the value of others. 2) Stay self-connected to the positive life energy in your deepest, truest, most authentic feelings and needs. Celebrate your caring!

Exercise #5: Take a breath, reconnect to the life energy in the need you MOST want to meet in your advocacy work, where does it live in you? Touch/treasure it.

HARVEST: Needs met? Not met, yet? Requests of self/others you might make?

NEXT STEPS? For more information: www.cnvc.org or www.nvctraining.org

Our local DC community/newsletter: www.CapitalNVC.org

EAD 2014 WORKSHEET/USING THE NVC BASICS

1. SELF-EMPATHY: Take a moment to “meet”—connect and feel into the power and energy of the need(s) that motivate you to take action.

2. IMAGINE a meeting with a legislator (or NRA member?) and a difficult-to-hear statement/question (your worst nightmare) about your issue/position:

3. OBSERVATIONS What concrete positive legislative action do you want to advocate for? What concrete, positive (video-able) statistics, true stories or concerns can you speak of most authentically?

3. Get ‘em out: THOUGHTS/JUDGMENTS – “The Jackal Show”

What thoughts or judgments (“stories”) do have about the other person or the situation?

What thoughts or judgments do you have about yourself--your words, actions, choices?

3. FEELINGS/NEEDS (STAR: Stop, Take a Breath and Relax?) Use chart below:

Self-empathy: As you consider difficult message/judgments, what feelings come up? What might be other unmet needs that give rise to these feelings?

Empathy: Now turn your attention to the other person, the one who spoke/might speak the words that are difficult for you. Make an open-hearted guess:

	Judgments/Blaming (aka the Jackal Show)	Feelings/Needs (aka Giraffe Ears)
Myself (self-emp.)		
Other Person (empathy)		

4. REQUESTS (All the NVC Basics together now!)

Expression: When I observe _____,
I feel _____
because I so value _____,

Connecting request of other: (ex. Would you be willing to tell me what makes most or least sense to you?): Would you be willing to _____

Action request of other: (ex. Would you be willing to vote, consider reading, letting me know...) Would you be willing to _____

Request of self: (ex. I want to be willing to hear no with curiosity and stay connected to my needs—will I?) I will try to _____