



Explore a way of communicating that connects, heals and liberates, a way to empower personal and social change, based on *Nonviolent Communication, NVC*.

Conscious Communication

Everyday practices that transform ourselves,
our relationships, and the world we live in

"Bringing about peaceful change begins with working on our own mindsets,
on the way we view ourselves and others, on the way we get our needs met."

Marshall B. Rosenberg, founder of the Center for Nonviolent Communication

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Barbara is a Certified Life Coach and NVC Facilitator, blending her extensive training in Nonviolent Communication (NVC) with her dedication to mindfulness, yoga and awakening – the inner journey of realizing wholeness and profound well-being. Barbara has been offering workshops and personal coaching since the 80's, accompanying fellow travellers in the work of transforming ourselves, our relationships and the world we live in.



What is Conscious Communication?

- A forgotten birthright of being human.
- Communication that supports us in becoming conscious, resilient, empowered, creative.
- A way to co-create the new culture of collaboration.
- The key to engaging the body-mind's capacity for healing from past hurts and trauma, balancing right and left hemispheres of the brain.
- The vehicle to being understood, cared about, valued, supported, accompanied.
- Fine-tuning the art of empathy for oneself and others.
- Language that has the power to connect, heal, transform and liberate.
- An expression of the authentic self, consciously connected with oneself, others, all...



Some Conscious Communication Practices

1. **Relational speech.** “I hear **you**.” “I’d like to share something with **you**.” “I remember when **you**...” “Can I ask a favour of **you**?” “I’m happy to see **you/ your**...” “I feel anxious when **you**...”
2. **Guessing/ naming feelings and underlying needs.** (See page #5) “Are you sad/ frustrated/ relieved/ glad/ excited/ disappointed/ discouraged?” “Would you love to be heard/ understood/ taken seriously/ appreciated/ to know that you matter, that you are valued and appreciated?”
3. **Tracking and naming body sensations.** “There is tension in my throat, pain in the upper right shoulder, butterflies in my belly, heaviness in my heart, tightness in my chest.”
4. **Acknowledging what is,** especially emotions and the underlying longing. “Would you like acknowledgment for how difficult (painful, stressful, frightening, bewildering, irritating) this has been for you?” “Would you like acknowledgment for your deep longing for harmony? ...safety? ...accompaniment? ...consideration? ...ease and spaciousness? ...joy?”
5. **Noticing and decoding non-verbal cues.** Pay attention to facial expression, touch, eye gaze, voice tone and speed, gesture, posture, pausing, breathing pattern, behavior...
6. **Using fresh metaphors.** “Are you stepping into a magical garden? ...vistas never seen before?”
7. **Offering relevant beauty.** Respond with poetry, art, visuals, song, music, movement, dance.
8. **Consciously delivered humour.** Attune to what’s alive inside using stories, jokes, impossible dreams (this can bring big insights.) On occasion, swear words can work wonders. !#%&!

The Language of Connection with Oneself and Others

"Most of us grew up speaking a language that encourages us to label, compare, demand, and pronounce judgments - rather than to be aware of what we are feeling and needing."

Marshall B. Rosenberg, *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life*

Choosing to be conscious, to be aware of feelings and needs, empowers the shift from confusion to connection. We can become aware of how our reactive thinking, **STORY**, prevents us from being present. With awareness we can disengage from our judgments, re-establishing connection with ourselves and others. Recall a situation where you were triggered (upset, stressed) by someone's behaviour. Here's a practice to become consciously aware of the whole of our experience.

STORY – What are the **thoughts/ beliefs/ images** that disconnect you? Regarding this situation, are you willing to see how you label, compare, demand, evaluate, diagnose, criticize? E.g. "I/ he/ she should know better." "I'm too sensitive." "No one respects me." "He's rude." "I'm right." "This is terrible/ wonderful."

Disengage from **STORY**. Shift attention to the four components of your actual experiencing:

1. OBSERVATION – What are the relevant **facts**, the stimulus or trigger for your feelings? Write down what was said or done – versus evaluations. E.g. "I see/ saw..." "I hear/ heard ..." "You're saying that..." "You/ I/ she said ..." "You did/ didn't (specific observable action)."

2. FEELING – What is the embodied experience, **emotions, feelings, body sensations** – versus implied judgments or interpretations? E.g. "I feel sad, upset, anxious, relieved, confused, angry..." {See Feelings list}

3. NEED – What **universal qualities of human well-being** are activated here – versus specific actions or strategies? E.g. "What is important to me in this situation is: *harmony, clarity, connection, ease, honesty, contribution, understanding, autonomy...*" {See Needs list}

4. ACTION/ REQUEST – What arises as a specific, do-able, positive action, a request or an offer (*not* a demand) to help meet mutual needs? E.g. An action request: "Would you be willing to chat about this with me tomorrow over lunch?" Here are two connection requests to help meet the need for understanding and connection, especially when there is conflict:

- "Would you be willing to let me know what you are hearing me say?"
- "Having heard what I just said, how do you feel now?"

The Art of Empathy - Our Capacity for Heart-felt Connection

What is Empathy? Barack Obama, in 2009, said it well: *“Empathy is seeing the world through others’ eyes. Empathy is the quality of character that can change the world.”* Marshall B. Rosenberg, founder of Nonviolent Communication (NVC) adds a key part when he says: *“Empathy occurs only when we have successfully shed all preconceived ideas and judgments.”* Easier said than done...

And, yes, we *are* hard-wired for empathy and connection. We all have moral inhibitions to harming another. In fact, when the natural empathic response to life is blocked, we pay an enormous price: depression, illness, apathy, alienation, aggression. *With* empathy there is mutual inner healing. Empathy transforms fear and isolation into connection and presence. It transforms pain into peace; it is healing balm for the soul. Empathy is embodied mindfulness, the power of presence as we relate.

Cultivating our Capacity for Empathy

Attention: Am I listening for person's underlying *feelings and needs*? Am I hearing and reflecting what's truly alive for this person? In silence or in words am I supporting the other person in feeling connected, in becoming conscious of their heart's desire, and in finding their own way forward?

Affection: Am I offering a space of heart-felt listening? Am I contributing to the other feeling safe, cared about, held, seen, loved? Am I responding *feelingly* to verbal and non-verbal cues?

Attunement: Am I attuning to the essential worthiness of this person? Am I free of agenda, judgment, preconceived ideas? Am I fully present? Attunement is about *being*, holding space, seeing the amazing beauty of this person, this interaction, this precious moment, here, now...

Empathy is Not

In our sincere wish to help another we often do so in ways that diminish connection. Or if we are triggered, we can speak in ways that are very hurtful. How do you feel when you get responses like this?

1. **Consoling/ Colluding:** “It’s going to be okay, don’t worry.” “You’re right. He’s a loser!”
2. **Advice:** “I think you should...” “Here’s what you must do...” “Why don’t you...?”
3. **Lecture/ Diagnosis:** “You don’t realize that...” “Your problem is ...” “You’re in your head.”
4. **Down-playing:** “There’s no need to be angry about this.” “Forget it.” “It’s nothing.”
5. **Interrupting/ Me too:** “Did you know that...” “That reminds me...” “Let me tell you...”
6. **Denial:** “You’ve got it all wrong.” “You’re fuming about nothing.” “It didn’t even happen.”
7. **Judgment/ Attack:** “I know you won’t succeed.” “What a fool you are to believe that.”
8. **Blame/ Shame:** “You only have yourself to blame for that.” “Why are you always lying?”
9. **Ridicule/ Sarcasm:** “You call that a piece of art?” “Aren’t you so very smart?”
10. **Threats:** “If you don’t apologize...” “Do this, or else...” “I’m warning you.”

Conflict Resolution: 7-Steps to Win-Win Solutions

"When we understand the needs that motivate our own and each others' behaviour, we have no enemies." Marshall B. Rosenberg

1. **OBSERVATION:** What are the *facts* of this situation that is of concern to me?
Be as objective as possible in your description of what happened, without using evaluative language. What are *the facts* of the event? What is the *trigger* or *stimulus* for your upset?
Disengage from **STORY**, discern clean observations versus evaluation, judgment...

2. **FEELING:** What am I *feeling* in relation to what happened? (See list of Feelings)
Clarify feelings, body sensations, emotions.
Disengage from **STORY**, **avoid** words that imply judgment. Discern actual feelings.

3. **NEED:** What are the *needs* alive here for me? (See list of Needs)
What are you longing for? What is your heart's desire, your needs or values in resolving this conflict? Disengage from **STORY**, avoid agenda, expectation, demands. Discern underlying needs, qualities of being, attributes of soul...


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4. **OBSERVATION:** How do you think the other person would describe the *facts* of this situation affecting them?
  
5. **FEELING:** How are they *feeling* in relation to this situation? (See list of Feelings)  
Can you guess what the other person might be feeling regarding what has happened?
  
6. **NEED:** What are the *needs* alive here for them? (See list of Needs)  
Can you guess what the other person might be longing for regarding this situation? What is their heart's desire, their needs or values in resolving the conflict? Are their needs similar to yours?
  
7. **ACTION/ REQUEST:** What are some options to help meet both of our needs?  
Consider specific offers or requests that would help satisfy both parties. Work together in acknowledging each other's feelings and needs, finally refining strategies to find a win-win solution. *With presence we can unhook our attention from **STORY**. We can undo our defensive armoring. We can co-create dialogue and resolution, transforming adversaries into allies.*

## FEELINGS and NEEDS: Words that foster connection and collaboration

*"At the heart of every action is the desire to meet a precious need."*

Marshall B. Rosenberg, founder of the Center for Nonviolent Communication [www.cnvc.org](http://www.cnvc.org)

### FEELINGS - Words for emotions that point to core needs that are fulfilled or acknowledged

|   |              |              |               |            |             |
|---|--------------|--------------|---------------|------------|-------------|
| A | Amazed       | Connected    | Excited       | Loving     | Refreshed   |
|   | Appreciative | Contented    | Fulfilled     | Moved      | Relaxed     |
|   | Awesome      | Curious      | Glad          | Nourished  | Relieved    |
|   | Blessed      | Delighted    | Grateful      | Open       | Safe/Secure |
|   | Blissful     | Eager        | Happy         | Optimistic | Satisfied   |
|   | Calm         | Ecstatic     | Hopeful       | Passionate | Stimulated  |
|   | Centred      | Empowered    | Inspired      | Peaceful   | Thankful    |
|   | Clear Headed | Encouraged   | Interested    | Playful    | Touched     |
|   | Comfortable  | Enlivened    | Joyful        | Pleased    | Tranquil    |
|   | Confident    | Enthusiastic | Light-Hearted | Proud      | Warm        |

### FEELINGS - Words for emotions that point to core needs that we long to have fulfilled or acknowledged

|   |              |               |           |                 |               |
|---|--------------|---------------|-----------|-----------------|---------------|
| B | Afraid       | Embarrassed   | Helpless  | Numb            | Sorrowful     |
|   | Angry        | Enraged       | Hesitant  | Overwhelmed     | Stressed      |
|   | Anxious      | Envious       | Hopeless  | Panic/Alarm     | Terrified     |
|   | Concerned    | Exhausted     | Horrified | Puzzled         | Tired/Weary   |
|   | Confused     | Frightened    | Hurt/Pain | Resentful       | Torn/Split    |
|   | Depressed    | Frustrated    | Insecure  | Sad/Missing     | Troubled      |
|   | Despairing   | Gloomy        | Irritated | Self-Protective | Uncomfortable |
|   | Disappointed | Guarded       | Jealous   | Shame           | Unhappy       |
|   | Discouraged  | Heart-Broken  | Lonely    | Shocked         | Vulnerable    |
|   | Disgust/Hate | Heavy-Hearted | Nervous   | Skeptical       | Worried       |

### UNIVERSAL HUMAN NEEDS - Words that help us connect with what deeply matters, qualities of soul

|   |                |               |                  |                 |                  |
|---|----------------|---------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| C | Acceptance     | Clarity       | Ease/Flow        | Letting Go      | Rest/Relaxation  |
|   | Acknowledgment | Closeness     | Emotional Safety | Love            | Safety/Security  |
|   | Affection      | Closure       | Empathy          | Meaning/Purpose | Self-Expression  |
|   | Appreciation   | Collaboration | Fairness         | Mourning        | Support          |
|   | Authenticity   | Communication | Family           | Order           | Surrender        |
|   | Autonomy       | Community     | Harmony          | Peace           | Tenderness       |
|   | Awareness      | Companionship | Honesty          | Play/Fun/Humour | To be Heard/Seen |
|   | Balance        | Compassion    | Humility         | Presence        | To be Known      |
|   | Beauty         | Confidence    | Information      | Privacy         | To Matter        |
|   | Belonging      | Connection    | Inspiration      | Reciprocity     | Trust            |
|   | Celebration    | Consideration | Integrity        | Reliability     | Understanding    |
|   | Challenge      | Contribution  | Joy/Delight      | Resolution      | Warmth           |
|   | Choice         | Dignity       | Kindness         | Respect         | Well-Being       |