



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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## What is Conscious Communication?

- A forgotten birthright of being human – fully human.
- Communication that supports us in becoming conscious, resilient, empowered, creative – alive, alert, aware.
- A way to co-create the new culture of collaboration – hope.
- The key to engaging the body-mind's capacity for healing from past hurts and trauma – healing.
- The vehicle to being understood, cared about, valued, supported, accompanied – belonging, intimacy, love.
- Fine-tuning empathy for oneself and others – connection.
- Language that has the power to connect, heal, transform and liberate – liberation, transformation, awakening.
- An expression of the authentic self, consciously connected with oneself, others, all – harmony, peace.



### Some Conscious Communication Practices

1. **Referencing the relationship.** “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**.” “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 metaphor.** “Are you seeing a magical garden? ...and you want to live there?”
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 practice 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 own 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."

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 essential 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 Language of Empathy: The Art of Really Listening

We all have the innate capacity to connect intimately with ourselves and others. How can we fine-tune the art of listening? Here are some options to support you in holding space for someone, to help forge genuine connection.

OBSERVATION: We can reflect the *facts* of the situation, distinct from evaluation, judgment.

"I gather/ understand/ hear you/ agree with you that ...?"

"I hear you. The facts of this situation are ...?"

"Okay, you're telling me that ...?"

"So, I hear that the trigger for you in this situation is that ...?"

FEELING: We can reflect the *feelings, emotions, sensations* arising here. (See List of Feelings)

"I'm guessing that you're feeling ...? Yes, I hear you. Whew."

"Would you say that you're experiencing ...?"

"You're telling me that you are feeling ...? Hmmm. Uh-huh..."

"Would you like to be acknowledged for the immensity of ... you are feeling about this?"

NEEDS: We can reflect the *needs, values, longings* – met or not met. (See list of Needs)

"I'm guessing that you value, love, appreciate, long for, would like, deeply care about ...?"

"It sounds like what is very important to you here is ...?"

"It seems to me that your heart's desire is ...? Is that it?"

"I wonder if the longing, need, alive for you here is ...?"

ACTION/ REQUEST: Ways of reflecting the *specific want* that has arisen to help fulfill needs.

"I'm hearing that what you want me (them, yourself) to do about this is ... Have I got it?"

"You're telling me that you will, want to, have decided to, are open to, plan to ..."

"You see the next step for you (for us) is to ...?"

"To help meet your need for ... you'd like to ask me (him, her, them) to ...? Is that it?"

"Here's the deal. The human soul doesn't want to be advised or fixed or saved. It simply wants to be witnessed — to be seen, heard and companioned exactly as it is."

Parker Palmer, *The Gift of Presence, The Perils of Advice*

"Taking refuge in presence - choosing presence - requires training." Tara Brach,  
*True Refuge: Finding Peace and Freedom in Your Own Awakened Heart*

## 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 vertsus 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: Basic Literacy for 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 pleasant emotions that point to **fulfilled** core needs.

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 unpleasant emotions that point to **unfulfilled** core needs.

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 core needs, core qualities of being.

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