

## Staying Current with Non Violent Communications (NVC)

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### *What is NVC?*

NVC is a philosophy, a methodology and a consciousness.

The philosophical foundation of NVC, developed by Marshall Rosenberg, is that all humans share universal emotions and needs. When we communicate and relate to each other, we're trying to get our needs met. However, a lot of communication, especially in times of conflict, focuses on our judgements and perceptions rather than our feelings and needs. NVC proposes that by focusing on and communicating our feelings and needs, we can come to a more harmonious outcome in our relationships.

### *Speaking with NVC*

The methodology for speaking with NVC is to use the OFNR formula: Observations, Feelings, Needs, Requests. First, we state an observation of an event that's at the heart of the matter without judgment. Then we share how we felt when that event happened and also what needs – met or unmet - were most important to us. Finally, we can make a request to a deeper connection with the other party or for future change.

Let's take a look at an example:

Jane invited her friend Wendy who's a professional chef over for dinner. At one point, Wendy made a comment that the vegetables didn't taste very good. Jane became upset over the comment as she felt Wendy had insulted her.

***Observations:***

It's important to distinguish an observation of an event from our perception of it. If Jane tells Wendy, "You insulted me," she would be making a judgment based on her perception, whereas if she says, "I heard you say that my cooking doesn't taste good," she would be making an observation. Telling someone that they insulted you often can trigger a defensive reaction whereas recalling something they actually said is more likely to be heard neutrally.

***Feelings:***

After stating the observation, we share how we feel when the incident happened. These are "I" statements. For example, "I felt angry" or "I felt jealous." A common mistake in this step is to use faux feelings. Faux feelings are words such as attacked, neglected, and betrayed. Faux feelings tend to carry a judgment of wrongness or blame. They indicate something happened to us rather than focus on what is inside of us. Back to our example, underneath Jane's perception that she was insulted, she was really feeling hurt. Here is a [list of additional feelings](#) for reference.

***Needs:***

The next step is to communicate our needs. A few examples of needs are connection, safety, autonomy, mattering and joy. Back to our example, Jane could have been needing respect and compassion. Here is a [list of additional needs](#).

***Requests:***

Finally, we can make a request of the other party. Requests can be made for a future action or connection in the moment. An action request is something we ask the other person to do. A connection request is asking the other party to share about their experience.

Putting it all together, Jane could have said something like this to Wendy:

"Hi Wendy. When you mentioned earlier that my vegetables didn't taste very good, I felt really hurt. I'm needing some empathy and compassion right now. Can you understand how I might be feeling?"

### *Listening with NVC*

NVC also helps us be better listeners by focusing on the feelings and needs of the speaker. NVC has a practice of making empathy guesses while listening using the form of "Are you feeling \_\_\_\_\_?" and "Are you needing/wanting \_\_\_\_\_?"

By providing empathy in the form of questions, we're more likely to stay open to all that's possible for the speaker rather than assert our assumptions of their experience. Also, asking the questions helps open our hearts towards understanding and away from judgment.

It's important to note that we don't have to agree with someone's perspective to have empathy for them. Just as we can have empathy for someone stealing medicine for their sick child, we may not condone their actions.

### *NVC Consciousness*

Finally, this brings us to the consciousness of NVC. It is the belief that we are all One and that our feelings and needs are universal. It is the belief that beneath what we perceive to be the most horrific, despicable and vile actions of others - and ourselves - are unmet needs that deserve our awareness and acceptance.