

Assumptions of Nonviolent Communication

* (according to Bret)

“It is our nature to enjoy giving and receiving in a compassionate manner” Marshall Rosenberg NVC is not about getting others to do or give us what we want. NVC is a consciousness that helps us focus our attention on expressing honestly and listening empathically, improving the quality of our connection to others and resulting in increased understanding and compassion.

1. Everything anyone does (like reading this) is an attempt to meet a need (or value).
2. Needs are universal. At our core, we have and share the same needs.
3. Needs are life expressing itself through us.
4. Needs are not “bad” or “good”; they are what allow life to sustain itself. (An example of needs are for understanding, connection, choice, trust and contributing to the well-being of others.)
5. When our needs are met we experience feelings we enjoy.
6. When our needs are not met we experience feelings we do not enjoy.
7. Feelings are not “bad” or “good”; they simply indicate when our needs are met.
8. Feelings and needs (or values) are internal.
9. The cause of our feelings is a need that is either met or unmet. While external events may stimulate a need, our feelings are never caused by something or someone outside of ourselves, such as the actions of others.
10. Strategies to meet needs can be either internal (thoughts) or external (behaviors). However, if it is external (behavior) it is a strategy to meet a need and not a need itself.
11. Needs (or values) do not conflict.
12. Strategies (behaviors or thoughts) employed to meet needs sometimes conflict, as they may meet some needs and not others.
13. Strategies to meet needs have pros and cons. Some strategies may meet some of our needs but at the expense of other needs, either ours or someone else’s.
14. When we are aware of the needs we are attempting to meet we are more likely to select strategies that meet our needs as well as the needs of others.
15. It is not always possible to meet everyone’s needs given a limited period of time. It is possible to understand and connect with each person’s needs. Often, meeting the need for understanding and connection is what is most helpful in that moment, even when other needs remain unmet.
16. Mourning the loss of unmet needs may meet the need for understanding and connection.
17. When people understand the reason and meaning (feelings and needs) behind our requests, they are more likely to stay in dialogue and seek to reach agreement.
18. When people trust that they are able to respond freely (choice) with either a “yes” or a “no”, and without retribution, they are more likely to stay in dialogue and seek to reach agreement.
19. To create understanding and connection between two or more people does not require each person to know and use the principles of NVC. It only takes one.
20. Focusing our attention on what another person is feeling and needing, and not on what they are saying or thinking, is more likely to result in understanding and connection.

NVC is not about getting others to do or give us what we want. NVC is a consciousness that helps us focus our attention on expressing honestly and listening empathically, improving the quality of our connection to others and resulting in increased understanding and compassion.

Based on Nonviolent Communication by Marshall Rosenberg, Ph.D. May be duplicated for personal use or for teaching NVC. Submit suggested changes and comments to Bret Stein at artisanf@hotmail.com Rev. 1/1/09