



**PROFESSIONELE BACHELOR IN HET ONDERWIJS
SECUNDAIR ONDERWIJS**

Eindwerk

Compass Teachers

Creating Compassionate Teachers
through Nonviolent Communication



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Compass Teachers Creating Compassionate Teachers through Nonviolent Communication

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ACADEMIEJAAR 2014-2015

Preface

The road to this Bachelor thesis was a long one. In life, everything that happens plays a part in what is to come. So have the events in my life led me to become interested in compassionate thinking which in turn opened the path towards Nonviolent Communication. Changing the world starts with changing myself and educating myself has been a really important step for me.

I would like to thank my promoter, Lieve Cuypers, not only for guiding me through this project, but also for introducing me to Nonviolent Communication. Her sessions on Intercultural Awareness have really strengthened my goals in life.

I wish to thank Yasuhiro Kotera for all his help and guidance. He has a lot of experience counselling and teaching university students, which gave me the opportunity to pick his brain when I needed to.

I wish to thank mother, sister and brother for their continuing support. It has been a rocky road, but the best can always survive the worst.

I also wish to thank my grandmother, for threatening me to never talk to me again if I would ever consider quitting this bachelor course. She is old school and that is a classic way of motivation.

Next I would like to thank Yasmin Reem Rajab. I love her with all my being and hopefully one day she will let me teach her about Nonviolent Communication. She has been there to support me and push me when I needed pushing.

Last, but definitely not least, I would like to thank Sanne Sulejmani. If it was not for her, I might have never had the courage to start this degree program.

Thank all of you for your support and your feedback.

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1 Introduction

“We do not look for compromise; rather, we seek to resolve the conflict to everyone’s complete satisfaction.”

— Marshall B. Rosenberg

“Has ‘teaching’ changed a lot since you started?” This is a question I asked all the teachers who have guided me throughout the placements I did during my teaching course at PXL University College. These teachers all had over a decade’s worth of experience in the field.

A firm yes was always the answer.

When I asked if they liked the changes they had experienced, the *no* that followed tended to be less firm, but no less clear. The two reasons why the teachers I interviewed feel the teaching profession has gotten less pleasurable are the following: the paperwork they had to fill out has increased and relationships with parents have become more challenging. The second problem caught my attention.

Could it be interesting and possible to improve the relationships between parents and teachers? Are there methods that can help both parties reach a better connection? These questions are the foundation of my research question.

It is of paramount importance to the pupils that their parents and teachers have a good connection. Where one might be in charge of development at home, the other is in charge of development in school. To make this venture work as well as possible, effective communication is essential. According to the teachers I spoke to, it is exactly that kind of communication that is missing nowadays. Donna Henderson, associate professor of Counsellor Education at Wake Forest University said the following in an interview on her university’s website:

"[As parents,] establishing a good relationship with the teacher at the beginning of the school year is essential [...] . Two people working together who have the best interest of the child in mind have a greater impact than if they work alone."

¹

Even though Henderson states this from the perspective of parents, the same statement could be made from the teachers' point of view.

To prepare (future) teachers for the challenge of creating effective communication, I want to introduce them to Nonviolent Communication (NVC), also called Compassionate Communication. NVC is a method of communication designed by the late Marshall Rosenberg (1934-2015). It has the potential to resolve conflicts in a peaceful manner by finding a way to meet all the needs that are involved in said conflicts. I have produced a series of activities that can be used by coaches to train (future) teachers in this method. I chose to focus my efforts on *teachers* and not on *teachers and parents* because of two reasons:

1. NVC can already be effective when used by one of the parties in a conflict,
2. and teaching NVC to teachers will be more effective than teaching the parents. If we would invite all the parents to learn about compassionate communication, we might only attract those who already tend to communicate more compassionately.

NVC is not just a curative method of communication, but also a preventive one. If teachers are familiar with NVC, they will have the possibility to approach parents differently from the start. It will capacitate teachers to prevent escalation in many situations. Even though the method might help you resolve conflicts, compassionate interaction that prevents the need for resolution is always preferred.

¹ <http://www.wfu.edu/wfunews/2001/071701s.htm>

1.1 Research Objectives

Taken all the above-mentioned into consideration, I developed my research goal for this bachelor thesis:

How can I help prepare (future) teachers to become more compassionate teachers?

As I believe the perfect place to start helping teachers is within the course that prepares students for the profession, I developed a series of workshops that can be integrated into the generic methodology aspect of this course. Therefore, my research goal needed to be expanded with the following question:

What would be an efficient approach to introduce Nonviolent Communication to (future) teachers and help them practise this approach?

To answer these questions, I first developed nine activities and built up two series of workshops with them. These series are just examples and all the materials are available for all coaches who want to develop their own workshops.

After trying out some of the activities on a diverse group of lecturers and staff at PXL University College, I found that...

...I can help prepare teachers for compassionate communication through the use of well-designed workshops.

2 Literature

2.1 Conflict Management in Education

Most of the ideas in this study come from Marshall B. Rosenberg's *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life* (2003). All other sources used will be mentioned throughout the text.

In schools, teachers try to provide their pupils with what they think is good education. While the teacher tries to get the pupil ahead in school, the parent tries to get the child ahead in life. Both parties want the same thing: they want the child to grow into the best version of him or herself whilst feeling intrinsically motivated to keep growing. Each has the need to be respected for their share in the process. Both trying to get the same person through the educational system, they will have to interact from time to time. But what happens when communication between these parties is difficult?

Marshall B. Rosenberg has developed a communication model, which he calls Nonviolent Communication. Within this system, feelings are seen as signals for either satisfied or unsatisfied universal needs. The way each of us tries to satisfy his or her universal needs can be very different, but Rosenberg believes that through empathetic communication we can find ways to work together to meet our needs. The techniques Rosenberg has developed since the early 1960s have proven to be effective in conflicts all over the world and in all layers of society.

2.2 Nonviolent Communication

Every person is a unique being, different fingerprints, different eyes, different minds, and so on. One thing we all do have in common are our universal needs. We all have the need for food, water, and breathable air. But there also are far more intricate needs, like the need for inclusion, mutuality and inspiration. The list of universal needs contains more than the six above mentioned concepts, but the list is not

endless. The needs might be universal, but the strategies we develop to meet those needs differ from person to person.

If two (or more) parties are aspiring to the same goal, they can agree to work together. This doesn't mean that the coalition will be free of conflict. Every party might have its own strategy, perfectly designed to meet its owner's needs, to reach set goal. It's very important to find a strategy in which the needs of all parties are met while simultaneously working towards the objective. The methods of Nonviolent Communication (NVC) are developed to explore underlying needs and find strategies that benefit participants and set objectives.

In his 2003 book *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life*, Marshall B. Rosenberg (PhD) clearly lays out the methods he designed and tested thoroughly since developing it in the 1960s. He explains that successful nonviolent communication exists out of four main components: Observing a situation without judging it; Identifying and expressing feelings within the situation; Exploring the needs that are connected to the emotions; Requesting that which will enrich all parties involved.

As *empathy* is one of the cornerstones of NVC, it will be beneficial to discuss it before proceeding to dig further into Rosenberg's method. As Lieve Cuypers, lecturer in Intercultural Awareness, would say during her lectures on NVC, "sympathy is feeling for someone, empathy on the other hand is feeling *with* that other person". It's very important to understand the difference. What follows, is a direct quote from *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life* :

"Empathy is a respectful understanding of what others are experiencing. We often have a strong urge to give advice or reassurance and to explain our own position or feeling. Empathy, however, calls on us to empty our mind and listen to others with our whole being."

— Marshall B. Rosenberg

2.3 Observation

When confronted with a situation, it might feel natural to immediately evaluate it. The situation will be compared to a previous experience that felt similar and a judgement will be passed. The first step in NVC is to let go of preconceptions and separate evaluation from observation. If we *do* observe and evaluate at the same time and express our findings, others might hear criticism which would lead to them resisting what we are saying. Instead, observations are to be made specific to time and context. This makes it easier to observe an action or situation without immediately attaching an evaluation.

To be able to observe often requires being able to empathetically listen. This is one of the basic qualities we need for creating connection with another person. In his book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (1989), **Stephen Covey** describes four different levels of listening:

1. We hear, but we don't care.
2. We pretend to listen.
3. We listen selectively, which might lead to us starting to listen attentively to the words that are being expressed.
4. The highest form of listening: to listen with empathy.

When it comes to conflict during interaction, it becomes of paramount importance to be able to listen empathetically when you wish to observe without evaluating. In their book *Konflikthantering I Professionellt Lärarskap* (2011), Marianne Göthlin and Towe Widstrand explain the highest form of listening to be more than just active or reflective listening. It means to see a situation from the other person's point of view, both mentally and emotionally, whether you agree with it or not. To be listened to in such a way can be a liberating experience; it can give power, energy and the ability to feel empathy for others as well.

2.4 Feelings

Once observation without evaluation is established, the next step is to identify and express one's feelings within the situation. To express our emotions towards others, Rosenberg emphasises how important it is for us to clearly and specifically identify our emotions. Only when other people can empathise with you, will you be able to establish the connection you are trying for with them. To do this, we will need to expand our *feelings vocabulary*.

In NVC there is a clear distinction between expressing one's actual feelings and expressing words and statements that describe thoughts, assessments and interpretations. Rosenberg provides us with a list of words describing feelings in *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life*. Because saying you feel *good* is a rather vague explanation of what you are feeling, Rosenberg suggests we use words like *happy*, *excited*, *relieved* or any other meaningful term.

Feelings have to be recognised for what they are: signals that our needs are or are not being satisfied. The feelings mentioned in the previous paragraph were feelings that occur when our needs are being met. But when needs are not being met, it might make for feelings that we don't experience as being 'good'. Table 1 below contains a list of example feelings for when needs are being satisfied, table 2 shows us feelings of the contrary.

Our emotions arise from what we *think* of certain situations or actions, not from the situation or action itself. Göthlin and Widstrand (2011) recognise *anger* as a signal that a need is not being met. Together with the emotions *annoyance* and *irritation*, *anger* is a peculiar feeling for needs not being met. While most other feelings have a direct connection to our needs, these three make us think someone else has acted wrongly. When expressing that you feel one of above-mentioned emotions because of the other party, you are inviting that other party to a judgmental discussion.

It's important to realise that beneath the initial emotion, there might be other feelings like *fear*, *sadness*, *vulnerability* or *frustration*. The latter are emotions that are more

likely to be understood by others because they won't experience your expression as an attack.

On basis of NVC, Göthlin and Widstrand (2011) propose a gradual training to take responsibility for our anger and become aware of the underlying unfulfilled needs:

1. Embrace your anger. The angrier you are, the more important the needs/values that are being threatened. Your current thoughts are likely judgments on other people's actions. Behind every judgment is one of your own needs.
2. Take a deep breath and turn your attention inwards, listen to your thoughts and judgments.
3. To find the needs behind your reaction, you can try saying to yourself: "I'm angry because I think NEED X is important."
4. When you are clear about the needs that are important or even threatened, notice how your feelings change.
5. When you are in contact with your needs, you can choose to express yourself or to listen to the other person.

Tabel 1 Feelings when your needs are met

AFFECTIONATE compassionate friendly loving open hearted sympathetic tender warm ENGAGED absorbed alert curious engrossed enchanted entranced fascinated	Interested intrigued involved spellbound stimulated HOPEFUL expectant encouraged optimistic CONFIDENT empowered open proud safe secure	EXCITED amazed animated ardent aroused astonished dazzled eager energetic enthusiastic giddy invigorated lively passionate surprised vibrant	GRATEFUL appreciative moved thankful touched INSPIRED amazed awed wonder JOYFUL amused delighted glad happy jubilant pleased tickled	EXHILARATED blissful ecstatic elated enthralled exuberant radiant rapturous thrilled PEACEFUL calm clear headed comfortable centered content equanimous fulfilled	mellow quiet relaxed relieved satisfied serene still tranquil trusting REFRESHED enlivened rejuvenated renewed rested restored revived
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Tabel 2 Feelings when your needs are not met

AFRAID apprehensive dread foreboding frightened mistrustful panicked petrified scared suspicious terrified wary worried ANNOYED aggravated dismayed disgruntled displeased exasperated frustrated impatient irritated irked ANGRY enraged furious incensed	indignant irate livid outraged resentful AVERSION animosity appalled contempt disgusted dislike hate horrified hostile repulsed CONFUSED ambivalent baffled bewildered dazed hesitant lost mystified perplexed puzzled torn	DISCONNECTED alienated aloof apathetic bored cold detached distant distracted indifferent numb removed uninterested withdrawn DISQUIET agitated alarmed discombobulated disconcerted disturbed perturbed rattled restless shocked startled surprised troubled	turbulent exhausted lethargic listless Turmoil uncomfortable uneasy unnerved unsettled upset EMBARRASSED ashamed chagrined flustered guilty mortified self-conscious FATIGUE beat burnt out depleted sleepy tired weary worn out PAIN agony	anguished bereaved devastated grief heartbroken hurt hopeless melancholy unhappy wretched lonely miserable regretful remorseful SAD depressed dejected despair despondent disappointed discouraged disheartened forlorn gloomy heavy hearted	TENSE anxious cranky distressed distraught edgy fidgety frazzled irritable jittery nervous overwhelmed restless stressed out VULNERABLE fragile guarded helpless insecure leery reserved sensitive shaky YEARNING envious jealous longing nostalgic pining wistful
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2.5 Needs

There are four ways to focus on your feelings when needs aren't met:

	BLAME	OBSERVE
INTERNAL	Blame yourself	Sense own feelings and needs
EXTERNAL	Blame others (Jackal)	Sense other's feelings and needs (Giraffe)

When in a situation where a need is not met, the feeling needs to be experienced and observed. When this happens with judgment, *blaming* might happen. One can blame oneself (internal blaming), or others (external blaming). In NVC, this kind of behaviour is referred to as **jackal behaviour**. The jackal is a fierce little animal that can be quite aggressive.

When the experience is being observed without judgment, it becomes possible to *sense one's own feelings and needs*. One can do this for one's own needs (internal) and for those of others (external). This is referred to as **giraffe behaviour**. The giraffe was chosen for several reasons: it is the land animal with the biggest sized heart; its long neck gives it the advantage of overseeing many situations; the long neck also refers to a willingness to stick one's neck out.

It's when we start getting into the *giraffe behaviour* that we can start looking for the needs behind our feelings. But to do this, we need to possess *self-empathy*. This is not the same as self-sympathy (self-pity). You need to be able to respectfully understand what you are experiencing without judging yourself or the situation you are in. This might take some practice.

External giraffe behaviour asks a good deal of *empathy* from us. Because of that, it allows us to get into a constructive discussion as to uncover the other person's needs that are not being met. But it won't be enough to just uncover them, the needs will have to be checked with their owner to see if they are correctly understood. Crosschecking needs will also heighten the empathic atmosphere.

2.6 Needs Inventory

The following list of needs is neither exhaustive nor definitive. It is meant as a starting place to support anyone who wishes to engage in a process of deepening self-discovery and to facilitate greater understanding and connection between people.

CONNECTION acceptance affection appreciation belonging cooperation communication closeness community companionship compassion consideration consistency empathy inclusion intimacy love mutuality nurturing respect/self-respect safety security stability support	to know and be known to see and be seen to understand and be understood trust warmth PHYSICAL WELLBEING air food movement/exercise rest/sleep sexual expression safety shelter touch water HONESTY authenticity integrity presence	PLAY joy humor PEACE beauty communion ease equality harmony inspiration order AUTONOMY choice freedom independence space spontaneity	MEANING awareness celebration of life challenge clarity competence consciousness contribution creativity discovery efficacy effectiveness growth hope learning mourning participation purpose self-expression stimulation to matter understanding
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Website: www.cnvc.org Email: cnvc@cnvc.org
Phone: +1.505-244-4041

2.7 Request for Action

Marshall B. Rosenberg poses two important questions in conflict situations between two parties:

- What is it that each of the parties is needing? (Uncover the underlying needs)
- What would one party like to request of the other in relation to its needs?

The last step before entering the arena of trying out solutions is making sensible and well thought through requests. When formulating these requests, try to avoid vague, abstract and ambiguous phrasing. Also use positive action language by stating what *is* being requested instead of what is *not*.

When a teacher would say to a pupil “Please don’t throw your books on the table every time you take them out”, the pupil will know what he’s not supposed to do. This, however, does not inform him of what he *is* allowed to do. The positive action request could be formulated as follows: “Please lay your books down on the table gently when taking them out.”

When both parties are able to form sensible requests based on their identified needs, they will be able to construct a strategy that will fulfil most, if not all, of those needs. Working together with one strategy will strengthen the feeling of teamwork and the idea that you can reach a common goal on common terms. When all needs are satisfied, the feelings that will be felt will be satisfying as well (see Table 1).

It is very important to always keep the main objective of NVC in mind, being *establishing relationships based on honesty and empathy that will eventually fulfil everyone’s needs*. NVC is not to be used as a means for manipulation. Always make sure that your requests are not demands. People will experience your request as a demand if they feel that not complying will result in blame or punishment. The thing about requests is that they don’t *have* to be met. But to help making requests effective, Rosenberg uses the following questions:

- What would I like the other person to do differently?
- What would I like the other person’s reason to change his behaviour be?

As long as these questions are not used in favour of demands, they will help to establish that main objective mentioned beforehand.

In a conflict, paraphrasing requests and possible solutions has proven to help reduce conflict time. Studies in labour-management negotiations demonstrate that the time required to reach conflict resolution is cut in half when each negotiator agrees, before responding, to accurately repeat what the previous speaker had said.

3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

To help prepare teachers to become compassionate teachers through the use of Nonviolent Communication (NVC), I have developed nine activities that can be used in workshops. These workshops are primarily focused on relationships between teachers and parents, but they also give insight on how to use NVC to mediate between pupils as well.

The activities are all designed to follow the four essential stages of NVC, being:

1. Observing without Evaluating
2. Identifying the Observed Feelings
3. Finding the Underlying Needs
4. Making Requests to Enrich our Lives

To prepare students/teachers to be introduced to NVC, I also designed one activity on the meaning of *empathy*. This activity should always be done before any of the others, as *empathy* is one of the cornerstones of compassionate teaching.

The designed activities are all available on the following website:

<https://compassteachers.weebly.com>

I chose to work with a website because this way, I will always be able to immediately apply feedback I might receive from people who want to try/tried out my activities. Also, if I develop more activities, I'll be able to immediately upload them for everyone to find. The site also had a discussion forum and a contact page.

This site is meant for coaches only. There is also a site that can be used by participants of workshops based on my activities to which a link can be found on the main site. The 'students' site' is the following:

<https://compassteaching.weebly.com>

3.2 The Activities

There are nine activities. They all have their own focus and most of them can be used without using the other activities. There are however some follow-up activities for which you need to have done other activities, but this will always be indicated.

I will portray the activities in this paper as they are available on the website. All the activities are accompanied by a level indicator (Beginner - Intermediate - Advanced), a short introduction on the objectives and possible timespan, and notes for the coaches in blue.

The requirements:

The provided activities were designed with the following specifications in mind:

- *Coaching groups of up to nine people:* if more or less, try to have a group that you can divide into threesomes, foursomes are also okay, but working in pairs would really make the work-forms less powerful.
- *Try to have at least one assistant:* this is not a necessity, the work-forms are perfectly manageable by yourself, but having an assistant who knows about NVC will be helpful during parts of the activities where the group is split up in threesomes.

Empathy

Empathy vs Sympathy: a Class Conversation

NVC-LEVEL: *Beginner*

"Empathy vs Sympathy" is an activity that let's your students think about the difference between EMPATHY and SYMPATHY through class conversations.

This activity will take up 15' to 30', depending on participant input.

PHASE 1

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_1Rt1R4xbM

(YouTube clip in which a Sesame Street character and American Actor Mark Ruffalo explain the meaning of the word *empathy*)

After showing your group the above youtube clip, introduce the following piece of text:

The situation:

After passing her teaching placement, a student comes to you (the guiding lecturer or befriended classmate) because she is feeling bad about something. In the last period of her placement, she had a pupil who just kept interrupting her lesson and she felt incapable of stopping him.

Ask your students the following question: **How would you react to this?**

Make sure to do the following:

- Let the students think about it and take notes on their thoughts.

- Let them tell each other about their thoughts.
- As coach: don't interfere in the process, but do make sure everyone who wants to speak gets a chance to.
- As coach: take notes on what the people are saying. Make sure to note down clear examples of SYMPATHETIC and EMPATHIC responses to use later on during the class conversation.

Two examples of possible reactions:

Sympathetic response:

Tell the student she has already passed the internship, so that must mean it's all okay and she shouldn't worry about it.

Empathic response:

Listen to the student, ask why it felt bad, let her know if she needs any help on something, you're there for her, ...

PHASE 2

Introduce the next piece of text:

The situation continued:

The reason why the student is feeling bad, is because she started shouting at the interrupting pupil and almost threw an eraser at him. The student was unable to stop the pupil from acting out, which got her so angry that she couldn't control herself.

Ask your students the following question: **How would you react to this?**

Make sure to do the following:

- Let the students think about it and take notes on their thoughts.
- Let them tell each other about their thoughts.
- As coach: don't interfere in the process, but do make sure everyone who wants to speak gets a chance to.
- As coach: take notes on what the people are saying. Make sure to note down clear examples of SYMPATHETIC and EMPATHIC responses to use later on during the class conversation.

Two examples of possible reactions:

Sympathetic or Judgmental response:

*It's always bad to lose temper in class. You **should** have your class under control through class management, you **should** have clear rules in class, you **should** ...*

Empathic response:

We already know this student has passed in the internship and that this was just an unfortunate incident. But now we want to know what sparked it. What was she feeling? Just 'bad' is a superficial description.

"Were you feeling impatient? Or stressed? Or were you exhausted?"

The student might have put a lot of work into her lessons and felt really displeased that a pupil was disrupting it, because the student might have a need for harmony, or cooperation, or understanding.

"Did you want to have a lesson in which everyone had a good time while working together?"

Or any question like this. Questions like these make the student feel understood. This in itself is very comforting.

PHASE 3

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Ewgu369Jw>

(YouTube clip in which Brené Brown explains the difference between empathy and sympathy)

After showing your group the above YouTube clip, you will want them to find out the difference between EMPATHY and SYMPATHY themselves.

Work in the form of mind maps on a white board (if available) and let the students/participants write down the things they think about now.



Use the provided worksheet (appendix 1) to list up the key differences in Dr. Brené Brown's explanation of the difference. Also add important additions brought up by the students themselves.

Ask your students the following question: **Now that we know about empathy, what could Empathic Listening be?**

Make sure to do the following:

- Let the students think about it and take notes on their thoughts.
- Let them tell each other about their thoughts.
- As coach: don't interfere in the process, but do make sure everyone who wants to speak gets a chance to.
- As coach: take notes on what the people are saying to use later on during the class conversation.

Use the provided worksheet (appendix 1) to come to a conclusion together that looks like this:

Empathetically listening to someone is listening while not holding on to your own point of view. Clear your mind and be in the present with them. Suspend all judgment and just feel with the other person.

The Four Steps

The 4 Steps: Practically using Nonviolent Communication

NVC-LEVEL: *Beginner*

Although this is a *Beginner* activity, you don't necessarily have to do this as one of the first activities. This is a presentation on the four steps of Nonviolent Communication, there is little to no interactivity in this activity.

We want to recommend doing this presentation after having done almost all the activities you want to do from this site with your students, but **before doing 'Teacher-Parent Request'** (see later activity). This way, you can have your students structure what they have already experienced up until here before they go into what we think of as the final activity of this project.

This activity will take up to 10', depending on participant input.

Present the following to your students:

NVC has four main steps to guide us through a conflict situation. The steps will be explained briefly for a conflict situation. Remember that these four steps can also be used for positive experiences.

Step 1 is Observation Without Evaluating.

When something happens to us, there are many different things going and sometimes we are very quick to draw conclusions and to assign guilt of certain actions to certain people. The first step of NVC wants to counter this. We want to analyse what's going on, without judging others or ourselves. It's important to observe the facts. What exactly is going on? Don't let emotions distort your vision.

A famous quote from Jiddu Krishnamurti goes 'the ability to observe without evaluating is the highest form of intelligence'.

Step 2 is Identifying the Feelings.

Once you have observed the situation, you will have also noticed that there are certain emotions at play. What are these emotions? To describe them as specifically as possible will help us to better understand the process of the situation.

Step 3 is Finding the Needs that aren't being met.

Every human being has the same universal needs. Sometimes these needs are met, sometimes they're not. If a need isn't being met, it will cause us to react to it emotionally. Although we all share the same needs, our reactions to it can be very different. But observing and identifying the emotions will help us find the underlying needs linked to them.

Step 4 is Making Requests to Enrich our Lives.

As soon as we have identified the needs that aren't being met, we can start by requesting (not demanding!) a certain action from the other party so that your unmet need will be met afterwards. As soon as all needs in a situation are met, the conflict will dissolve. So after requesting for an action to help meet your own needs, also see to acting in such a way that the other's needs are met. Both parties, after finding the needs that need tending to, might want to take some time and think about strategies that could meet both parties' needs.

Observation

Jackal vs Giraffe: a Class Agreement

NVC-LEVEL: *Beginner*

"Jackal vs Giraffe: a class agreement" is an activity that let's your students practise using compassionate language. It will teach them about the importance of empathy and self-empathy.

Make sure to print out four Jackal cards and four Giraffe cards (you can find these at the bottom of the *Jackal vs Giraffe* webpage under '**Materials**'). One Jackal and one Giraffe card for the people guiding this activity and every group in your class gets one card of each as well (see the requirements on more info on groups in class).

This activity will take up 15' to 30', depending on participant input.

PHASE 1: What is Empathy?

If you have already done the EMPATHY activity with your class group, it might be useful to talk about it before starting this activity. If you haven't done the EMPATHY activity, show your class group the following YouTube-clip and briefly discuss it's content: what was the clip about; what does empathy mean to you; what does empathy mean to Mark Ruffalo?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_1Rt1R4xbM

PHASE 2

We will now introduce a way to visualise compassionate language. In NVC, Marshall Rosenberg uses the JACKAL and the GIRAFFE as the champions for **BLAMING** and **EMPATHISING LANGUAGE**.

There are two ways of communicating. We can either communicate like a Jackal, or like a Giraffe.

A. JACKAL TALK

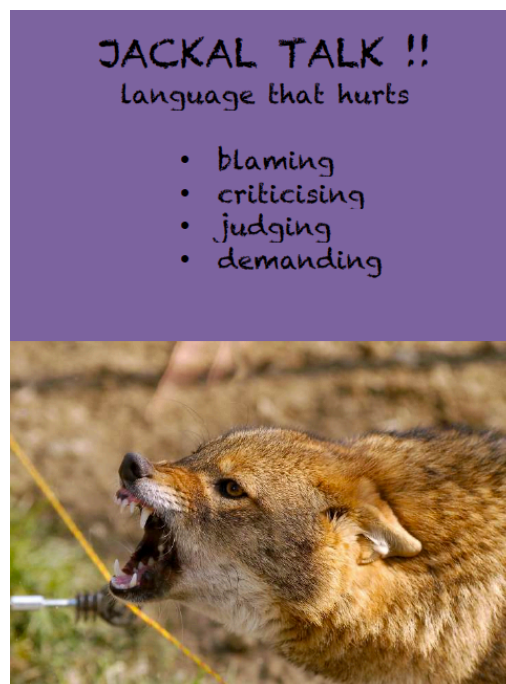
The jackal card:

Show the jackal card to your class.

Most people are experts in JACKAL TALK. We have always learned how to **blame**. When something happens, we quickly point a finger, be it at someone else or at ourselves.

The jackal is good at:

- Blaming self and others
- Offering critique to self and others
- Evaluating a situation from its own point of view
- Demanding what it wants from others



B. GIRAFFE TALK

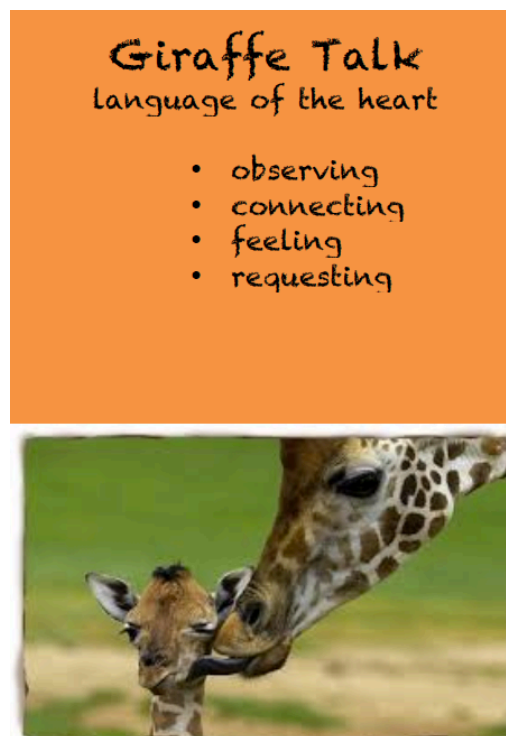
The giraffe card:

Show the giraffe card to your class.

What most people aren't that good at, is GIRAFFE TALK. The giraffe is the land mammal with the biggest heart, it has a long neck which helps sticking it out (making it vulnerable) and to oversee and observe a situation. It's an **empathic** creature.

The giraffe is good at:

- Observing a situation
- Connecting to others (language of the heart)
- Feeling
- Requesting for enriching actions



C. FOUR WAYS OF OBSERVING

The following table will provide you and your students with a structured view of what Jackal and Giraffe Talk essentially is. The exercise in **Phase 4** is a way to practice differentiating between the two different languages.

	BLAME	EMPATHISE
INTERNAL	Blame yourself	Sense own feelings and needs
EXTERNAL	Blame others (Jackal)	Sense other's feelings and needs (Giraffe)

Blaming yourself or others is as vicious as the jackal's bite. It doesn't solve any of your problems, but it does give you a false sensation of responsibility. The best way to observe a situation is to use *empathy*. Giraffe Talk is the language of the heart and will help you connect with yourself and others.

PHASE 3: Self-Empathy

It's very important for the students to understand what **self-empathy** is to be able to use Giraffe Talk.

Ask your students the following question: **Is self-empathy the same as self-pity?**

Make sure to do the following:

- Let the students think about it and take notes on their thoughts.
- Let them tell each other about their thoughts.
- As coach: don't interfere in the process, but do make sure everyone who wants to speak gets a chance to.
- As coach: take notes on what the people are saying to use later on during the class conversation.

A conclusion:

Self-pity is a form of self-blaming, which makes it Jackal Talk. **Self-empathy** makes that you are able to connect to yourself and have respect for your own feelings and needs. It's about allowing yourself to feel your emotions without feeling guilty about it because you know that your feelings will lead you to understand your needs.

PHASE 4: Exercise on Jackal and Giraffe Talk

It isn't easy making Giraffe statements without practice. The point of this exercise is for the students to be able to find Jackal statements. Writing the Giraffe sentences will be quite a challenge, but it's important that everyone tries and afterwards compare their answers with yours. In this version of the exercise, the answers are already given with suggestions on the Giraffe statements. The students can use the worksheet (appendix 2).

Are the following statements Jackal or Giraffe? And if they are Jackal, please turn it into a Giraffe.

- Because of you, I'm feeling miserable! (JACKAL)
 - Better: *I am feeling miserable.*
- I feel annoyed because you are so loud. (JACKAL)
 - Better: *The lack of peace and quiet makes me feel annoyed.*
- I feel bored. I wish I could be with my friends at the moment. (GIRAFFE)
- I feel bad. It's because I'm such a slouch. (JACKAL)
 - Better: *I feel guilty for not meeting my own need for efficacy.*
- I am so proud of my results on the exams last month! (GIRAFFE)
- I'm burnt out. It's because I'm so bad at my job. (JACKAL)
 - Better: *I feel burnt out. I need to meet my need for harmony between work and personal life.*
- I feel heartbroken. I had expectations of the situation but they weren't met. (GIRAFFE)
- I feel scared because I don't feel safe in this environment. (GIRAFFE)
- I am so lost right now. It might be because I don't feel I belong anywhere. (GIRAFFE)
- I feel hurt. I think your way of addressing me is very aggressive. (JACKAL)
 - Better: *I feel hurt. My need for consideration is not met.*

Feelings

Loaded Language - Discarding Jackal Talk: Learning to Observe without Evaluating

NVC-LEVEL: Intermediate

'Loaded Language' is an activity that will help you and your students to separate opinions from emotions. The ability to observe without evaluating is the highest form of intelligence (according to J. Krishnamurti). Judgment, or evaluation, makes for loaded language which can have an offensive effect on people. This activity will help you look through judgment and find the core of someone's message.

This activity will take up 40' to 60', depending on participant input.

PHASE 1: Finding Judgment in a Situation

Show your class the following cartoon before you say or do anything:



Ask the students about what is happening in this little comic. Ask them about WHAT happened, WHY it happened and HOW they feel about it.

If the word 'judgment' isn't being brought up, bring it up yourself. Present your students the following screenshot from [Oxford's Advanced Learner's Dictionary](#):

Definition of **judgemental adjective** from the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary

judgemental *adjective*

(British English)
(also **judgmental** North American English, British English)

BrE /dʒʌdʒ'mentl/ ; NAmE /dʒʌdʒ'mentl/

★ Add to my wordlist

- 1 (disapproving) judging people and criticizing them too quickly
 - Stop always being so judgemental!
 - SEE RELATED ENTRIES: **Moral**
- 2 (formal) connected with the process of judging things

Let the students read the following account:

A Teacher's Account

During a parent-teacher night, there was a parent who wanted to talk to me about her daughter's grades. The fifteen-year-old had failed most of her tests and assignments, and the mother blamed me for that.

The mother started by asking me if I even paid attention to her child and why I didn't help her more.

I told her I help all my pupils as best as I can and that her daughter was no exception. But when I told the mother that I believe there might be a problem with the child's study habits or environment, she got really upset.

The mother started telling me off that I knew nothing of their home situation

and that it was none of my business either. She asked me how I dared even consider linking her bad grades to her family.

I told the mother: to get good grades in school, a pupil needs to study well, have a good studying environment at home and needs to get proper support from the parents.

Again the mother attacked me to evade her responsibility to help her daughter get better grades. But her daughter doesn't only perform poorly for maths. I've been talking to some of the colleagues and I definitely think the problem lies at home.

When I tried asking about the daughter's studying habits again, the mother said she didn't know much about those. At this I replied: "Ah, that might be where the problem lies. If you don't even know about her habits, how can you properly support her?"

Ask your students the following question: **How do you feel about this situation?**

Make sure to do the following:

- Let the students think about it, discuss and take notes on their thoughts.
- As coach: don't interfere in the process. Make sure you leave the entire creative process in the hands of the participants. But if you see that they are straying too far away from the given situation, help them out by asking questions that will put them in the NVC direction.

Divide the class into threesomes (see requirements). Let them discuss and take notes on the following things:

- **How would they handle the teacher's situation?**
- **What do they think the mother's reaction might be to their approach?**

Make sure to give them a time limit (anywhere between 5' and 10').
Afterwards let each threesome present their approach.

Now present the following version of the *Teacher's Account*:

A Compassionate Teacher's Account

During a parent-teacher night, there was a parent who wanted to talk to me about her daughter's grades. The fifteen-year-old had failed most of her tests and assignments, and the mother blamed me for that.

The mother started asking me if I even paid attention to her child and why I didn't help her more.

The mother was clearly upset and believed that I was the cause of this emotion.

"Are you upset because your daughter has bad grades?"

"Of course, I'm upset that she has bad grades and you are doing nothing to help her!"

This was of course painful to hear, but I needed to listen through her harsh words and hear what she was actually saying.

What I heard was that she's feeling anxious about the thought that her daughter might not be doing well in class and might not pass at the end of the year.

She might not know what I do in class to assist her daughter through her learning process, it might be best to help her see that so that we can both look for a way to get the pupil to perform more satisfactory.

"I understand. I myself am very unhappy about your daughter's results. My

goal is to help my pupils as best as I can so they can study successfully and pass their exams.”

The mother calmed down a little bit, but naturally still didn't seem to feel comforted. I had done nothing to prove that I mean only good for her daughter, as intentions are worth nothing without actions.

“Would it maybe be of help to have more insight on your daughter's class learning process and my methods and check if that is enough for her to manage herself at home? We could go through it together and if you feel there's something missing, we could discuss ways to make it better.”

Ask your students the following question: **How do you feel about this situation?**

Make sure to do the following:

- Let the students think about it, discuss and take notes on their thoughts.
- Let the students compare this to their own solutions.

PHASE 2: Distinguishing Emotions from Opinions

Lecture the following content to your students:

To be able to observe without evaluating is really hard. Especially when you are yourself in the situation you are observing. But to do so, we'll have to practice the ability to separate emotions from opinions.

Needs are universal, and we all have them. Emotions are our own reactions to those needs that our unconscious feels are either met or unmet. Positive feelings signal needs being met, negative feelings the opposite.

The emotion anger for instance can be the result of a number of needs not

being met, like the need for security, the need for independence, the need for communication. It all depends on the facts surrounding the emotion. The context.

The mother to the teacher: "I'm upset that she has bad grades and you are doing nothing to help her!"

The mother stated an emotion followed by an observation. The observation might not be correct, but the mother is definitely stating an emotion.

If the mother would have said "I feel that you are not doing your job right, my daughter grades are proof of that!", it would not have been an emotion, but an opinion.

Make sure, that when you are expressing feelings within NVC, you are expressing YOUR feelings. Try not to say:

- **what someone else is feeling**, unless you have asked that person about it (not "I feel you dislike me", but rather "I feel sad because it seems you dislike me"),
- **you know what someone else is doing**, unless you have asked that person about it (not "I feel ignored", but rather "I feel worried because I think you might be ignoring me"),
- **say that you feel like a certain state**, but you can feel something while being in that state (not "I feel informed", but rather "I feel happy to be well-informed").

Divide your class into threesomes again. Hand out a list of feelings and needs and provide the students with the following link:

<https://www.cnvc.org/Training/feelings-inventory>

Hand out a list of statements that were provided by Lucy Leu in her book "*Nonviolent Communication Companion Workbook*" (appendix 3) and let the threesomes think about it.

Make sure to tell them **to motivate their answers**.

In each of the following statements, do you regard the speaker to be expressing her or his feelings? If not, please play with the sentence until it does feel like it's properly expressing the speaker's feelings.

The statements:

1. "I feel dismissed when no one at work responds to my suggestions."
2. "It feels completely incomprehensible how you can do such a thing."
3. "I'd be furious too if that had happened to me."
4. "You're wearing me out."
5. "I feel independent, now that I have my own car and paycheck."
6. "I am flabbergasted to see her picture on the front page."
7. "I feel you're annoying me on purpose."
8. "I feel displaced, with all this new technology coming in."
9. "I feel I am being unkind to them."
10. "I am feeling how disappointing it must be for her to see the house all empty now."

Give the threesomes a time limit to do this exercise. When they are finished, go through the following possible suggestions offered by Lucy Leu in her book "*Nonviolent Communication Companion Workbook*":

Suggestions for improved statements:

1. "I feel *anxious* when no one at work responds to my suggestions."
 2. "I feel *very puzzled* about how you could do such a thing."
 3. "I feel *concerned* that this happened to you. I would have been furious if it had been me."
 4. "I feel *exhausted*."
 5. "I feel *pleased* and *proud* to have my own car and paycheck."
 6. "Flabbergasted" expresses a feeling.
 7. "I am *upset* because I think you are annoying me on purpose."
 8. "I feel *worried* and *disheartened* with all this new technology coming in."
 9. "I feel *regret* around how I am behaving toward them."
 10. "I am feeling *sad* thinking about how disappointed she must be to see the house all empty now."
-

PHASE 3: Revisiting the Parent-Teacher Situation

Now go back to the first version of the situation between the mother and the teacher about the fifteen-year-old's bad grades.

Have them:

- underline all the sentences they feel display a feeling or emotion, either well or not well expressed,
- and in case the students think the feeling could be expressed differently, have them play around with those sentences.

When the threesomes are content with their found emotions and their take on them, go through the text and have them raise their hands when you encounter a feeling or emotion. Go through possible changes together with the class.

Needs I

Sharing the Field: Finding Needs on the Playground

NVC-LEVEL: Intermediate

"Sharing the Field" is an activity based on a situation described by Marshall Rosenberg in his book *Life-Enriching Education* (2003). This activity let's you and your students look for underlying needs in a conflict situation between two pupils.

Please look at the bottom of the *Sharing the Field* webpage for worksheets and a PowerPoint presentation under the header '**Materials**'. Read the requirements on more info on groups in class.

This activity will take up 40' to 60', depending on participant input.

PHASE 1: Gauging your Audience

For this activity, hand your students a sheet describing the following situation.

Sharing the Field

A Nonviolent Communication (NVC) trainer was teaching NVC to teachers and students at an elementary school. One day while she was there, a conflict occurred on the playground between two groups of boys. It provided an opportunity to demonstrate how NVC skills can be used to mediate conflicts by helping people hear one another's feelings and needs.

It was toward the end of the lunch break and a small group of teachers were on the playground talking with the NVC trainer. Two boys between the ages of ten and twelve ran to the NVC trainer. The bigger boy (boy 1) was red in the face and holding tightly on to a ball. The other, smaller, boy (boy 2) was crying.

(Excerpt From: Marshall B. Rosenberg, Riane Eisler: "Life-Enriching Education.")

Now present what each of the boys had to say for themselves.

Boy 1: *"I wanted to play, and because of him (pointing to the other boy) I couldn't."*

Boy 2: *"We want to play. Just because they're bigger than us, they never give us the field."*

Ask your students the following question: **How would you react to this?**

Divide your class group into threesomes and give them time to think about it in their small groups. (Give them a time limit)

Make sure to do the following:

- Let the students think about it, discuss and take notes on their thoughts.
- As coach: don't interfere in the process. Make sure you leave the entire creative process in the hands of the participants. But if you see that they are straying too far away from the given situation, help them out by asking questions that will put them in the NVC direction.

When they are finished:

Let every group tell the class about their reaction to the situation and about what they think the outcome might be.

Give the other groups the chance to comment, ask questions and maybe add on to the reaction of the explaining group.

As coach: Do not offer your insights!

PHASE 2

Give everyone the entire excerpt (appendix 4) from *Life-Enriching Education* by Rosenberg. Choose one threesome to come to the front of class. They will have to read it out (**unprepared role-play**).

While this threesome is reading out the situation, the rest of class will observe and **underline** what they think are **feelings and needs** in this text.

AFTERWARDS: Discuss what the class has underlined. Talk about it and see why you and your class think the underlined words/phrases are either feelings, needs or none of both. Recognising feelings and needs requires a lot of practice, this part of the exercise is therefore very important.

Hand out non-exhaustive lists of feelings and needs and let them link the feelings and needs they found in the text to the lists.

Also discuss whether or not the reaction from the excerpt is different from their own and in what way. Now that they have observed the NVC trainer's situation and learned more about NVC, would they act in a similar way or do they have another take on the situation?

PHASE 3: Hearing Needs

Hearing needs is very difficult when someone is not clearly expressing them. In conflict situations, some people tend to blame others (or themselves) and as a listener or receiver of that blaming, it's difficult to set aside those perceived personal attacks and try to hear the needs of the other person.

Talk about this with your students and/or let them read this quote.

Hearing needs over hearing critique:

It can be a difficult experience when someone starts addressing you directly in a blaming way. But it's important to observe and hear the underlying feelings.

Don't take it personally.

The other person might not know it, but he is not acting like that because of you, but reacting to what's happening inside himself. Find the emotion the person is feeling so you can ask about the need that isn't met.

Now do this little exercise together with everyone in class.

Needs and feelings are linked. Feelings are signals that certain needs are either being met, or not. While everyone experiences the same needs, we all have different ways of reacting to them.

Reading our feelings is our best way to knowing what our needs are.

Find the feelings and needs behind the following sentences:

- Boy 1: "I wanted to play, but because of him (pointing at the other boy) I couldn't." (see excerpt)
 - Feeling: angry / displeased / ...
 - Need: need for respect / joy / order / ...
 - Teacher: "Can you stop interrupting my class!"
 - Feeling: frustration / impatient / angry / ...
 - Need: need for appreciation / consideration / respect / ...
 - Mother: "Congratulations! I'm so proud of you graduating."
 - Feeling: proud / pleased / happy / thrilled / ...
 - Need: need for nurturing / security / joy / harmony / ...
-

PHASE 4: Linking to Own Experience

To read about NVC and do some exercises is fun. But it's really important to try and apply it to your life. This exercise is meant for the students to reflect on one of their own past conflicts.

Ask your students the following question: **Can you imagine the last time you had a really strong feeling, either positive or negative? Can you also imagine the situation linked to it?**

As soon as everyone has a situation in mind, let them take note on it.

Make sure to do the following:

- Ensure the students that this is for their eyes only and that they will not have to share any of their notes if they don't want to.
- Ask them to take the feelings list (appendix 5) and try and nuance their emotions during their experiences as clearly as possible.
- Ask them to take the needs list (appendix 5) and try to find the need(s) they felt were either met or unmet during their situation.

Ask if the students want to share their findings. If they don't want to, then that is fine. If some or all of them do, give them the opportunity to.

After the entire exercise is done, will have analysed their personal experience and sought out the underlying need. Ask if the students have different feelings about the situation and what started it. It is possible that the students have gained new insights into it now they have looked at it more closely.

Ask if they want to share these insights.

Needs II

Anger Management: Guidelines for Taking Responsibility for Your Own Anger

NVC-LEVEL: *Advanced*

'Anger Management' is an activity that will help you and your students put the emotion Anger into perspective. Recognising Anger as a reaction to an unmet need instead of an emotion caused by other people, will help you calm down and will help you understand the given situation better.

Make sure to bring 18 small **empty** role cards for your participants to use during the main exercise. This way, every participant has two role cards.

This activity will take up 15' to 20', depending on participant input.

PHASE 1: What is Anger?

Phase 1 is a bit theoretical. Explain the following things to your students and hand them the guidelines described at the end of phase 1 for use in phase 2.

Anger is a strong emotion that easily gets attributed to outside causes. But just like any other emotion, it's sparked by **something inside**. You don't feel a certain way because someone does something to you, you feel a certain way because of a need that is or isn't met during the process. It's not the other person causing your reaction, it's **your perception of the action** that is.

Finding the needs behind your own anger can be challenging because anger is such a strong feeling. But when feeling anger, it's really worth taking a step back

to find the need that isn't being met. To do this, there are some steps you'll have to go through:

1. Embrace your anger. The angrier you are, the more important the needs/values that are being threatened. Your current thoughts are likely judgments on other people's actions. Behind every judgment is one of your own needs.
2. Take a deep breath and turn your attention inwards, listen to your thoughts and judgments.
3. To find the needs behind your reaction, you can try saying to yourself: "I'm angry because I think NEED X is important."
4. When you are clear about the needs that are important or even threatened, notice how your feelings change.

When you are in contact with your needs, you can choose to express yourself or to listen to the other person.

PHASE 2: What Gets You Angry?

Let everyone think of one situation that got/will get them angry. Ask about the situations so the others can hear them too, be inspired by it or have a good laugh about it.

Have everyone write two role cards:

1. Card one says how the angry person is feeling (angry) and why. They have to write a small motivation about the feeling and situation.
2. Card two is exactly the same, but for the other party in the conflict.

Divide your class into threesomes. Give every threesome one list of emotions and needs (appendix 5). Every group starts with one situation. The writer of the situation gives someone the 'angry card', but keeps the 'other party' card. The remaining participant is the observer.

The observer notes down what he/she sees. What emotions he/she thinks both actors are displaying in the scene. (the observer has the lists of emotions and feelings)

At the end of the plat, the observer has to ask each actor:

- Are you feeling ... ?
- Are you feeling ... because you need ... ?

Everyone has to be observer once.

PHASE 3: Class Reflection

Take the time to reflect with the entire class group about this activity. Anger is a very strong emotion and there might be some thoughts or findings the students want to discuss with a broader group (or with the coach) to get another perspective on their threesome-situations.

Ask the groups how it went, what really struck them and if they agreed with everything they had observed or experienced.

Needs III

Parent-Teacher Night: Experiencing and Observing a Conflict

NVC-LEVEL: *Advanced*

'Parent-Teacher Night' is a role-play activity to help you and your students experience and observe a conflict firsthand. It requires the ability to empathise with other people and a basic knowledge of observing a situation to identify emotions and needs.

This activity will take up 30' to 50', depending on participant input.

PHASE 1: Role-Play

Divide your class into threesomes. Each little group will do its own thing during this activity. Having two or three coaches for this activity would be an added value for all participants.

There are three different situations. Every group will get all three situations, but give each student an envelope containing two different role cards. Every situation will have a 'parent' and a 'teacher'. The provided role cards are for these two roles. Every third student will be an 'observer'. Make sure every group has at least one of the lists provided by Marshall Rosenberg with emotions and needs (appendix 5).

The OBSERVER has to observe the situation being played out by his/her two fellows. The OBSERVER will then take note on what he sees:

- Facts.
- Portrayed emotions.

The OBSERVER will also try to link the observed emotions to possible underlying *needs* using the provided list. The OBSERVER will need to *observe without evaluating*.

Here are the role cards and the suggested way to divide the different roles among the students in a threesome:

	Teacher	Parent
Situation1: Bad Grades	You are a [subject] teacher. A parent comes to you and complains about her child's bad grades.	Your child has performed poorly this semester for [subject]. You believe that the fault lies with the teacher for not being able to properly motivate your child. After all, the subject at hand used to be your favourite, so it's in your child's blood.
Situation2: Punitive Actions	You gave one of your pupils an extra homework assignment because (s)he didn't finish a certain assignment. A parent comes to complain about this.	Your child came home with even more homework than usual. Your child seemed demotivated by this. When you asked him/her about it, it seemed that it was a punishment because he/she didn't complete one of the assignments in time. This is just ridiculous, because the child's schedule is already overbooked as it is and this extra work will certainly not have a good influence on your child's feelings about school.
Situation3: Religion	You are a biology teacher and you are going to incorporate sex education into one of your following lessons. A parent comes to you to show his/her concern about this because of his/her religious standpoint.	You try to check what your child is doing in school every week. You saw in his/her homework that next week there will be some sexual education lessons. You don't believe your twelve-year old child has to know about this yet. It's also sinful according to your religion to have your children thinking and talking about sex and you are afraid that sins like homosexuality will be taught as if they are normal.

	Situation 1	Situation 2	Situation 3
student 1	TEACHER	<i>parent</i>	<u>Observer</u>
student 2	<u>Observer</u>	TEACHER	<i>parent</i>
student 3	<i>parent</i>	<u>Observer</u>	TEACHER

Activity guidelines:

- Give each student an envelope.
- Let the students prepare their roles for a little play that lasts for about 5' (10' to 15' preparation time).
- Let the students choose a situation to start with.
- Two students play with the third student (the OBSERVER) as audience.
- After the role-play, students sit together and look at the OBSERVER's notes. They look into if the emotions felt are in line with the emotions observed. The OBSERVER will have to ask the actors the following question: "Did you feel [emotion X] because you had a need for [need Y]?"
- Students write a little report (couple of lines) on their experience and how it was perceived by the OBSERVER. They must also describe how they feel about the situation and how they felt being in the situation. This report is for later class reflection.
- The students start with the next role-play and follow these guidelines again until everyone has had the chance to observe once.

PHASE 2: Class Reflection

After the exercise is done, have all the students sit in class in a comfortable manner. Having them sit in a circle will improve community feeling and will allow everyone to have contact with everyone.

Go through the experiences of all situations. You, as coach, will ask them how they have experienced every situation. Start with one situation and let everyone/every threesome tell the rest of class how it was for them. The little reports they wrote will help them with this.

This is a very important phase of the activity, so take your time for this and make sure that every student has the chance to have their say about their experience. Help them distinguish between real feelings and *opinions disguised as feelings* (see “Loaded Language”) and help them find the underlying needs if they have trouble finding them on their own.

Requests I

Plus Lingo: Putting Positive Action Language into Practice

NVC-LEVEL: *Beginner*

'Plus Lingo' is an activity that gives you and your students the opportunity to transform statements and requests into positive action language sentences. This is very important in the fourth step of NVC: making requests for enrichment.

This activity will take up 20' to 40', depending on participant input.

PLUS LINGO = Positive Action Language

Lecture the following to your students:

Requesting what you need from someone is a very important step in the NVC-process. Asking for enrichment will help you a lot more than demanding anything from any situation. But it is very important to make your expectations clear. If you want to request something, always do it in such a manner that you will actually get what you need, not something that comes close to it.

Show the following sentences to your students:

How to do this? Let's first look at how not to do this:

- "I have a need for peace and rest, so could you please stop being so irritating?"
- "When you take your books out of your schoolbag, please don't throw them on the table."
- "I have a need to be understood, so please don't interrupt me when I'm talking."
- "You're always at the bar, but I have a need for companionship. Could you stop going there please?"

- “Can you please stop walking around? I have a huge headache.”
- “As your child’s teacher, I need you not to interfere with my teaching methods.”
- “Every time I give your child detention, you keep him from coming. Please stop doing this!”
- “It would be better if you didn’t always come late to my class.”
- “You know what, my life would be so much richer if you didn’t tell me what to do constantly.”

Ask your students the following question: **What do these statements/requests have in common?**

Explain the following if it's not uttered: **They’re all saying what not to do, instead of stating what should be done.**

Show your students the following outcomes:

- The person addressed, not knowing how he or she is irritating, starts doing something completely different, which is also perceived as irritating by the addresser.
- The student doesn’t throw his books on the table anymore. In fact, he doesn’t even take them out either.
- Instead of interrupting the addresser, the other person stops listening and starts flipping through apps on his or her smartphone.
- The addressed person stops going to that bar, but starts going to a friend’s house to have fun.
- Instead of walking around, the addressed person starts practising his tuba skills.

Let the students try thinking of outcomes for the five other situations. The outcomes have to be in line with the request but probably not what the requester wanted.

Present your students the following:

We need to request using POSITIVE ACTION LANGUAGE. Request clear actions that people can actually do. When trying to communicate a request for enrichment, it's confusing to hear what people don't want you to do, because you don't know what their exact expectations are.

Let the students transform the 'how not to do it'-sentences into POSITIVE ACTION LANGUAGE sentences.

Do the first sentence together with the students. Let the students try the rest for themselves in threesomes.

Here are some possible suggestions for positive action sentences:

- "I have a need for peace and rest, could you please leave me alone for an hour?"
- "When you take your books out of your schoolbag, could you please just put them on your desk gently? I would appreciate that because I need peace and order in this classroom."
- "I have a need to be understood. Can you please listen to my thoughts?"
- "You're always at the bar, but I have a need for companionship. Could you please spend the evenings throughout the workweek with me?"
- "Can you please go into another room? I have a huge headache and need some rest at the moment."
- "I need respect for my teaching methods. If you don't agree with them, can you please come to me so that we can talk about that?"
- "Every time I give your child detention, he doesn't show up for it. Can you please make sure he comes to his detention, because I need cooperation from parents to help the pupils see that I find respect important."
- "Can you please come to every one of my lessons on time? I need your cooperation for this."
- "I appreciate your advice, but could you give me space to decide on this topic independently?"

- “I really need to relax and I’m trying to watch Big Brother, can we please talk about politics after the show has finished?”

Discuss what the threesomes came up with and if they get stuck, help them out by giving tips.

Requests II

Teacher-Parent Request: Requests on Parent-Teacher Night

NVC-LEVEL: *Advanced*

This activity requires that you and your students have done the 'Parent-Teacher Night' and the 'Plus Lingo' activities. This activity is best done near the end of your workshop-series based on this website.

Also, it would be very interesting to let this activity be directly preceded by 'the 4 steps' informational activity. This way, your students will be able to structure all their experiences and newly acquired skills into the four steps of NVC.

This activity is meant for you and your students to implement all of these newly acquired skills.

This activity can be split into two separate, but linked, activities. Phase 1 and Phase 2 can be executed during different sessions if needed.

Phase 1 will take up 20' to 35', depending on participant input.

Phase 2 will take up 30' to 40', depending on participant input.

Phase 3 will take up as much time as you would like it to take up.

PHASE 1: Revisiting Parent-Teacher Night

Let the students take their little observation reports that they have written for 'Parent-Teacher Night' and let them regroup in the same threesomes as they were in during that activity.

We will now go through the entire four steps of NVC to review those situations and see if:

- we would act differently now (it's okay if we wouldn't act differently, too)
- and how we would follow up on it now we know how to use positive action language.

Observation, Feelings and Needs phases:

Let the students reread their observations. Get back into the situations and if something isn't clear, they can revisit the situation in their original groups, ask each other questions if necessary.

They have to be positive about the feelings and needs they have identified back then. Make sure they still agree with them.

Request phase:

Now they have to put their notes together and gather all of the observations, feelings and needs they agree with for the situations in which **they had the 'teacher' role**.

They will have to **write 2 different requests for the 'parent'** in their situation that will **meet the needs of the 'teacher'**. The requests must be aimed to meet the needs of the teacher and thus enrich the situation.

The students in a threesome can **help each other** with this. Forming requests is not easy and you as coach should try to be around as much as possible to help with this and suggest possibilities.

AFTERWARDS: When everyone in a threesome is ready, they will take up their assigned roles again (teacher - parent - observer) and they will present their requests to each other while in their roles.

- They will play out again from the beginning,
- but this time, the teacher will make a request when (s)he has declared their unmet need.
- The students will have to act in their roles and go express how they feel as that character receiving that request.
- The observers observe and record on paper what the reactions are like.

After each request and its reaction, the threesome will sit together and go through the observation and elaborate about felt feelings to the observer if needed.

When everyone has observed in the entire class group, we will go through the different requests formulated and the reactions to those requests per situation. Give the entire class the chance to comment or add to situations of others.

PHASE 2: A No is Not the End

Present the following to your students:

Strategies

When a single request, or the request of just one of the involved parties can't be met because there hasn't been sufficient attention for the unmet needs of the other party, we have to find a way to have all needs met.

Combining requests for needs to be met into one big plan is what we call an NVC strategy. In such a strategy, we make sure that we have a plan that will benefit everyone's needs. It can be one single, well-formulated request, but it can also consist out of a multi-step approach.

For instance:

You want your partner to do the dishes tonight, but your partner wants you to do it instead. After observing and talking about it, you may find out that you have a **need for relaxation**, which is why you wanted your partner to do this chore. But your partner has a **need for equality** and apparently you don't do the dishes that often, which is why (s)he wanted you to do it. A possible strategy to meet both your needs can be that:

- You will do the dishes together tonight.
- Set up a schedule of who does the dishes on which day of the week.
- Think of limited amount of wildcards you can pull when you have a high need for, for instance, relaxation, but it's your night to do the dishes.
- Relax after that.

At the end of Phase 1, there might have been yes and no replies to the formulated requests. Every threesome will choose one of its three situations to which either a 'no' was the answer to the request, or for which request a 'no'-answer is most imaginable.

The threesome will now think about the **needs of the parent** in the situation.

- Use the list of needs and feelings (appendix 5).
- See which feelings are playing a major role in the situation.
- Link it to an array of possible underlying needs.
- Think about a strategy in which the needs of the teacher and the supposed needs of the parent can be met.

AFTERWARDS: When all threesomes are ready, we'll look at all the strategies they came up with. Give everyone the chance to comment and/or add to other threesome's strategies and also contribute yourself.

PHASE 3: Reflection

Take a moment to let everything flow from your mind. Have everyone close their eyes for a moment and just focus on their breathing. Do this for a time you find appropriate and afterwards ask what your students think of the exercise they just experienced and what they think about NVC for as far as they know about it now.

This can be done in free conversation and it works well when everyone is seated in a circle. As a coach, take in all what the students have to say. Observe, identify the feelings, ask the students about possible underlying needs and see what you make of their reaction.

3.3 The Workshops

On the CompassTeachers website, I don't only provide the activities as described on the pages preceding this one. To help coaches build workshops, I also give them two series of example workshops.

The first series is called '**NVC Quickie**'. This series consists out of three workshops. This series is meant for coaches who want to use the most important activities of the website, but don't have the time to do all of them.

The second series is called '**Serious Compassion**'. This series consists out of four workshops. This one covers all of the provided activities in what I believe is the best order. After completing this series, the coach's students will have practised the covered NVC skills thoroughly.

3.3.1 NVC Quickie

'NVC Quickie' consists out of three workshops. **Workshop 1** might take up 50', **Workshop 2** might take up 70' and **Workshop 3** might take up 40', all depending on participant input.

This program is ideal if you want to introduce your students to Nonviolent Communication briefly and teach them the required skills for them to become compassionate teachers.

Workshop 1

- Empathy vs Sympathy (Empathy)
- The 4 Steps (The Four Steps)
- Jackal vs Giraffe (Observation)

Workshop 2

- Parent-Teacher Night (Needs III)
- Plus Lingo (Requests I)

Workshop 3

- Teacher-Parent Request (Requests II) → Only do phase 1 and phase 3

3.3.2 Serious Compassion

'Serious Compassion' consists out of four workshops. **Workshop 1** might take up 90', **Workshop 2** might take up 90', **Workshop 3** might take up 60' and **Workshop 4** might take up 80', all depending on participant input.

This program is ideal to introduce your students to Nonviolent Communication, have them practise its skills optimally, and give them a thorough insight into the different aspects of NVC.

Workshop 1

- Empathy vs Sympathy (Empathy)
- Jackal vs Giraffe (Observation)
- Loaded Language (Feelings)

Workshop 2

- Sharing the Field (Needs I)
- Parent-Teacher Night (Needs III)

Workshop 3

- Anger Management (Needs II)
- Plus Lingo (Requests I)
- The 4 Steps (The Four Steps)

Workshop 4

- Teacher-Parent Request (Requests II)

4 Evaluation

5 Conclusion

When we are looking to compromise within a conflict situation, certain needs will be prioritised while others will be discarded. But by not meeting all of the unmet needs, negative emotions might remain present. Within Nonviolent Communication (NVC) we don't compromise, we develop strategies that help us resolve conflicts to everyone's satisfaction. Finding strategies like these in parent-teacher conflicts will make for a more powerful learning environment for involved pupils, which in the end is what it is all about.

NVC is a very powerful philosophy to life. Teaching it to teachers will not only result in more compassionate teachers, but also in more compassionate people. Hopefully it will result in teachers passing on the ideas of NVC to their pupils and this way it will spread. This thought may sound idealistic, but being introduced to NVC myself only two years ago, I have been trying to spread it ever since.

Answers and Solutions

I started this thesis with the following questions:

How can I help prepare (future) teachers to become more compassionate teachers?

and

What would be an efficient approach to introduce Nonviolent Communication to (future) teachers and help them practise this approach?

During the process of my research I have found answers that I find valuable. Finding NVC has been an important discovery for me. If I can spread its message to my colleagues in education support them in becoming more compassionate teachers in

the process, I feel this will be a good development towards a more compassionate world.

The methods developed by Rosenberg are useful in any field and have been further developed for use in education². My work on the subject has resulted in a series of workshops that can be used to train teachers as well as teacher trainees. They can be used as separate workshop, or as part of a teaching course.

I propose the following solution to prepare (future) teachers to become more compassionate teachers:

Integrate the results of this bachelor thesis into generic methodology courses in Teacher Training Programs.

This way, we can make sure that the teachers graduating in the future will have a basic knowledge of Nonviolent Communication. This will help them in their careers and in their personal lives. It will also help overall communication in schools, between teachers and colleagues, staff, parents and pupils.

Nonviolent Communication

To thank you for reading my work and to give you a good reason to implement NVC into your personal life, I would like to conclude with a quote:

“Our survival as a species depends on our ability to recognize that our well-being and the well-being of others are in fact one and the same.”

— Marshall B. Rosenberg

² <https://www.cnvc.org/about-us/projects/nvc-schools/nonviolent-communication-schools>

6 References

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7 Appendices

1. Worksheets for the **Empathy** activity.
2. Worksheets for the **Jackal vs. Giraffe** activity.
3. Worksheets for the **Loaded Language** activity.
4. Worksheets for the **Sharing the Field** activity.
5. The list of **needs and feelings** provided by www.cnvc.org.

What Would You Do?

What is the difference between SYMPATHY and EMPATHY? Watch the video clip on what Dr. Brené Brown thinks the difference is and see if you agree.

What is the difference?

Sympathy	Empathy

What Would You Do?

Being able to distinguish empathy from sympathy is not enough. To be able to use it, you need to be able to listen empathetically too. But what does that mean?

What is Empathetic Listening?

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Jackal vs Giraffe

Are the following statements Jackal or Giraffe? And if they are Jackal, please turn them into a Giraffe.

Because of you, I'm feeling miserable!

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.....

I feel annoyed because you are so loud.

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I feel bored. I wish I could be with friends at the moment.

.....

.....

I feel bad. It's because I'm such a slouch.

.....

.....

I am so proud of my results on the exams last month!

.....

.....

I'm burnt out. It's because I'm so bad at my job.

.....

.....

I feel heartbroken. I had expectations of the situation but they weren't met.

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.....

I feel scared because I don't feel safe in this environment.

.....
.....

I am so lost right now. It might be because I don't feel I belong anywhere.

.....
.....

I feel hurt. I think your way of addressing me is very aggressive.

.....
.....

Loaded Language

A Teacher's Account

During a parent-teacher night, there was a parent who wanted to talk to me about her daughter's grades. The fifteen-year-old had failed most of her tests and assignments, and the mother blamed me for that.

The mother started by asking me if I even paid attention to her child and why I didn't help her more.

I told her I help all my pupils as best as I can and that her daughter was no exception. But when I told the mother that I believe there might be a problem with the child's study habits or environment, she got really upset.

The mother started telling me off that I knew nothing of their home situation and that it was none of my business either. She asked me how I dared even consider linking her bad grades to her family.

I told the mother: to get good grades in school, a pupil needs to study well, have a good studying environment at home and needs to get proper support from the parents.

Again the mother attacked me to evade her responsibility to help her daughter get better grades. But her daughter doesn't only perform poorly for maths. I've been talking to some of the colleagues and I definitely think the problem lies at home.

When I tried asking about the daughter's studying habits again, the mother said she didn't know much about those. At this I replied: "Ah, that might be where the problem lies. If you don't even know about her habits, how can you properly support her?"

Loaded Language

A Compassionate Teacher's Account

During a parent-teacher night, there was a parent who wanted to talk to me about her daughter's grades. The fifteen-year-old had failed most of her tests and assignments, and the mother blamed me for that.

The mother started asking me if I even paid attention to her child and why I didn't help her more.

The mother was clearly upset and believed that I was the cause of this emotion.

"Are you upset because your daughter has bad grades?"

"Of course, I'm upset that she has bad grades and you are doing nothing to help her!"

This was of course painful to hear, but I needed to listen through her harsh words and hear what she was actually saying.

What I heard was that she's feeling anxious about the thought that her daughter might not be doing well in class and might not pass at the end of the year.

She might not know what I do in class to assist her daughter through her learning process, it might be best to help her see that so that we can both look for a way to get the pupil to perform more satisfactory.

"I understand. I myself am very unhappy about your daughter's results. My goal is to help my pupils as best as I can so they can study successfully and pass their exams."

The mother calmed down a little bit, but naturally still didn't seem to feel comforted. I had done nothing to prove that I mean only good for her daughter, as intentions are worth nothing without actions.

"Would it maybe be of help to have more insight on your daughter's class learning process and my methods and check if that is enough for her to manage herself at home? We could go through it together and if you feel there's something missing, we could discuss ways to make it better."

Loaded Language: Feelings?

In each of the following statements, do you regard the speaker to be expressing her or his feelings? If not, please play with the sentence until it does feel like it's properly expressing the speaker's feelings.

Always motivate your answer.

The Statements:

1) "I feel dismissed when no one at work responds to my suggestions."

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2) "It feels completely incomprehensible how you can do such a thing."

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3) "I'd be furious too if that had happened to me."

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4) "You're wearing me out."

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5) "I feel independent, now that I have my own car and paycheck."

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6) "I am flabbergasted to see her picture on the frontpage."

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7) "I feel you're annoying me on purpose."

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8) "I feel displaced, with all this new technology coming in."

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9) "I feel I'm being unkind to them."

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10) "I am feeling how disappointing it must be for her to see the house all empty now."

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Sharing the Field

A situation:

A Nonviolent Communication (NVC) trainer was teaching NVC to teachers and students at an elementary school. One day while she was there, a conflict occurred on the playground between two groups of boys. It provided an opportunity to demonstrate how NVC skills can be used to mediate conflicts by helping people hear one another's feelings and needs.

It was toward the end of the lunch break and a small group of teachers were on the playground talking with the NVC trainer. Two boys between the ages of ten and twelve ran to the NVC trainer. The bigger boy (boy 1) was red in the face and holding tightly on to a ball. The other, smaller, boy (boy 2) was crying.

Sharing the Field

The situation continued:

NVC Trainer (turning, first, to the boy with the ball, and guessing his feelings): You look very excited and upset right now!

Boy 1: Yes. I wanted to play, and because of him (pointing to the other boy), I couldn't.

NVC Trainer (hearing his needs and reflecting them): So, you wanted to play and have time with your friends, and this didn't happen?

Boy 1: Yeah, he came and he broke into our game and he wanted to take the ball and we told him many, many times to go away. It's not their time to play now.

NVC Trainer (turning to Boy 2 to see if he heard Boy 1's needs): Can you tell me what you hear him say his needs are?

Boy 2: Yeah, they don't want to play with us.

NVC Trainer (again asking Boy 2): I hear you're frustrated, too, and I would still like to hear from you in your words what do you hear him saying?

Boy 2: That they don't want to be disturbed while they're playing.

NVC Trainer: That's what I hear as well. And now, I'd like to know how that is for you?

Boy 2: We want to play. Just because they're bigger than us, they never give us the field.

NVC Trainer (turning to Boy 1): So, what do you hear him say?

Boy 1: Yeah, they want to play, too, but it's not their time.

NVC Trainer: Hold on. Can you just hear him right now?

Boy 1: Yeah, he wants to play, too.

NVC Trainer: So what I'm hearing is that you both want to play. And you'd both like some say in where and how you can use the field.

Boy 2: But it's not fair. Just because they're bigger, they always get their way.

NVC Trainer (hearing his needs): So you would like respect? And you'd like fairness?

Boy 2: Yeah.

NVC Trainer: I'm guessing you might like to have equal time to play on the field? Would this meet your needs for fairness and for respect?

Boy 2: Yeah.

NVC Trainer (turning to Boy 1): I guess you'd like fairness as well?

Boy 1: Yeah.

NVC Trainer: I'm wondering if you're ready to consider some ways this could happen, or do either of you need more understanding first?

Boy 2: I think he'll just take the field anyway.

Boy 1: How do I know he won't keep butting in?

NVC Trainer: So it sounds to me like you both have a need to trust that the other person will keep whatever agreement you make about dividing the field?

Boys 1 & 2: Yeah.

(Excerpt From: Marshall B. Rosenberg, Riane Eisler: "Life-Enriching Education.")

Sharing the Field

Needs and feelings are linked. Feelings are signals that certain needs are either being met or not. While everyone experiences the same needs, we all have different ways of reacting to them.

Reading our feelings is the best way to knowing what are needs are.

Exercise

Find the feelings and needs behind the following sentences:

- *Boy 1: "I wanted to play, but because of him (pointing at the other boy) I couldn't."*
 - Feelings:
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 - Needs:
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- *Teacher: "Can you stop interrupting my class!"*
 - Feelings:
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 - Needs:
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- *Mother: "Congratulations! I'm so proud of you graduating."*
 - Feelings:
.....
.....
 - Needs:
.....
.....

Some Basic Feelings We All Have



Feelings when needs are fulfilled

- Amazed
- Comfortable
- Confident
- Eager
- Energetic
- Fulfilled
- Glad
- Hopeful
- Inspired
- Intrigued
- Joyous
- Moved
- Optimistic
- Proud
- Relieved
- Stimulated
- Surprised
- Thankful
- Touched
- Trustful

Feelings when needs are not fulfilled

- Angry
- Annoyed
- Concerned
- Confused
- Disappointed
- Discouraged
- Distressed
- Embarrassed
- Frustrated
- Helpless
- Hopeless
- Impatient
- Irritated
- Lonely
- Nervous
- Overwhelmed
- Puzzled
- Reluctant
- Sad
- Uncomfortable

Some Basic Needs We All Have



Autonomy

- Choosing dreams/goals/values
- Choosing plans for fulfilling one's dreams, goals, values

Celebration

- Celebrating the creation of life and dreams fulfilled
- Celebrating losses: loved ones, dreams, etc. (mourning)

Integrity

- Authenticity • Creativity
- Meaning • Self-worth

Interdependence

- Acceptance • Appreciation
- Closeness • Community
- Consideration
- Contribution to the enrichment of life
- Emotional Safety • Empathy

Physical Nurturance

- Air • Food
- Movement, exercise
- Protection from life-threatening forms of life: viruses, bacteria, insects, predatory animals
- Rest • Sexual expression
- Shelter • Touch • Water

Play

- Fun • Laughter

Spiritual Communion

- Beauty • Harmony
- Inspiration • Order • Peace
- Honesty (the empowering honesty that enables us to learn from our limitations)
- Love • Reassurance
- Respect • Support
- Trust • Understanding

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