

Feelings and Needs as Life In Action - NVC

Marshall Rosenberg's **"Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life"** offers a transformative approach to communication that prioritizes empathy, understanding, and compassion. By focusing on observations, **feelings, needs, and requests**, NVC provides a framework for expressing ourselves honestly and listening to others empathetically. The ultimate goal of NVC is to foster relationships based on mutual respect and cooperation, enabling us to resolve conflicts peacefully and build stronger connections with others. Through practice and awareness, NVC helps us become more mindful of our language and actions, leading to more fulfilling and harmonious interactions.

'Feelings and needs are the best way I've ever learned to connect to the life in myself and other people... Being alive is really being in touch with our needs.' Marshall Rosenberg

10 lessons from Non Violent Communication

1. It's important that we have a strong vocabulary for our **feelings**... and it's also important that we take **responsibility** for our feelings.
2. "The word responsible means 'response-able' – we can only be responsible for that which we're able to control."
3. We are responsible for our feelings... so in Non-Violent-Communication we follow any expression of feelings with 'because I...'

For example, "I feel hurt, because I..."

"I'm feeling pleased, because I..."

"See your needs as life in action within you, it's a precious gift to express the life in action within us, to other people." Marshall Rosenberg

10 lessons cont...

4. “We can use our feelings (anger, guilt, depression and shame) to make us conscious that at that moment we’re not **connected to our needs**, we’re up in our heads, analysing in a judgemental way. So what we need to learn to do is quickly identify those judgements that are causing us to feel (anger, guilt, depression and shame) and to be conscious that behind those judgements, **at the root of them, are always our needs**. Unfortunately we haven’t been trained to go directly to the root – we’ve been trained to go up to the head. The root is always our needs.”

5. “Judgements and criticisms are alienated expressions of our needs.”

6. When we express our needs indirectly, others are likely to hear **criticism** – and when anyone hears anything that sounds like criticism, they are likely to invest their energies in self-defence or counterattack. If we want a **compassionate** response from others, the more directly we can connect our feelings to our own needs, the more easy it is for others to feel compassion for us.

7. Needs are always a more truthful expression of what’s alive in people than these judgements of others that we are trained to make...

8. **Conflicts** are resolved easily once both sides are able to articulate the needs that the other party has that aren’t being met.

9. **Needs are universal**. All human beings have the same needs. For example:

Basic sustenance needs – food, shelter, protection from the elements, clothing etc; Safety; Empathy (understanding); Honesty and trust; Celebration; Play; Rest; Creativity; Love (the need, not the feeling); Community and belonging; Autonomy and self-direction; Meaning and purpose in our lives; (a need to contribute to life)

10. We need to (validate) our needs, and see them as a gift to others, not as a burden to others. They give other people an opportunity to see what’s alive in us and contribute to our well-being. When people hear our **requests**, and see it solely as an opportunity to contribute to our wellbeing, it gives them this opportunity to do what we human beings love more than anything else: to use our power in the service of life.