

Radical Compassion: The Essence of Nonviolent Communication

*Please note that these notes are provided as a collaboration of effort between Keith Hwang and Candice Duff, from the first class in an 8-week series taught by **Jim & Jori Manske** on JULY 29, 2006.

OSCAR THE GIRAFFE used as the “talking stick” in class

Biggest heart
Height (sees above and beyond)
Longest swallow
Fiercely protective (yet giraffes will only use their power to *fend off* an attack)
Powerful hoofs (yet they use their necks when fighting, which cannot cause severe damage to each other)
Eat Achaia leaves that have *thorns* which giraffes are able to *dissolve*

* “Oscar Convention”

If during the session, your needs are not being met there are 3 things that you can do.

1. Speak up.
2. Pick up “Oscar” with the hope that someone will notice you and give you “permission” to speak up.
3. Get a notebook out and write out what is preventing you from picking Oscar up...and give yourself Empathy.

THREE “MODES” OF NVC

Self-connection: Meeting the need” within our self. “Peace begins with us.”

Honesty: Expressing **your** Observation, feelings, needs, and making a present time “doable” request.

When I observe _____, I feel _____, because I need _____. Would you be willing to (in the present moment) _____?

Empathy: Guessing what is being observed, felt, and needed by **another person**.

When you think, see, hear, _____, do you feel _____, because you need _____?

EXERCISE: “Starting with the Need first”

Everyone in the group practices “Honesty & Empathy” by picking a “Need Card” from the pile of cards on the table.

Then the person with “Oscar,” expresses Honesty by speaking about how their particular “Need Card” relates to “what is *alive* in them.

The other participants practice Empathy by listening respectfully, while attempting to understand the heart of what the speaker is feeling.

*Movie: “Peaceful Warrior” (now playing at “Academy Theatre” in Pasadena 626-229-9400)

THREE “APPLICATIONS” OF NVC

Self-Connection: Deep *Inner work*

Relationships: *Skills* of NVC

Social Change: Taking NVC out into the *world*

*My needs first and foremost, although not at the expense of others.

*Everything we do is in the service of meeting a need.

*Everything we do is “Practicing NVC” as long as we are staying with our awareness of our feelings and needs and connecting with others.

EXERCISE: “DREAMING IN GIRAFFE”: WHAT IS THE WORLD IN WHICH I WANT TO LIVE IN/CREATE?

Participants answered the above question in writing for about 5 minutes.

EXERCISE: “ACTIVE LISTENING/SILENT EMPATHY”

Participants divide up into pairs.

Person “A” speaks about what is “alive in them” concerning the “Dreaming in Giraffe” topic with a time limit of 5 minutes.

Person “B” intentionally listens *without speaking*, while focusing their awareness on what the speaker's needs may be at the moment.

At the end of 5 minutes, the listener responds with one sentence:

“It sounds like what is essentially most important for you right now is _____.” [Need identification]

HARVESTING: Hearing from the participants...

What was hard about this process?

Many people shared that listening and not responding was hard.

Not talking going against one's “conditioning” of what is “right or wrong” about how a conversation is “supposed” to unfold.

Summing up the essence of what the speaker was saying/needing was difficult.

Struggling with having feelings of Empathy, but being at a loss for the language to communicate that empathic feeling.

Hard not to “sympathize” vs. “empathize”. Not turning the conversation around to something similar that happened to you, too.

Having the same unmet need causing us to be unable to listen to and connect with the other person emphatically.

What were some observations during the process?

Noticing that the “words” are not necessary to feeling empathy.

Realizing that you don't *have to speak* when it's *your turn* to speak, because by being silent it may meet your need for choice, freedom, autonomy...

By being silent while listening we can meet our need for self-connection and empathy AND then return our attention to give empathy to the person.

When we are listened to, we are able to reveal more of our self and go deeper and deeper into self-connection.

Silence supports Self-empathy in the speaker by creating a space for them to connect with their needs.

Surprised by emotional reaction when need was acknowledged.

- *Marshall Rosenberg says, “Never confuse what you *Say* with Empathy.”
- *90% of Communication is Non-verbal.
- *Language of needs is Universal.
- *Unmet needs cause pain.
- *Quality of trust is the magical part of NVC.

LESSON ON PAIN AND VUNERABILITY

We can find that there is an element of wanting to protect ourselves from pain, to go dead, to not be “Alive” by avoiding our needs and the needs of others. Although we may need to be “present” in order to be empowered to be what we want to be and to create a world in which we want to live in; *we also* may need to moderate how deep we choose to feel. We may choose to “contain” some of these “intense” feelings, so that we can live in a life-serving way. Sometimes it is wise to allow for distractions, so that the pain can come and go while meeting our need for balance and maintaining a level of resources to coop with our other needs.

*It’s “ok” to put our need aside for a while with the intention to go back later.

LESSON ON LEARNING

Learn to evaluate yourself more...

Are you meeting your needs?

Are you making a moral judgment?

What need is not being met when you do this?

Make judgment on needs, not on morality or who is right or who is wrong.

Please give up all the “hope” that you will ever “do NVC right”.

You’re “doing it” to the best of your ability to “do it” in the moment.

Cut yourself a break. Even falling on your face is an opportunity.

Identify certain distractions that can give you more choice in your life.

Others can recognize the “humanness” *in us* as we reveal it to them.

There’s an “easy way” and a “hard way” to practice NVC.

It’s *hard* to practice with the person that you live with, your parents, your children...where you are being “stimulated.

It’s *easy* to “teach it” or practice with someone you don’t know.

Create an “Empathy Network”

Four levels of Learning: Adult Learning by Maslow

Unconscious Incompetence – We are ignorant that we do not know.

Conscious Incompetence – We know that we do not know. (A baby laughs and tries again.) Be a baby Giraffe!

Conscious competence – We know that we know. (Focuses on “trying to use NVC” in tricky situations.)

Unconscious competence – We do not know that we know.
Automatic/Integrated.

*Know that we are not “static” in any one of these places.

**Antidote to Alzheimer’s disease*: Once we become “UC” something else emerges for us to learn.

GRATITUDE EXERCISE: “GENERATIVE EMPATHY”

Gratitude is expressing when your or my needs are being met.

Create a “Gratitude Journal”

1. Each day write down at least one thing that *I did today for me* that made my life more wonderful.

2. Acknowledge what need was met by having done this thing.

3. Consider *right now* how you feel about having done this thing for yourself.

(Creates a bridge to our hearts!)

4. “Giraffe Juice”...Savor that feeling...let it melt in your mouth.

*Savoring these feelings helps us create a stronger “neural network” of consciousness to our needs/values. This helps us to “wake up” to what is “alive in us”.

*Our hearts are 60% of Neural Energy. While we need probes attached to our head to record “brain activity” on to machines, we can measure “heart energy” from 15 feet away.

Hang out with a “need” everyday.

Put a “Needs Sheet” on the refrigerator and become more acquainted with what is inside/a part of your being.

**Personal note from Candice... Laminate your “Feelings and Needs” sheets together and put them beside your phone/computer. Whenever you find yourself having difficulty communicating or having “uncomfortable feelings” take a glance and see what comes up for you. ☺

HOMEWORK:

1. Call someone in our group and practice Active Listening/Silent Empathy exercise.

Make sure to “share something that is currently *alive in you* at the present moment.

Spend 5 minutes with one speaking and one listening, and then switch turns.

2. Put a need card on the bathroom mirror and ask each morning, “How can I meet this need today?” At the end of the day, ask yourself, “How did I meet this need

today?

3. Write in your “Gratitude Journal” each day, using the above exercise.
4. Read Chapter 2 of NVC A Language of Life & Chapters 1 & 2 of Speak Peace.

FEEDBACK:

When you think about our time together today, what did you do?

What did you like?

What did you learn?

What did you do differently?

**Feedback Responses from Candice...

I connected with my need for contribution, connection, and empathy. I liked that I was able to get in touch with my need for “hope” to get in touch with my need for “empowerment” and “meaning” around the issue of Social Change. I learned to go “deeper” to find my needs and I actually asked for help to meet my needs instead of just “doing it myself.”