

An L202 Empathy in Action Workshop

Freedom in Relationship

The Power of Non-Ownership



Learning to Love Ourselves and Others



What We are Exploring...



Non-Ownership

Letting others be who they are — their choices, moods, and timing belong to them.



Self-Ownership

My feelings come from my needs.



Fixing

Caring that turns into managing someone else's world.
Innocent... and costly.



Non-Ownership

Embracing the Freedom of Others' Choices

No one belongs to us — not their mood, choices, timing, or behavior.

Their actions express their needs, not our value.

Letting go of ownership creates breathing room in relationships.

It's not apathy — it's respect.



Self-Ownership

Embrace your feelings and take responsibility for your needs

Self-ownership is about recognizing that *our* feelings arise from *our* needs.

By taking responsibility for our own emotional landscape, we can foster clarity and empowerment.

This approach encourages us to move away from blame and towards a deeper understanding and connection with ourselves and others.



Fixing

Fixing is what happens when caring mixes with fear

Fixing happens when our caring turns into managing someone else's inner world.

At its core, fixing is innocent.

Fixing is a scared, loving impulse trying to prevent pain — ours and theirs.

A tender fear that says,
“I need you to change so I can feel okay.”



The Holiday Story Flip

Warmup Activity

1. Recall

Reflect a stressful holiday moment



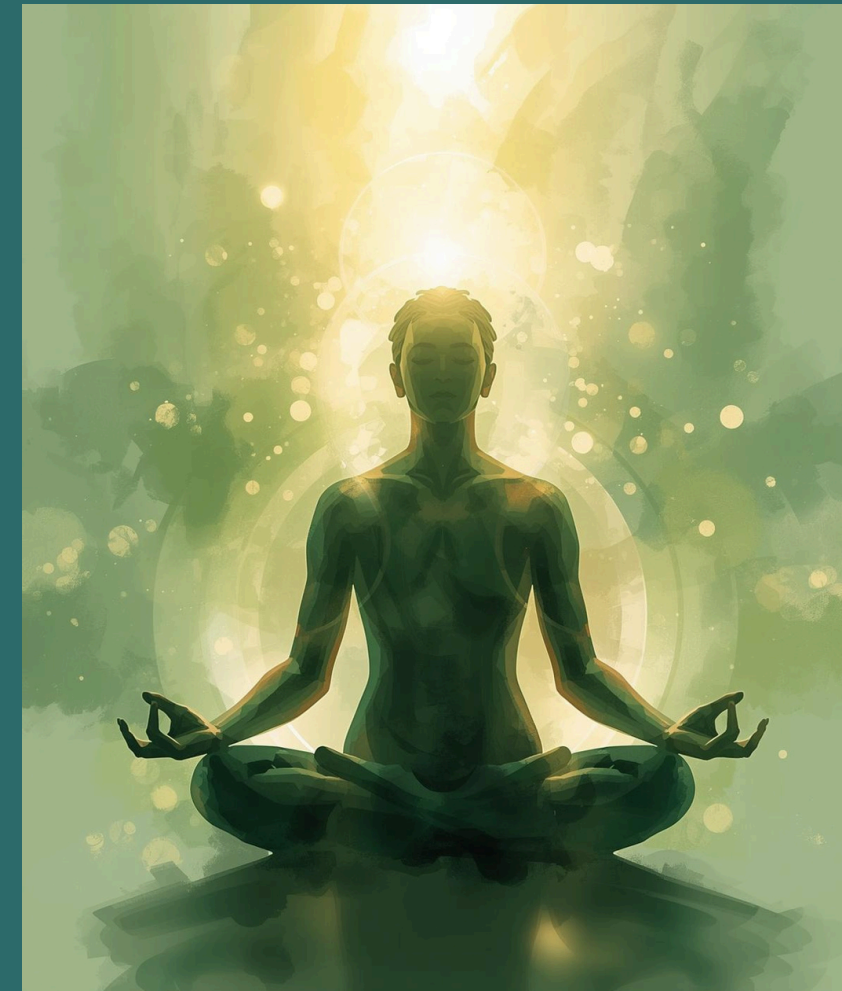
2. Identify

Recognize the ownership story behind it



3. Flip

Use OFNR to reframe the experience



4. Transform

Shift your perspective to create ease





The “Tree Decorating Turf War”

Story:

“They keep moving the ornaments I hung. Why can’t they leave it alone?”

🦊 Ownership story:

“They should appreciate how I decorated.”

🦌 OFNR Flip:

“When the ornaments were moved, I felt discouraged because I needed creative expression and to feel considered.”



The “Late Arrival Spiral”

Story:

“My sibling showed up 45 minutes late to dinner again.”

🦊 Ownership story:

“They should respect my time.”

🦌 OFNR Flip:

“When dinner started late, I felt anxious because I needed predictability and shared rhythm.”

The Holiday Story Flip

Examples



Presence

Actively listen and
engage fully



Awareness

Recognize emotional
responses while
interacting & do not fix!



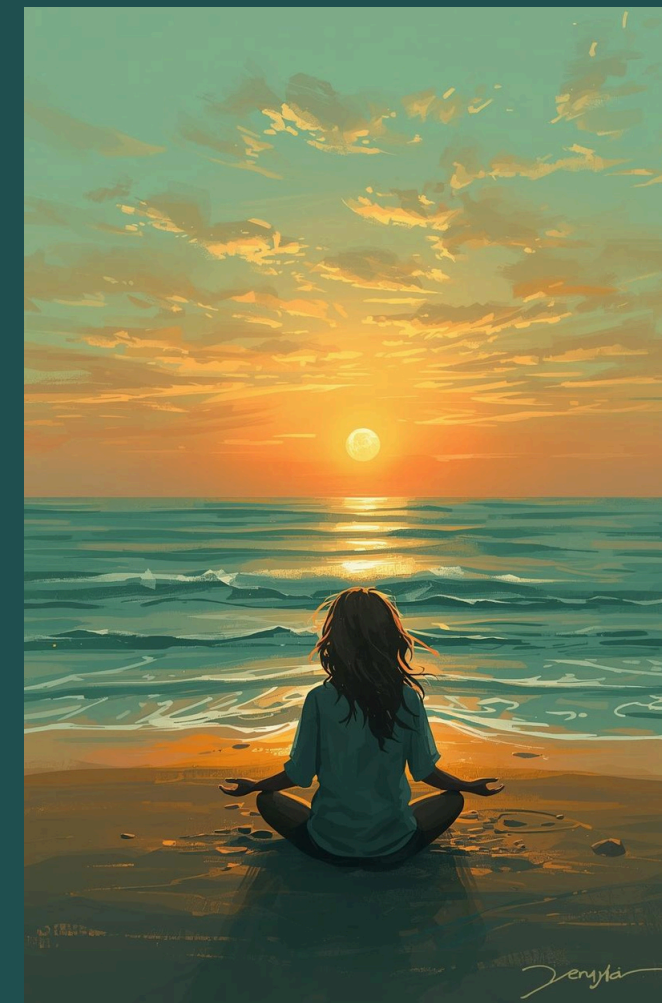
Compassion

Empathetically
connect, with yourself
and the other



Reflection

Consider personal
feelings/needs during
the conversation



Empowerment

Take ownership of
your own emotional
landscape

What is Presence?

How Can We be Present for Others' Sharing?

The Fixing Loop

Roleplay Activity

Two volunteers.

One shares a real (but light) frustration.

The other tries to fix. On purpose.

Round 1 — “The Fixer”

- Sharer holds the jackal and shares their frustration
- Listener grabs the jackal from the sharer and:
 - Fixes them
 - Offers solutions
 - Interrupts
 - Reframes their problem
 - Tells them what they would do



Round 2 — “The Presence Shift”

- Same sharer
- Listener switches to giraffe mode and stays anchored in presence:
 - No fixing and no rescuing
 - Uses active listening and reflection
 - Has soft curiosity
 - Asks, “Do you want to be heard, empathy, clarity or something else?”





1. "I have to buy gifts and I don't know what to get anyone."
2. "My family can't agree on when to meet."
3. "I'm stressed about hosting."
4. "I feel pressure to be cheerful, and I'm not."
5. "I'm tired of coordinating everything for the holidays."
6. "Someone I care about isn't responding the way they usually do."
7. "I feel disconnected from a friend lately."
8. "I don't feel heard in some conversations."
9. "I'm worried someone is upset with me."
10. "I feel like I'm putting more into the relationship than I'm getting back."

The Fixing Loop

Example Frustrations

The Fixing Loop

Group Reflection

- How did your body respond when the listener grabbed the jackal?
- What shifted when the giraffe was able to be present?
- Where did the responsibility move in you as you watched?



The Gift of Not Fixing

Embrace freedom by letting go of the urge to fix others

In this final reflection, consider one thing you will stop fixing in your life.

Recognize the underlying need behind it and explore how giving yourself the gift of presence can empower both you and those around you.

Celebrate this choice as a step toward deeper connections.

