



Empathy in Action

*Compassionate Communication
with NVC*



Learning to Love
Ourselves and Others

Some Ground Rules

1. Create Safety Together 🤝

Connect with curiosity and kindness.

Respect all perspectives, limits, and privacy.

2. Self-Care First 🧴 Listen to your own needs. If you need a break, take it.

3. Challenge by Choice 🌱: You can always say "Pass." Stretch your comfort zone, but don't snap it! 🤸



See our [Code of Conduct](#) for more details

Some Ground Rules

1. To cultivate a space where everyone feels valued and safe, let's connect with kindness and empathy, respect all perspectives and limits, and honor boundaries and privacy.
2. Listen to your needs and take care of yourself.
3. Feel free to pass on anything. We're all here to learn, so gently explore new perspectives and stretch your comfort zone when you are ready.

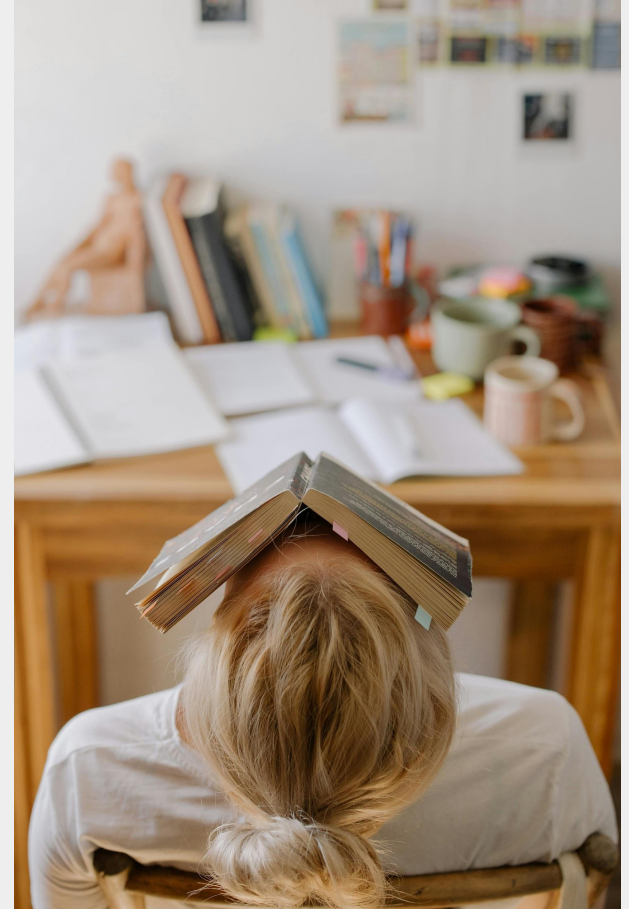


See our [Code of Conduct](#) for more details

Disclaimer

You are responsible for yourself.

The facilitators of this meetup are providing this information to help you learn and practice.



Disclaimer

Intent vs. Impact

NVC does not guarantee the other person will be happy.
It guarantees you will be authentic.

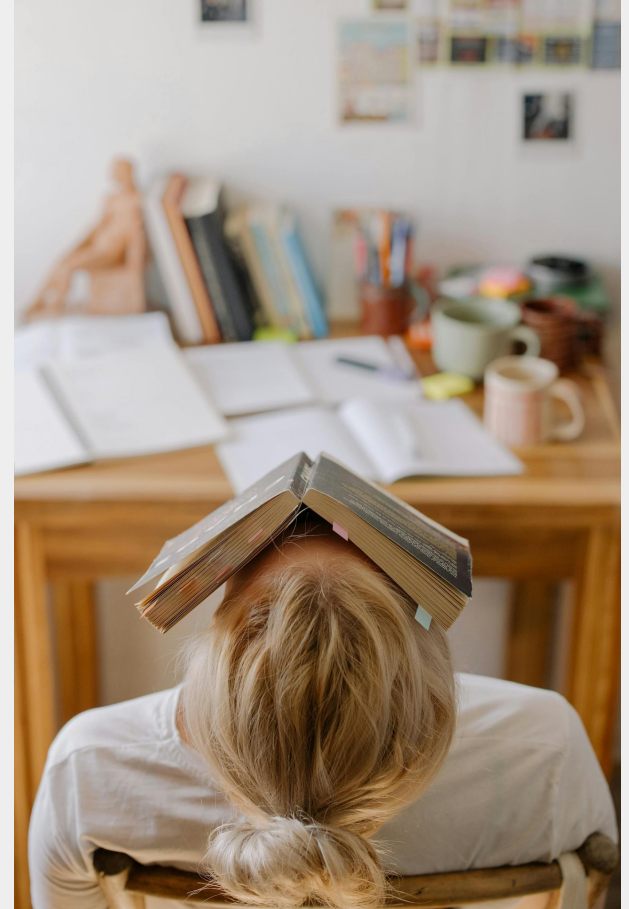
Side effects may include awkwardness and vulnerability.



Disclaimer: Use with Caution 🚧

Side effects of authenticity include:

- Awkwardness & Vulnerability 🙈
- Getting fired from a job you hated anyway 📈🙋
- Walking away from relationships that don't serve life 🤝💔



Our Communication Approach

Practicing empathy through real conversation

- **Speak from the Heart:** 🗣️ Share your own genuine feelings and needs using "I" statements.
- **Listen to Connect, Not to Fix:** 👂 Our goal is to understand the other person's experience deeply, rather than trying to change it.
- **Value All Voices:** 🌈 Diverse viewpoints are welcomed, encouraged, and celebrated here.
- **Connection over Perfection!** 🧩 It's okay to be messy. We value the intention to connect more than getting the words "right."



Our Communication Approach

Fostering insights through authentic sharing and mutual respect

Together, we commit to:

- **Share Your Unique View:** Offer your own genuine perspective
- **Listen to Understand and Connect, Not to Fix:** Our goal is to appreciate each contribution
- **Value All Voices:** All diverse viewpoints are welcomed, encouraged, and celebrated here
- **Connection, not Perfection!**



Why are We Doing This?

The Energy of Curiosity 🔦✨

We replace judgment with wonder. Curiosity creates the open space where safety, authenticity, and connection can grow.

Permission to be Imperfect 🤔❤️ This is a safe space to be messy. We learn more from our authentic stumbles than from "getting it right."

Playground for Growth 🛝 We explore NVC with playfulness and boldness—feeling deeply and learning to love ourselves and others.



Individual Needs

- Self-respect, Self-worth
- Space & time to oneself
- Order
- Clarity, Understanding
- Openness, Honesty
- Learning, Growth
- Challenge, Stretch
- Play, Recreation
- Creativity
- Competence, effectiveness
- Achievement
- Choice, Autonomy
- To assert one's individuality, Identity
- Integrity, Authenticity
- Hope

"Higher" Needs

- A spiritual life of some kind
- Peace
- Inspiration
- Harmony, Beauty
- Completion
- Mourning
- Celebration
- Fulfillment
- Purpose
- Meaning

Physical Needs

- Nutrition, Water
- Clean air, Light
- Shelter, Warmth
- Safety, Security
- Protection from threats to health
- Exercise, Mobility
- Rest, De-stressing, Sleep
- Sexual needs
- Touch

Social Needs

- Attention, Communication
- Respect, Dignity
- Recognition, Appreciation
- Companionship, Closeness, Warmth
- Friendship, Affection
- Love, Intimacy
- Emotional safety
- Honesty, Trust
- Reassurance
- Fairness, Justice
- Mutuality
- Care, Consideration
- Understanding, Empathy
- Support
- Acceptance, Belonging
- Inclusion, Participation
- To contribute to others' wellbeing
- Community

Pleasant (expansion)

CALM

relaxation grounded
serene centered
tranquil trusting
peaceful relief
quiet content
at ease fulfilled
comfortable satisfaction
at home mellow

HAPPY

joy delight
amusement glad
animated pleased

CURIOUS

fascination inspiration
interest anticipation
involvement wonder
engagement

CONFIDENT

empowerment
proud
hopeful
optimistic
strong

REFRESHMENT

rested
enlivened
restored
reactivation
clearheaded
exuberant

LIVELY

awake vibrant
excitement bliss
enthusiasm ecstatic
eager radiant
energetic thrill
passionate astonishment
alive amazement
surprise tingle

COMPASSION

tender touched
warm moved
open affection
loving friendly

GRATEFUL

appreciation openhearted
thankful encouragement

Feelings - Sensations - Emotions

CONFUSION

torn
doubt
lost
hesitant
bafflement
perplex
puzzled

FEAR

afraid
scared
suspicion
panic
paralyzed
terror
apprehension

FATIGUE

overwhelm
burn-out
exhaustion
sleepy
tired

VULNERABLE

fragile
insecure
reservation
sensitive

JEALOUS

envious

BODY SENSATIONS

knot in the belly
lump in the throat
inner rush
disgust
choking
breathless
squeeze
trembling

shrink
sick
weak
empty
shaky
dizzy
foggy
cold

SAD

heavy heart
nostalgic
melancholy
disappointment
discouragement
depression

hopeless
helpless
gloomy
down
longing
despair

PAIN

guilt
hurt
lonely
grief
agony
suffer

heartbreak
miserable
devastation
regret
remorseful
turmoil

AGITATION

uncertain
troubled
unsettle
cranky
disquiet

alert
restless
shock
uncomfortable
uneasy

SHAME

embarrassment
shy

WORRY

anxious
edgy
unquiet
concern
stress/tense
nervous

ANNOYANCE

irritation
frustration
exasperation
impatient

ANGER

upset
furious
rage
resentful

HATE

hostile
aversion
bitter
disgust
contempt
dislike

BOREDOM

apathetic
numb
far
withdraw
disengagement



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Nonviolent Communication

Universal Basic Needs

PHYSICAL WELL-BEING

air
nourishment (food, water)
light
warmth
rest / sleep
movement / physical
exercise
health
touch
sexual expression
shelter / security / safety /
emotional safety /
protection from pain /
protection / preservation
comfort

HARMONY

peace
beauty
calm / equanimity /
relaxation / tranquility
ease
order
coherence / congruence
sustainability
stability / balance
communion / wholeness
completion / digestion /
integration
predictability / familiarity
equality / justice / fairness

CONNECTION

love / self-love
care / self-care
belonging
closeness / intimacy
empathy / compassion
appreciation / gratitude
acceptance
recognition
reassurance
affection
attention
openness
trust
communication
sharing / exchange
giving / receiving
tenderness / softness
sensitivity / kindness
respect
seeing (see & be seen)
hearing (hear & be heard)
understanding (understand
& be understood)
consideration / inclusion /
that my needs matter /
participation
support / help / nurturance
cooperation / collaboration
community / fellowship /
companionship / partnership
mutuality / reciprocity
consistency / continuity

MEANING

contribution / enrich life
presence / centeredness
self-connection
hope / vision / dream / faith
clarity / focus / concentration
to know (be in reality)
learning
awareness / consciousness
inspiration / creativity
challenge / stimulation
growth / evolution / progress
expansion
exploration / development
power / (inner) strength /
empowerment
competence / capacity
self-value / self-confidence /
self-esteem/ dignity /
efficacy / effectiveness
to matter / take part in /
have my place in the world
spirituality / purpose
liberation / transformation
Interdependence
simplicity
celebration / mourning

FREEDOM

choice / acting out of my
own spirituality
autonomy
independence
space / time

HONESTY

authenticity
(self) expression
integrity
transparency
realness / truth

PLAY

liveliness / alive / vitality
flow
passion
spontaneity
fun
humor / laugh / lightness
discovery / adventure
variety / diversity
renewal / refreshment

Yoram Mosenzon

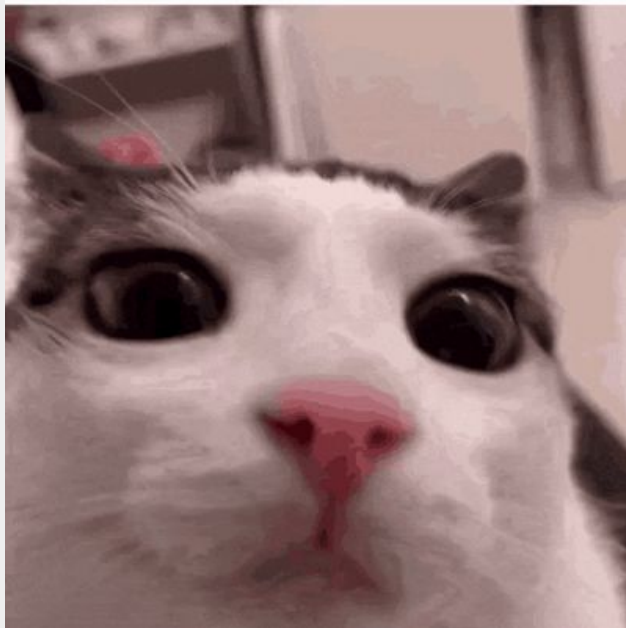
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Introductions

**Introduce
yourself**



Rapid Check-In (~20 seconds/person) ⚡🕒

Please share:

👋 **Name**

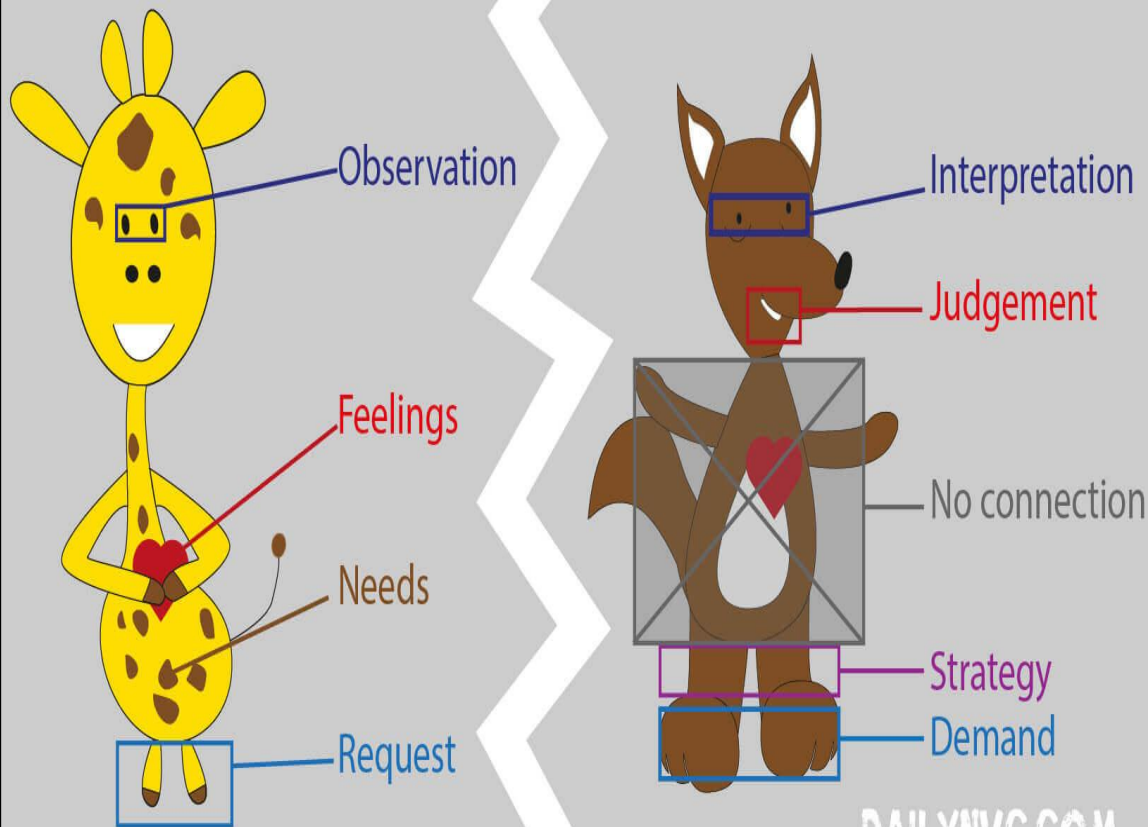
🌱 **Experience:** Are you new to NVC?

❤️ **Feeling:** 1-2 words describing how you feel right now.

🥤 **Need:** 1-2 words describing a need you have (met or unmet).


NVC WORLD


THE WORLD AS MOST OF US KNOW IT



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Two Modes, One Human

 **The Giraffe (Heart)** Because they have the largest heart of any land animal, they symbolize leading with vulnerability, observation, and feelings.

 **The Jackal (Habit)** Represents our conditioning to interpret, judge, and demand.

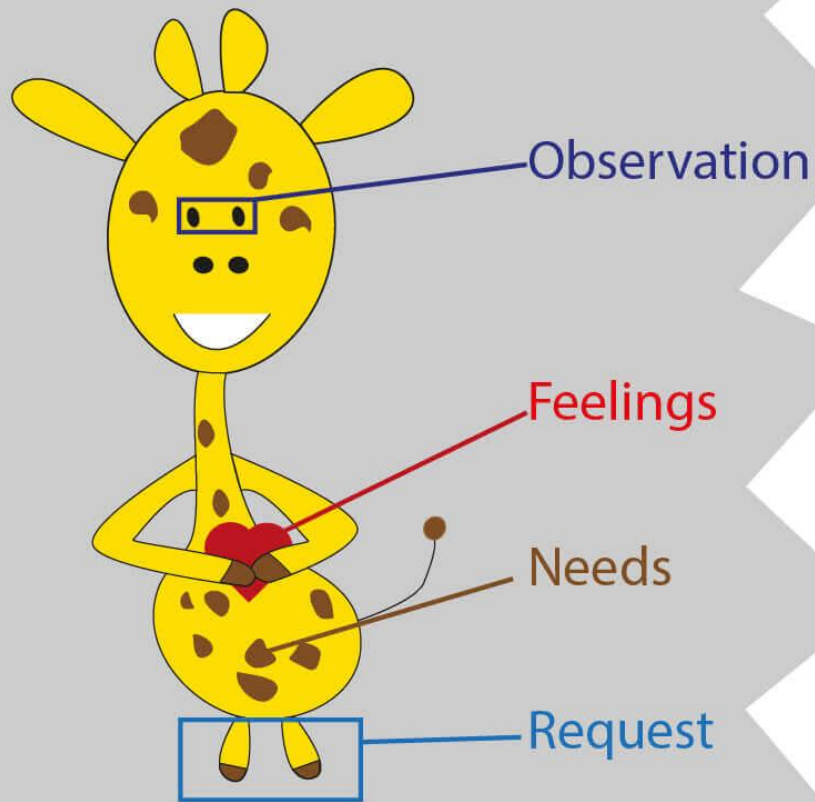
- **The Goal:** We don't "kill" the Jackal. We learn to listen to it.
- **Judgments:** Are not "bad"—they are just tragic expressions of unmet needs. We want to remove the shame and punishment, not the signal.
- **Requests vs. Demands:**

Humans fundamentally *want* to help each other.

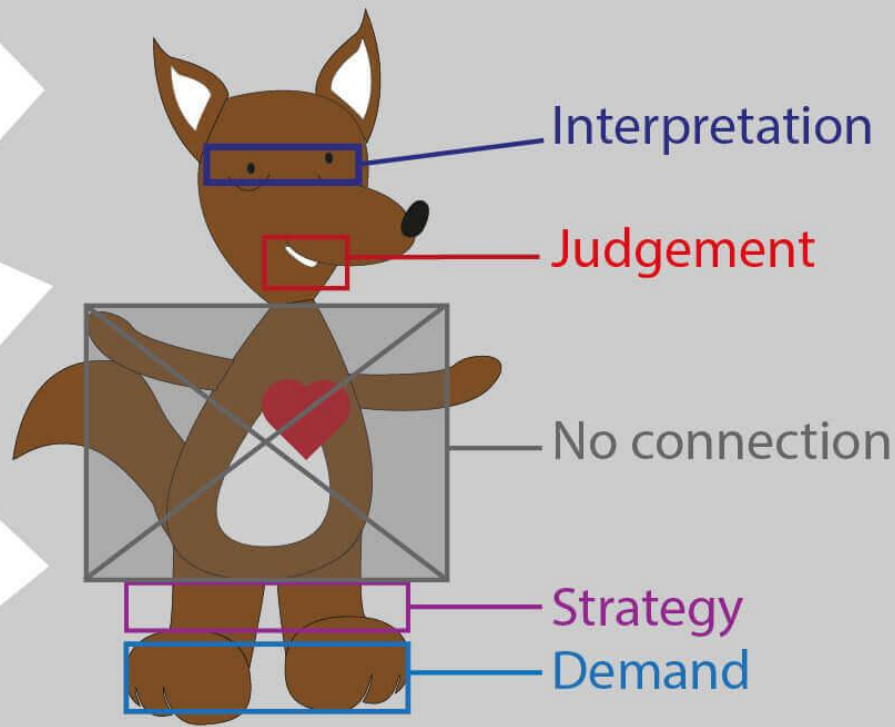
Demands create resistance;

Requests invite natural giving.

NVC WORLD



THE WORLD AS MOST OF US KNOW IT



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Questions to Help You Discover Who *You* Are

What are **you** *feeling*?

Sad, angry, tired



What do **you** *need*?

care/comfort (universal need)

What do **you** *want*?
(to satisfy **your** need?)

You want a hug



What is **your** *request*?

“Can you please give me a hug?”



How do **YOU** want to live **YOUR** life?



The Parts of NVC

Observation

Observation involves identifying both internal and external events, while acknowledging personal interpretations and judgments.

Feeling

A feeling is a sensation in your body that arises from met or unmet needs.



Need

Needs are the conditions human beings require in order to **thrive**.

Request

A Request is a way to ask for what you want in a way that promotes connection and finding mutually beneficial solutions.

Example of an NVC Request

I feel frustrated when I come home and find dishes in the sink (observation + feeling).

It's important to me to have a tidy space to relax (need).

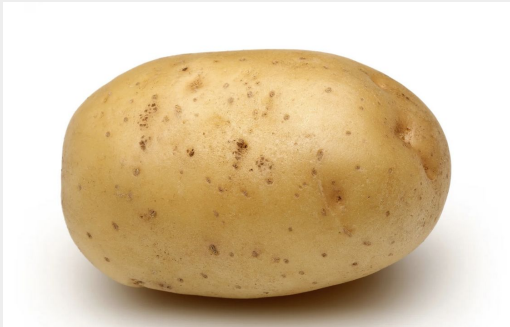
Would you be willing to load the dishwasher after meals (request)?





Activity

Giraffe Hot Potato (group exercise)



Goal:

To build NVC muscle memory! We are practicing how to quickly identify the 4 steps (Observation, Feelings, Needs, Requests) in real-time.

Skills we are building:

- 👁️ **Clear Observation:** Separating facts from stories.
- ❤️ **Self-Empathy:** connecting our own feelings to needs.
- 🤔 **Curiosity:** Getting interested instead of defensive.
- 🎉 **Play:** Learning through connection, not perfection.

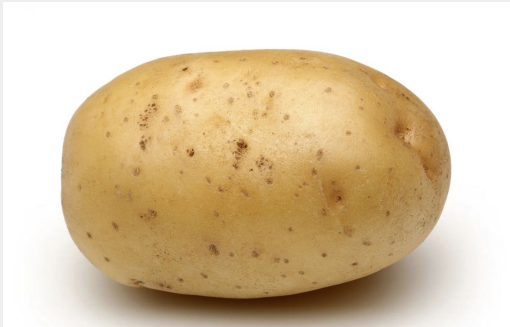
Giraffe Hot Potato (group exercise)



Goal: To practice thinking in terms of the steps of NVC, and practice our critical thinking in terms of observation, feelings, needs and requests

Skills we are building:

1. 👁️ Self-understanding/Understanding feelings/needs, observation
2. ❤️ Empathy/Compassion
3. 🤔 Curiosity
4. 🎉 Play



Giraffe Hot Potato (group exercise) - Example





Observation	I heard you sigh after I spoke; I feel...			
Feeling	Unimportant, abandoned	Worried, anxious	embarrassed	Hurt, sad
Needs	Safety, acceptance	Safety, peace, calmness, assured	Need to matter, acknowledgement	Inclusion, Need to matter
Request	Could you tell me a little more about why you sighed?	Please give me some patience in this	Could you tell me why you sighed? Could you give me some clarity why you sighed?	Could you reassure me that I matter to you?

Giraffe Hot Potato (group exercise)

Observation	I heard laughter ripple through the group. I feel...			
Feeling	shame	Enthused and connected	Confused	Uneasy, afraid, scared
Needs	Be heard	attention	Understanding clarity	closeness and community
Request	I just want to be heard	Thank you and Please listen	Can you tell me what is going on? Share with me what is happening?	I recognize that I want that type of community and interaction, how can I get that for myself?





Giraffe Hot Potato (group exercise)

When I _____, I feel _____ because I need _____. Would you _____?

 The Spark (Observation)	When I expressed how I felt, you changed the topic; I feel...			
 Feelings	scared	curious	angry	frustrated
 Needs	Safety, security, belonging, self worth, worth	Effective communication, understanding, clarity	To be heard and valued	To have space, to be left alone
 Request	Can we talk about what just happened?	Hey, you seem like your stressed, let's talk about what you need	Can we talk about what I expressed?	I'm going to take 5 minutes and regroup and I will be back, does that work for you?


Giraffe Hot Potato (group exercise)

When I _____ , I feel _____ because I need _____. Would you _____ ?

 The Spark (Observation)	When I expressed how I felt, you changed the topic; I feel...			
 Feelings	sad	uneasy	disconnected	frustrated
 Needs	Emotional acknowledgement	Emotional safety	To matter	Mutual understanding
 Request	Would you be willing to reflect back what you heard me feeling before we move on?	Would you be willing to pause with my feeling for a moment instead of shifting topics?	Would you be willing to tell me what landed for you when I shared?	Would you be willing to ask me one question about my feeling before continuing?





Goal: To build NVC muscle memory! We practice identifying the 4 steps (Observation, Feelings, Needs, Requests) in real-time.

How to Play:

1. **The Spark:** We start with one **Observation** (e.g., "I heard a sigh"). 
2. **Fill the Grid:** The group calls out any **Feeling**, **Need**, or **Request** that might fit



Giraffe Hot Potato (group exercise)

When I _____ , I feel _____ because I need _____ . Would you _____ ?

 The Spark (Observation)	I was speaking about the budget, and you started speaking before I finished my sentence.			
 Feelings				
 Needs				
 Request				





Goal: To build NVC muscle memory! We practice identifying the 4 steps (Observation, Feelings, Needs, Requests) in real-time.

How to Play:

1. **The Spark:** We start with one **Observation** (e.g., "I heard a sigh"). 
2. **Fill the Grid:** The group calls out *any* **Feeling**, **Need**, or **Request** that might fit.
 - *Tip:* You can guess for *your* perspective or the *other person's*.
3. **The Statement:** Finally, we walk through the full sentence together:
 - *"When I [Observation], I feel [Feeling] because I need [Need]. Would you [Request]?"* 



Giraffe Hot Potato (group exercise)

When I _____ , I feel _____ because I need _____. Would you _____ ?

 The Spark (Observation)	I was speaking about the budget, and you started speaking before I finished my sentence.			
 Feelings	Frustrated	discouraged		
 Needs	To be heard	respect	contribution	
 Request	Would you be willing to wait until I finish my thought before sharing yours?	Would you repeat back what I have said to the point where I agree that's what I said	Trap: "You are <i>rude</i> ." (Label/Judgment)	





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Giraffe Hot Potato (group exercise)

When I _____, I feel _____ because I need _____. Would you _____?

 The Spark (Observation)	I shared that I was stressed about the project, and you said, 'You just need to organize your files better.'			
 Feelings				
 Needs				
 Request				






Goal: To build NVC muscle memory! We practice identifying the 4 steps (Observation, Feelings, Needs, Requests) in real-time.

How to Play:

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Giraffe Hot Potato (group exercise)

When I _____, I feel _____ because I need _____. Would you _____?

 The Spark (Observation)	I shared that I was stressed about the project, and you said, 'You just need to organize your files better.'			
 Feelings	Lonely	annoyed	misunderstood	
 Needs	Empathy	connection (not fixing)		
 Request	Would you be willing to just listen to my feelings right now without offering solutions?			 Trap: "You are being condescending." (Judgment)

Goal: To build NVC muscle memory! We practice identifying the 4 steps (Observation, Feelings, Needs, Requests) in real-time.

How to Play:

- The Spark:** We start with one **Observation** (e.g., "I heard a sigh"). 
- Fill the Grid:** The group calls out *any* **Feeling**, **Need**, or **Request** that might fit.
 - Tip:* You can guess for *your* perspective or the *other person's*.
- The Statement:** Finally, we walk through the full sentence together:
 - "When I [Observation], I feel [Feeling] because I need [Need]. Would you [Request]?" 



Giraffe Hot Potato (group exercise)

When I _____, I feel _____ because I need _____. Would you _____ ?

 The Spark (Observation)				
 Feelings				
 Needs				
 Request				

Goal: To build NVC muscle memory! We practice identifying the 4 steps (Observation, Feelings, Needs, Requests) in real-time.

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Giraffe Hot Potato (group exercise)

When I _____, I feel _____ because I need _____. Would you _____ ?

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 Feelings				
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 - *"When I [Observation], I feel [Feeling] because I need [Need]. Would you [Request]?"* 

Giraffe Hot Potato (group exercise)

Observation	I heard laughter ripple through the group. I feel...			
Feeling	happy	confused		
Needs	Levity, fun, enjoyment	understanding		
Request	(I'm going to laugh too)	Could someone tell me what everyone is laughing at?		

Get up and shake it off!



Get up and shake it off!

00:30





Activity

Freedom in Relationship ([Conva link](#))

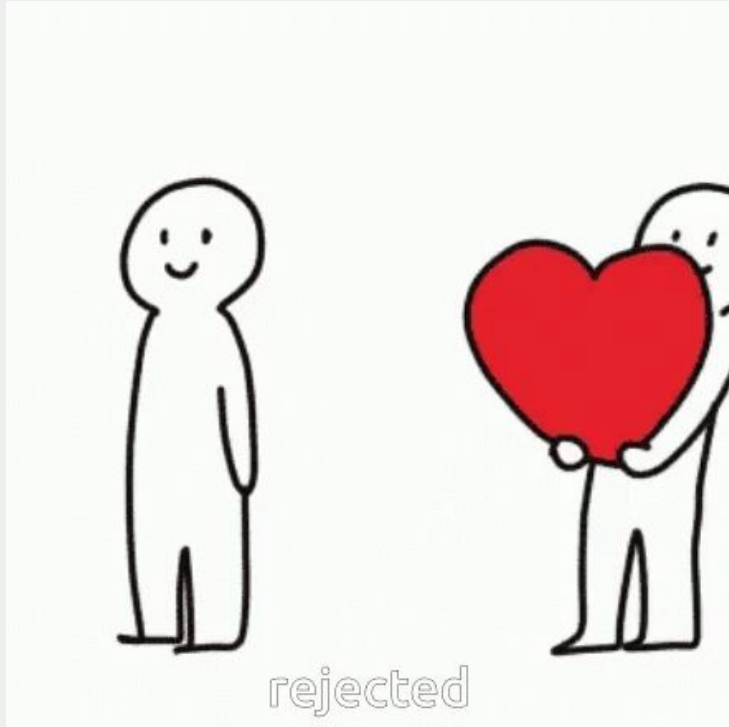
Get up and shake it off!





Activity

The Art of Hearing "No" 🛡️❤️



The Human Challenge: Rejection feels like a threat to our survival. It is hard to set boundaries (fear of hurting others) and hard to hear them (fear of being hurt).

The NVC Reframe: We practice hearing "No" not as a rejection of *us*, but as a "Yes" to one of their own needs.

The Trust Paradox: 🤝 "If I can trust your 'No,' I can believe your 'Yes.'" When we know someone isn't saying "Yes" out of guilt or obligation, their agreement becomes a genuine gift rather than a burden.

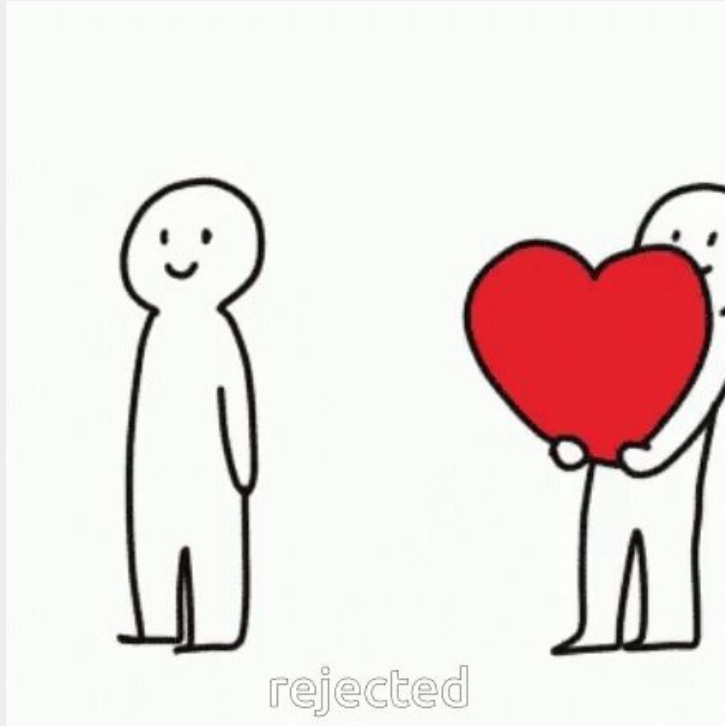
Goal: Build Resilience 💪 To hear a "No" without losing the connection or taking it personally.

Rejection

Human beings are social creatures, and rejection from our social groups can be devastating

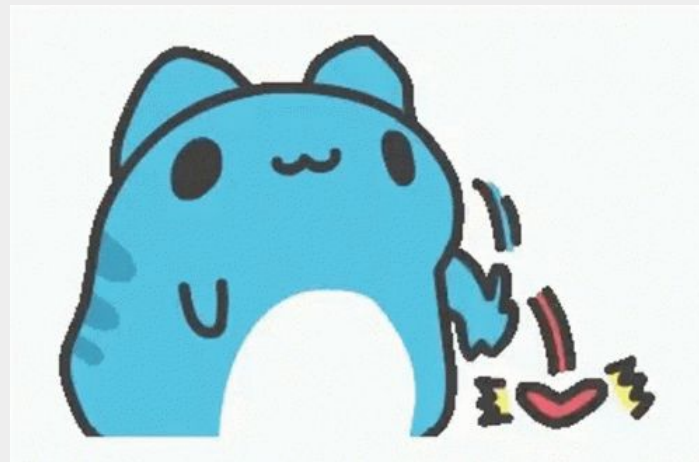
- Holding our boundaries, even when it hurts others, is hard
- Hearing others hold their boundaries, even when it hurts us, is hard

Goal: to practice rejection, hearing it from others, and giving it to others, so we can strengthen our rejection muscles, but also be holding and respecting our boundaries and other's boundaries



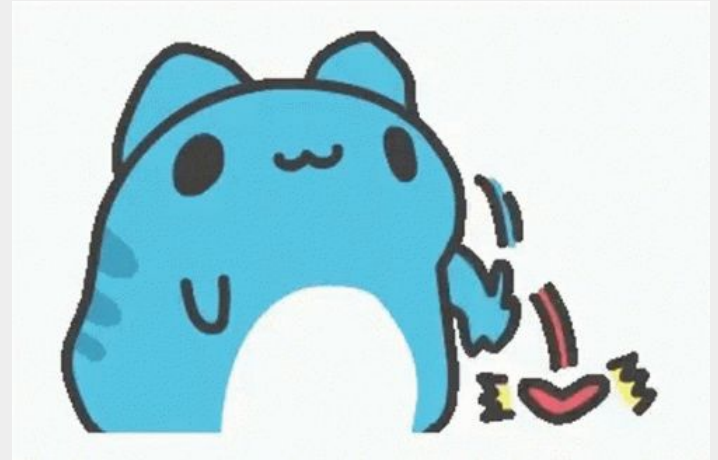
As the Recipient: You Have Options 🛠️

1. **The Choice of Silence:** 🤫 You have the choice not to respond at all.
 - *Note:* Every choice has a consequence (a "price" to the connection), but the right to choose is always yours.
2. **The Simple "No":** 🖐️ You can just say "No." You do not owe anyone an explanation or justification. "No" is a complete sentence.
3. **Reflect Back:** 🔄 Repeat back what you heard.
 - *Why:* This buys you time to think and ensures you actually understand what they want before you answer.
4. **Empathy Guess:** 🦒 Shift the focus to them: *"Are you feeling [Feeling] because you need [Need]?"* This can diffuse the tension.
5. **The Authentic "Yes":** ✅ Say "Yes"—but only if you can do it without resentment.



As the recipient of the request (examples)

1. you don't have to respond at all
2. you can just say no
3. you could reflect back what you think you heard
4. and/or reflect the feelings and/or needs that you think are associated with the request
5. say yes or no



Rejection Request Ideas/Scenarios

1. Could you tell me what you're really feeling instead of shutting down?
2. Would you be open to couples counseling?
3. Can you say 'I love you' more often? I miss hearing it.
4. Would you be willing to forgive me?
5. Can we try again after what happened?
6. Can you stay while I cry for a bit?
7. Would you tell me if something I do pushes you away?
8. Can I share something personal without you trying to fix it?
9. Would you be open to hearing how your words landed for me?
10. Can you be honest with me, even if you think it might hurt?






Rejection Request Ideas/Scenarios

1. Hey, do you want to hang out tonight? I could really use some company.
2. Would you like to come over for dinner this weekend?
3. Could you please do the dishes tonight? I'm really wiped out.
4. I've been sitting on something that hurt me—can we talk about it?
5. I'm throwing a little birthday thing and would love for you to come.
6. Would you cuddle with me? I'm feeling very sad from a lack of physical touch...
7. Would you consider moving in with me? I'd love to share a home with you.
8. I've realized I have feelings for you. I wanted to tell you honestly.
9. I'm thinking about moving to another city, and I'd love for us to start fresh together. Would you come with me?

Rejection Request Ideas/Scenarios

What the Options Sound Like

The Stimulus: Someone asks you: *"Can you drop everything and help me right now? I'm freaking out!"*

- 1. The Choice of Silence**  *(Taking 3 deep breaths to check in with yourself before saying anything. You are choosing not to react immediately.)*
- 2. The Simple "No"**  "I am not available to help right now."
- 3. Reflect Back**  "I hear that you are really stressed and you want me to come over immediately. Is that right?"
- 4. Empathy Guess**  "Are you feeling overwhelmed? Do you need some reassurance that you can handle this?"
- 5. The Authentic Response (The "No" with Care)**  "I can't come over right now (I have a need for rest), but I would be willing to talk on the phone for 10 minutes."

Facilitation Tip

When you present **#2 (The Simple No)**, remind them: *"Notice I didn't say 'I can't because I'm busy.' I just said 'I am not available.' Explanations often sound like excuses. You are allowed to just say No."*

Rejection exercise (group exercise)

1. Pick a person (A) to start
2. That person (A) picks a card from the spank the yeti action cards, or thinks of their own “action” question to ask
3. Person (A) then asks another person (B, the recipient) in the room to do this “action” with them
4. Person (B) should reflect back the request:
 - a. Reflect the request, try to use their words
 - b. Reflect the feelings/needs you are hearing
5. Then person (B) can either say yes or no to the request
6. Person (A), if rejected, could:
 - a. offer a statement such as “Thank you for taking care of yourself” as a way to connect and reflect
 - b. Start a negotiation to reach a request that works for both of you
7. Then continue popcorn-style

Rejection exercise (group exercise)

1. Would you be willing to lend me your car for the weekend?
2. Can you help me move my furniture tomorrow?
3. Will you swap your lunch with me?
4. Would you mind watching my pet while I'm away?
5. Can I borrow your phone for an hour?
6. Would you like to join me for a run at 6 a.m.?
7. Can you stay late to finish this project with me tonight?
8. Would you share something personal with the group?
9. Can you give me a ride to the airport early Saturday morning?
10. Would you cancel your plans to spend time with me now?
11. Would you skinny-dip with me right now?
12. Can I text your ex from your phone tonight?
13. Would you let me draw on your face with a permanent marker?
14. Will you reveal your wildest fantasy to the group?
15. Can you prank-call someone using your real voice?
16. Would you let me see the last photo on your camera roll?
17. Can you eat a spoonful of hot sauce in front of everyone?
18. Will you do a dramatic reading of your last text message exchange?
19. Would you swap outfits with me for the next hour?
20. Can you send a flirty DM to a celebrity from your own account?

Debrief

Let's answer these questions:

- a. How are you feeling now? How do you feel about this exercise?
- b. What is your one main takeaway from the exercise?



Get up and shake it off!



See you next time!

We are eager to learn about how you have integrated Nonviolent Communication (NVC) principles into your daily routines.

