



Empathy in Action

*Compassionate Communication
with NVC*

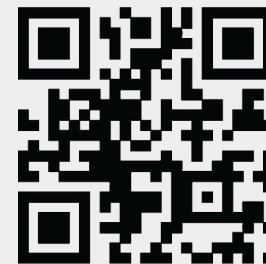


Learning to Love
Ourselves and Others



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*Compassionate Communication
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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! 🦋

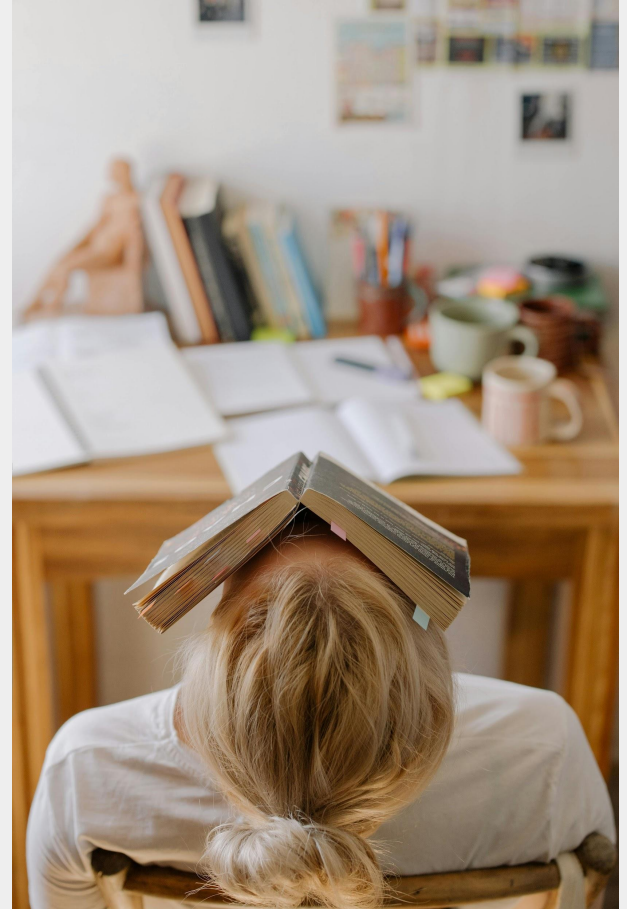


[Code of Conduct](#)

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."



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.



Pleasant (expansion)

Feelings - Sensations - Emotions

Unpleasant (constriction)

CALM

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

LIVELY

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

CONFUSION

torn
doubt
lost
hesitant
bafflement
perplex
puzzled

BODY SENSATIONS

knot in the belly shrink
lump in the throat sick
inner rush weak
disgust empty
choking shaky
breathless dizzy
squeeze foggy
trembling cold

WORRY

anxious
edgy
unquiet
concern
stress/tense
nervous

HAPPY

joy delight
amusement glad
animated pleased

COMPASSION

tender touched
warm moved
open affection
loving friendly

FEAR

afraid
scared
suspicion
panic
paralyzed
terror
apprehension

SAD

heavy heart hopeless
nostalgic helpless
melancholy gloomy
disappointment down
discouragement longing
depression despair

ANNOYANCE

irritation
frustration
exasperation
impatient

CURIOUS

fascination inspiration
interest anticipation
involvement wonder
engagement

GRATEFUL

appreciation openhearted
thankful encouragement

ANGER

upset
furious
rage
resentful

CONFIDENT

empowerment
proud
hopeful
optimistic
strong

REFRESHMENT

rested
enlivened
restored
reactivation
clearheaded
exuberant

PAIN

guilt heartbreak
hurt miserable
lonely devastation
grief regret
agony remorseful
suffer turmoil

HATE

hostile
aversion
bitter
disgust
contempt
dislike

FATIGUE

overwhelm
burn-out
exhaustion
sleepy
tired

VULNERABLE

fragile
insecure
reservation
sensitive

AGITATION

uncertain alert
troubled restless
unsettle shock
cranky uncomfortable
disquiet uneasy

BOREDOM

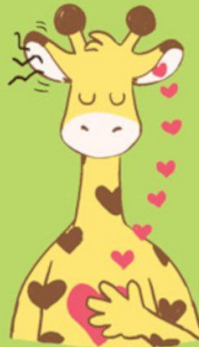
apathetic
numb
far
withdraw
disengagement

JEALOUS

envious

SHAME

embarrassment shy



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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

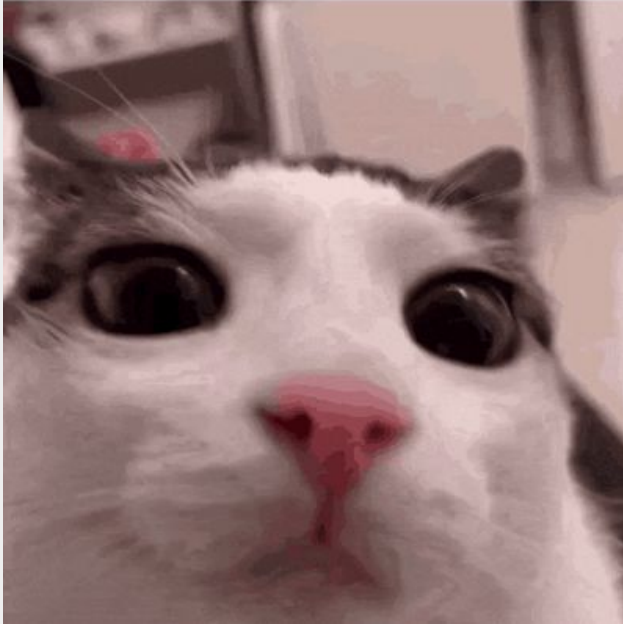
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Introduce yourself



Introductions

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

Please share:

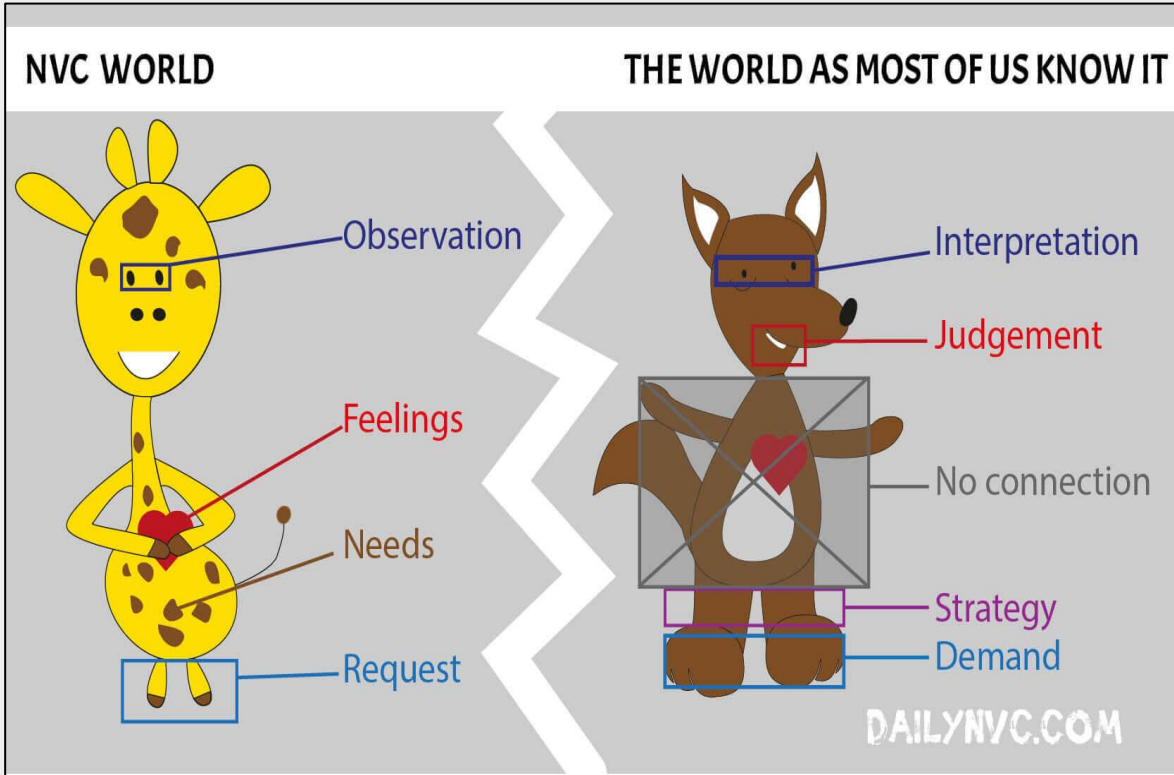
👋 **Name**


🌱 **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).

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.

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

I NEED 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)?



The background features a repeating pattern of overlapping circles in three colors: light blue, light orange, and light yellow. Each circle is divided vertically by a thin white line, creating a grid-like effect. The circles overlap in a staggered fashion, creating a sense of depth and movement.

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 (example)

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

 Observation	When I expressed how I felt, you changed the topic; I feel...			
 Feelings	scared	curious	angry	frustrated
 Needs	Safety, security	understanding	To be heard	To have space
 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





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 _____ ?

 Observation	At dinner I say, "I think that movie came out in 2018," and you pulls out their phone and says, "Nope. 2016." I feel...			
 Feelings	intrigued	insecure	angry	confused
 Needs	To learn	reassurance	Autonomy, to be seen and heard, care and empathy, safety	Clarity, connection
 Request	I'd like to learn more from you, thank you!	Can you let me know you love me for who I am and not the year movies come out in? :)	I hear your need to correct me, but I'm feeling fixed instead of heard, please don't fix me	I would like to understand why you wanted to correct me so quickly?





Giraffe Hot Potato (group exercise)

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

 Observation	At dinner you say, "I think that movie came out in 2018," and your partner pulls out their phone and says, "Nope. 2016." I feel...			
 Feelings	embarrassed	tense	hurt	insecure
 Needs	acceptance	Being heard	care	competence
 Request	"Hey, could we just laugh about it instead of fact-checking right away?"	"Would you be willing to let the conversation keep flowing instead of checking it immediately?"	"When that happens I feel a little deflated. Would you be open to correcting me later instead of in the moment?"	"Can you tell me you don't see me as 'wrong all the time'? That reassurance would help."





Giraffe Hot Potato (group exercise)

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

 Observation	When the meeting ended, the action items were assigned, and my name wasn't included. I feel...			
 Feelings				
 Needs				
 Request				

Giraffe Hot Potato (group exercise)

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

 Observation	When the meeting ended, the action items were assigned, and my name wasn't included. I feel...			
 Feelings	disappointed	discouraged	lonely	confused
 Needs	inclusion	contribution	recognition	clarity
 Request	“Would you be willing to tell me how you decide who takes on action items?”	“Could we check in about where my support would be most helpful?”	“Would you be open to including me next time if there's a task that fits?”	“Could we clarify how we decide who owns which actions?”

Giraffe Hot Potato (group exercise)

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

 Observation				
 Feelings				
 Needs				
 Request				

Giraffe Hot Potato (group exercise)

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

 Observation				
 Feelings				
 Needs				
 Request				

Get up and shake it off!



Get up and shake it off!

00:30



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Activity

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

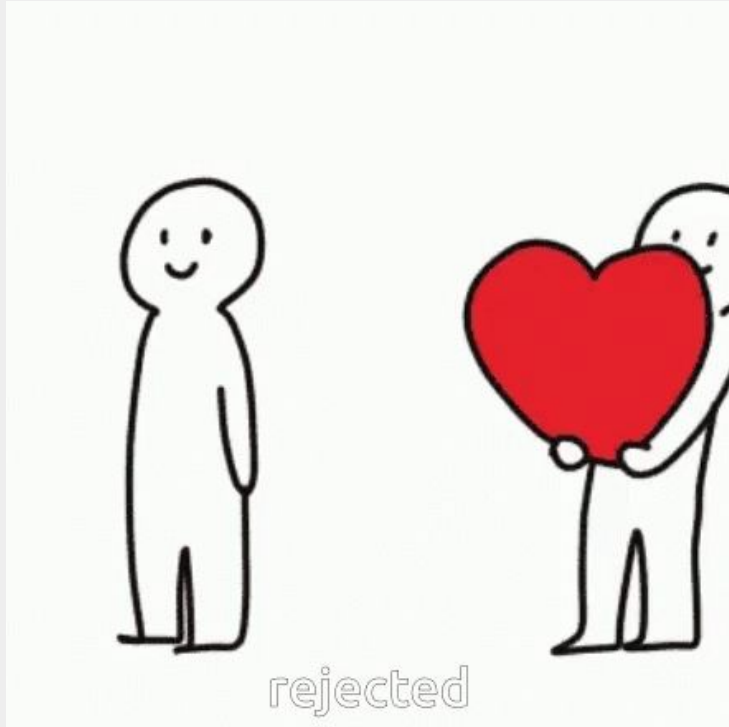
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Activity

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.

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: You Have Options 🛠️



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. 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.

