



Introduction to Conscious Communication

Session 1: Empathy Poker

Who's it for?

- People who are new to Conscious Communication or Nonviolent Communication (NVC).
- People who would like a refresher and those who would like to practice with others to deepen the learning.

What's our intention?

- To **experience** what it feels like to communicate using the principles of Marshall Rosenberg's *Nonviolent Communication* on which these exercises are based.
- Join our community of practice for further study using the book as our text as an option. We hope this introductory program will give you enough of a taste of this process. If you would like to continue learning and practicing these skills with us, we will let you subscribe for our email list.

Learning Objectives:

Before the end of our sessions, you will have a chance to:

Session #1: Empathy Poker (offered Sept. 29, Oct. 1 and Oct. 7)

- Define feelings and needs using NVC principles.
- Differentiate thoughts from feelings and strategies from needs.
- Become familiar with communicating with needs-based language.

Session #2: Take Back Your Power: How to Never Be Insulted Again (offered Oct. 8, Oct. 13 and Oct. 14)

- Make clear observations distinguishing from thoughts.
- Identify universal human needs behind things that set you off.

Session #3: Thoughts Get in the Way (offered Oct. 15, Oct. 21 and Oct. 27)

- Acquire awareness that your thoughts are NOT you.
- Translate thoughts into feelings and needs.

Session #4: Working with "Enemy" or Fixed Images (offered Oct. 22, Oct. 28 and Nov. 10)

- Use embodied practice with few words to identify and release difficult or repetitive patterns in a relationship.



How to Interact Virtually:

- Unmute your mic to speak to the large group.
- Say your name when speaking to the large group (e.g. "This is Shoko and I have a question").
- Mute your mic after you are finished to give room for others to participate.
- Enable your video and mic to communicate with your partner in the breakout room.
- Use the chat feature (optional).
- Toggle between the "Speaker View" and the "Gallery View." Use what you prefer.

Those who love you are not fooled by mistakes you have made or dark images you hold about yourself. They remember your beauty when you feel ugly; your wholeness when you are broken; your innocence when you feel guilty; and your purpose when you feel confused.

African Proverb



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Exercise #1 (Breakout Room): You'll have approximately 5 minutes.

- Think about a conversation or experience you had which was deeply satisfying.
- Name 1-3 qualities which were present in that moment that made it work for you.
- Share your own conversation/experience briefly and discuss the qualities with your partner.
- What made the experience a 'good connection?' Make a note of these qualities.
- Write your quality on a piece of paper. Write it big.

Example: I know a person who always blurts out whatever he's thinking, no filters, the qualities that make this satisfying for me are the honesty and authenticity in his expression.

Honesty

FEELINGS tell us if our needs are met or not.

Glad: Calm, Cheerful, Comfortable, Curious, Eager, Excited, Exuberant, Grateful, Happy, Joyful, Mellow, Okay, Open, Peaceful, Pleased, Pleasure, Relaxed, Tender, Thrilled, Touched, Tranquil, Warm

Sad: Anguish, Beat, Blue, Blah, Depressed, Down, Disappointed, Discouraged, Hopeless, Forlorn, Hurt, Lonely, Sorrowful, Unhappy, Wretched

Mad: Angry, Furious, Grumpy, Frustrated, Bitter, Annoyed, Irritated, Cranky, Grouchy, Peeved, Ticked Off, Miffed, Irked, Irate, Exasperated, Enraged, Infuriated

Bad: Apathetic, Ashamed, Averse, Bored, Chagrined, Disgusted, Embarrassed, Guilty, Heavy, Horrified, Indifferent, Intense, Jealous, Listless, Lethargic, Numb, Overwhelmed, Startled, Surprised, Tired,

Afraid: Agitated, Alarmed Antsy, Anxious, Apprehensive, Cautious, Concerned, Dread, Fearful, Fidgety, Frightened, Nervous, Panicky, Scared, Terrified, Timid, Unnerved, Uptight, Worried,

Daniel Goleman's categories of emotion: glad, sad, mad, afraid, surprise & disgust

Calm

Angry



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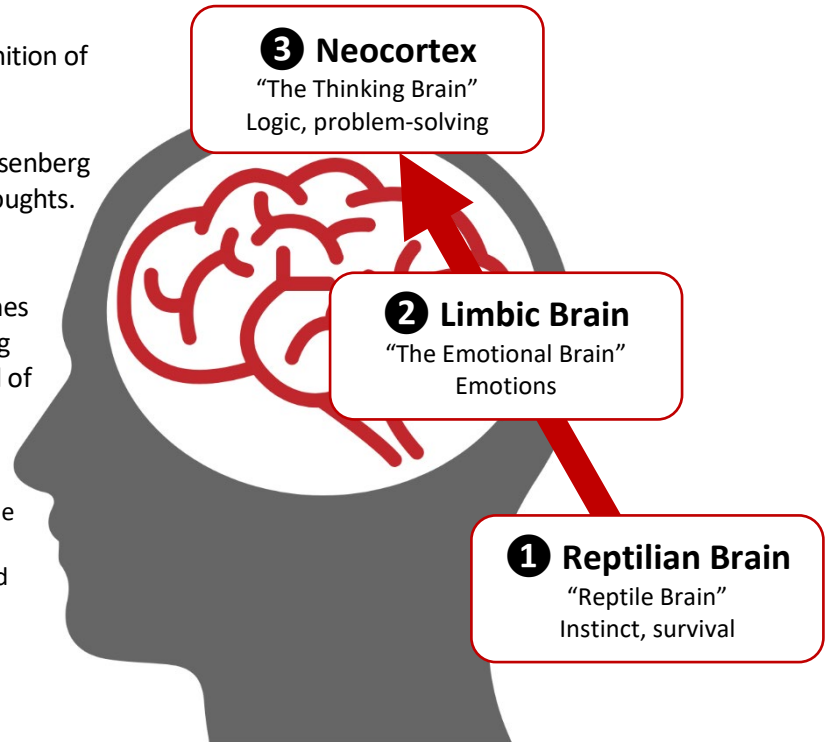
In Conscious Communication, we use a narrow definition of the words “feelings and “needs.”

In his book *Nonviolent Communication*, Marshall Rosenberg defines feelings and he differentiates them from thoughts.

Rosenberg also defines universal human needs and he differentiates them from strategies. We sometimes are in disagreement of each other’s strategies during conflict situations. We can always agree on the level of needs.

Naming feelings calms the amygdala (main aspect of the emotional brain) and allows us to move out of being stuck in drama, carried away by thoughts, emotions and physical sensations.

Naming needs activates the neocortex where we have the ability to solve problems.



Definition of Feelings	Thoughts	vs.	Feelings
Feelings are universal human emotions that have a physical component (experienced in the body).	“I feel betrayed.”		“I feel sad.” “I feel hurt.”
We make a clear distinction between feelings and thoughts.	“I feel like you’re lying to me.”		“I feel suspicious.”

Feelings let us know if our needs are met (glad feelings) or not met (mad, sad, afraid feelings). Feelings are pointers to needs.

Definition of Needs	Needs	vs.	Strategies
Needs are universal qualities which all human beings need to survive and thrive.	Food		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go to a restaurant. • Go to a supermarket. • Grow food in my garden. • Steal from neighbor’s garden.
We distinguish between needs and strategies for getting the needs met.			

Needs make no reference to any specific person doing any specific thing at specific time/location.



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Exercise #6 (Breakout Room): Empathy Poker

1. Choose one feeling word from the list of feelings.
2. Everyone in the breakout room will silently remember a time they felt that way and the circumstances surrounding the incident which stimulated the feeling.
3. One person in the room will volunteer to share a 2-sentence recap of their story and the feeling that accompanies the story. This person is the 'player.'
4. The people in the room will choose need words from the list of needs and offer their guesses as to what needs may have been up for the player. The clue is in the feeling because the feeling points to needs.

Use this phrase: "[Player's Name], were you feeling [feeling] because your need(s) for [need(s)] was being met/was not being met?"

5. The breakout room 'host' will:
 - Write one or two words on a piece of paper and hold it up onto the screen. OR
 - Type need words from the participants into the chat.
6. The player receives need words silently until everyone is finished. The player is looking for needs that resonate. Don't *think* about this. Notice your 'gut reaction.'
7. After choosing the needs that resonate, the player says to the group: "I was feeling [feeling] because my need(s) for [chosen need words] were being met/were not being met."
8. Once the needs have been identified, sit with them for a minute and notice how much you value these needs. Imagine what it would feel like to have them met. We call this "*Sinking into the beauty of the needs.*" Or "*grounding in the need.*"

Questions for debriefing in your breakout room:

- What was it like to have your partners offer you "empathy guesses" about feelings or needs that might have been up for you when they heard your story?
- What was it like to offer "empathy guesses" to someone else?
- Did you identify a need or value that you'd like to spend more time with?
- Were you surprised by any of the needs or feelings you identified?

