



Making Clear Observations (Distinguishing from Thoughts)

NVC Chapter 3: Observing without Evaluating

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, you will have some ideas on how to...

1. Notice the difference between observations and judgments/evaluations.
2. End Goal: Practice “pause-and-listen” techniques as clarifying, listening, and communication skills.

While you are waiting...

What are your thoughts about the following situation? Write them down in the box below.

You overhear a conversation between your nephew and an older relative.

Archie, an older white relative, says to Jon, your younger nephew,
“I’m voting for law and order — there’s no excuse for violence, everyone has the same opportunities in this country and they just need to obey the laws and work harder.”

Your nephew responds, “That’s racist, Uncle Archie.” Uncle Archie replies, “I’m not a racist!”

My thoughts



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Observable data is exactly what happened, as if they were video-recorded.

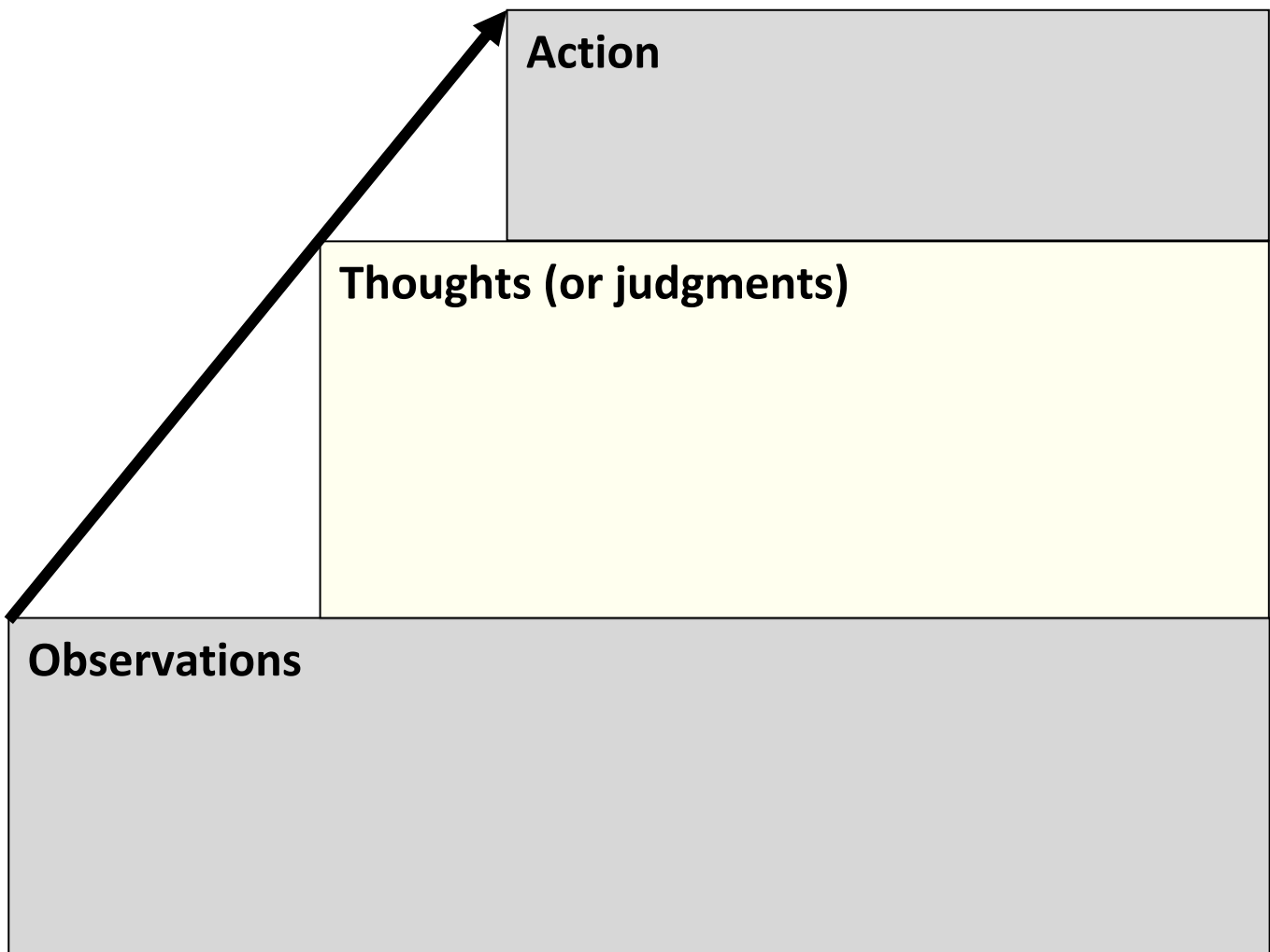
- They are just facts you can prove or have seen.
- Can also be defined as what your senses tell you. What you see, hear, etc.
- An exact quote: I heard Shoko say, “(insert the exact quote as if it were recorded).”

In the chat, write observations and potential thoughts/judgments about the following situation.

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Your nephew responds, “That’s racist, Uncle Archie.” Uncle Archie replies, “I’m not a racist!”



Adapted by Mary Hoddy from *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook*. P.M. Senge. (1994). Double Day. *Nonviolent Communication*. M. Rosenberg. (2003). PuddleDancer Press.

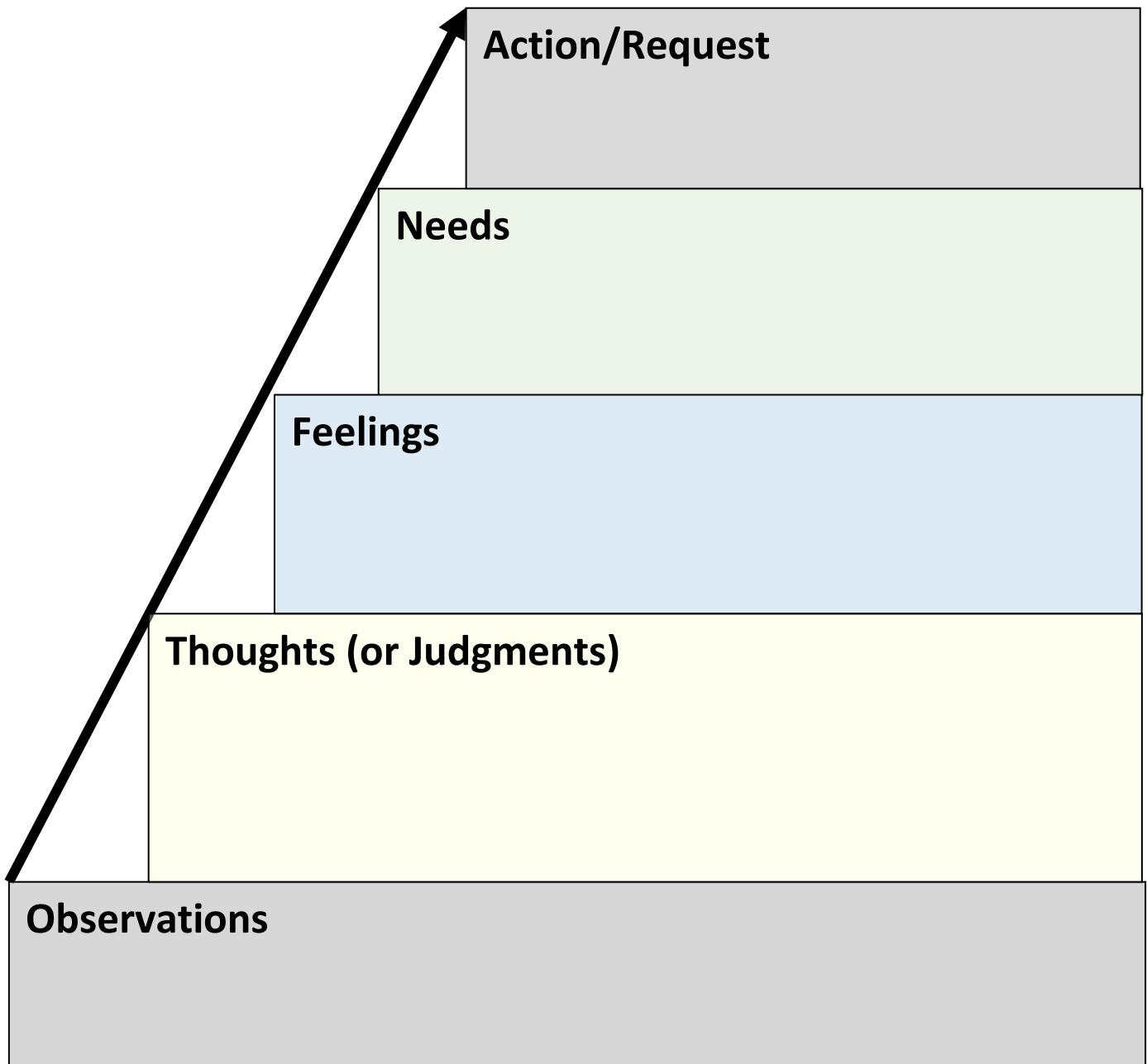


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You can use your own scenario or continue with the example above.

- **Begin** on the bottom and **write the observation** in the box below.
- **Fill in some thoughts** that come up for you.
- Your partner will **offer empathy by making feelings/needs guesses** around the thoughts.
- Once you have identified a need or two around the situation – do you have a request of yourself or others?



Needs are actionable — feelings are not. Once we have identified the needs that are up in the situation, we can use our power with (rather than over or against) one another to come up with strategies to meet them.