



“I resort to using force.” – Own rather than justify

NVC Chapter 11 or 12: The Protective Use of Force

STEP 1: Grounding

In breakout rooms, review and discuss the content on page 1. What is percolating in you?

I resort to using force when:

- Physical use of force is necessary.
- There is an **IMMINENT** threat to life, wellbeing, or rights.
- There is no room for dialogue (unwilling or unable to communicate).



#1: Protect.

Use the minimum amount of force necessary.



#2: Connect.

Connect with the other person for mutual education and compassionate receiving.

- **Give empathy:** What need was the other person trying to meet when I intervened?
- **Share vulnerability:** What need was I trying to meet when the behavior of the other person impacted me? Take responsibility for your intervention. And honestly and vulnerably share your needs.

Marshall Rosenberg coaches **very limited circumstances** for using the protective use of force.

Punitive force:

- Physical punishment (e.g., spanking, or corporal punishment)
- Judgmental labeling, blaming, shaming (e.g., “How could you be so stupid?”, “Immature”)
- Withholding of privileges, means of gratification of needs

Costs of punishment:

- Submission motivated by fear of punishment distracts us from values
- Diminished self-respect and self-trust, which is costly to connection



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STEP 2: Compare and contrast the protective use of force

Individually, recall/imagine situations for sections A-C. In breakout rooms, process each section. Take turns.

Section A: Being on the receiving end

Recall or imagine a **situation** when you were on the receiving end of the protective use of force. Make observations.



Get empathy to your reaction from others. Guess your **feelings** and **needs** at the time.



What **request** emerges from your feelings and needs?



Make empathic guesses about the other person’s use of the protective use of force. What needs were there?

Section B: Being on the giving end

Recall or imagine a **situation** when you were on the giving end of the protective use of force. Make observations.



Describe the situation with **feelings** and **needs**. What was going on in you that prompted to behave in a way that was protective?



This moment is over. Now, what **request** would you make in this moment as you recall the situation? What do you notice when you give the gift of protecting someone else?



What’s your guess about the needs alive in the other person?

Section C: Being on the giving end (again)

Recall or imagine a time when you observed someone else applying what they said was the protective use of force. Make observations.



When someone thinks they are using protective use of force, but they are communicating their strong preference, what’s the impact to the relationship? What will happen to compassion, a flow between yourself and others based on mutual giving from the heart?

Manske, J. (2023, March 17). The protective use of force [Journal questions are from meeting presentation] Supporting Holistic Systems (NVC and Social Change), online event.

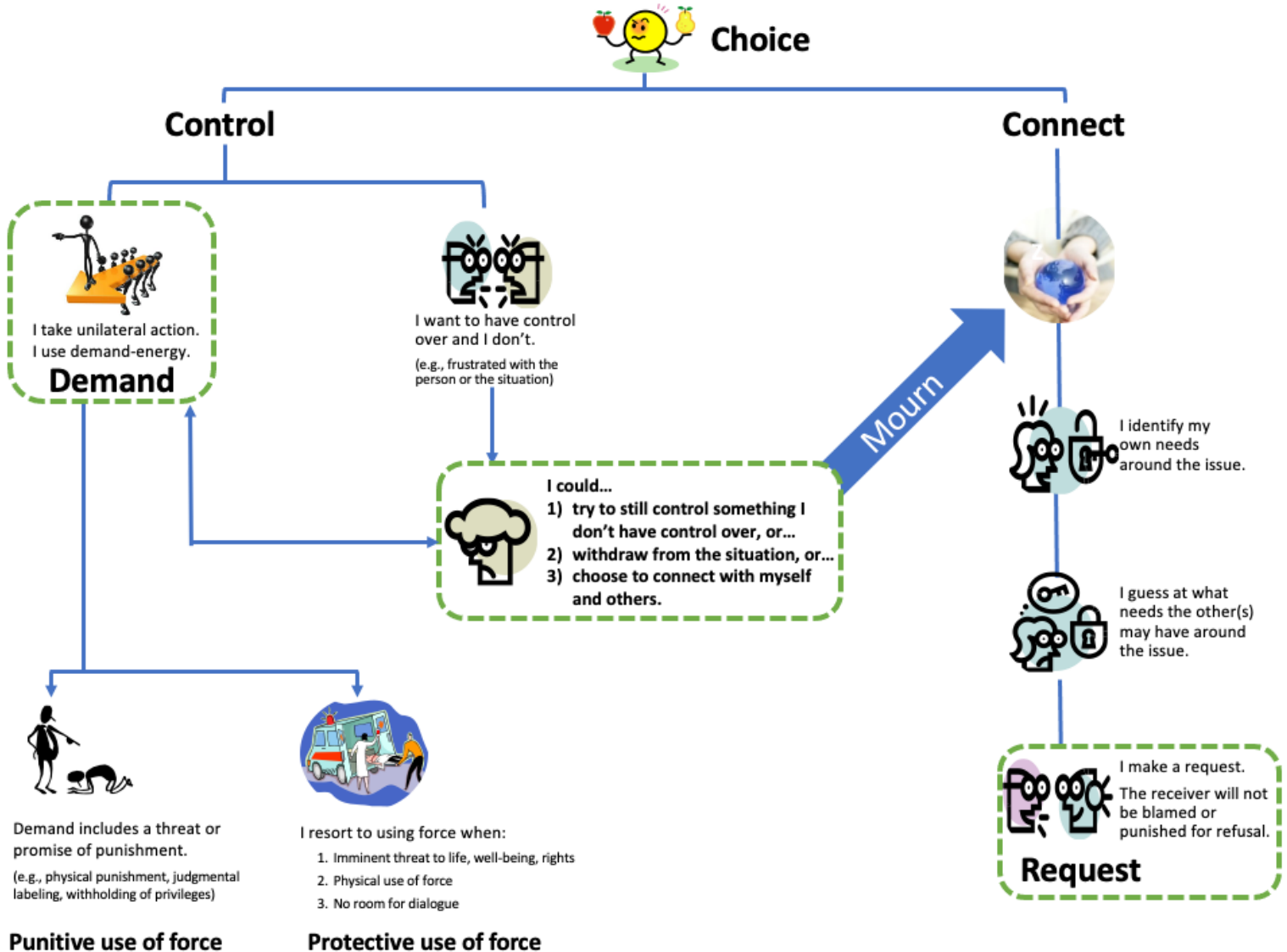


Protective use of force within the context of NVC

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STEP 3: Wrap-up

Notice if we have any thoughts such as, "Punishment is bad. Punitive force is bad. I'm a bad person if I use demand or punishment to get my needs met." The goal of this lesson is to give a "seat on the couch" to the punitive force and demand as well as protective use of force. Rather than labeling our actions as good or bad, let's notice when we use various types of force in our lives. When we use protective use of force, demand with a threat of punishment, be honest about it. Own it.



Are there conditions to co-exist (boundaries)?

Rewards for obedience and punishment for non-compliance?

- Employment agreement
- Help with household chores
- Wear a mask (+ cover nose)
- Pass the exams and do homework
- Vaccination
- Potty training
- Quit smoking/drinking
- Be monogamous
- No abusive behaviors
- Use of contraception



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STEP 4: Resources & Examples

Activity #1: Re-enactment

1. ACTION TAKER: Enact **ONE** situation below. The action taker behaves in ways that are authentic.
2. RECEIVER: The receiver experiences the situation and identifies what feelings are coming up.
3. DEBRIEF: Discuss the intention of the action taker and how the action landed on the receiver.

Situations:

- I snatched a 5-year-old child who was moving towards a busy street.
- I grabbed the arm of a young woman who was looking at her mobile phone when the crosswalk light turned red, and I saw a car coming toward her.

Were there...?

- Physical use of force?
- **IMMINENT** threat to life, wellbeing, or rights?
- No room for dialogue (unwilling or unable to communicate)?

Activity #2: Muddiest Points

1. DIALOGUE: Talk with your partner about **ONE** of the following situations where you resorted to using force.
2. DISCUSS whether you would consider them as protective use of force or demand that includes a threat of punishment. What feelings and needs are present for you? What's your guess about the needs alive in the other person?

Situations:

- I put my elderly parent in a care facility even though she refused vehemently.
- I'm leaving a physically abusive relationship.
- I told a young woman filling her tank of gas while the car engine was running, "Hey, can you stop filling the gas and turn off your engine? You have two kids in the car. You could blow up your car."
- I approached a man at Costco, "Hey, your mask has slipped down. Let me fix your mask to cover your nose."

I resort to using force.

- I justify my use of force by calling it protective use of force.
- I wonder if my use of force was received as punitive use of force.
- I own my use of force and am honest about it and call it a demand.

Session objectives: By the time you exit the room after 90 minutes, you will have...

1. Discussed the protective use of force in the context of NVC.
2. Identified multiple perspectives.

Lofty goals: A year from now, what audacious and inspiring thing will you be able to do?

1. Own that you used force (including demands) instead of justifying.
2. Cope with the fact that we use force. Empathize or give space to discomfort.
3. Mourn when your protective use of force is received as demand or punitive force.