



Introduction to Conscious Communication

Session 1: Empathy Poker



Breakout room activity:

- Think about a conversation or experience you had that was deeply satisfying.
- Name 1–3 qualities 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, using large letters.

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

Honesty

Definition of Needs	Needs	vs.	Strategies
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Needs are universal qualities which all human beings need to survive and thrive.

Food

- 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 a specific time or location.



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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

Definition of Feelings

Feelings are universal human emotions that have a physical component (experienced in the body).

We make a clear **distinction between feelings and thoughts.**

Thoughts

"I feel betrayed."

"I feel like you're lying to me."

vs.

Feelings

"I feel sad."
"I feel hurt."

"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.

Calm

Angry



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Breakout room activity: empathy poker

1. Choose one feeling word from the list of feelings.
2. Silently recall a time when you felt that way and the circumstances surrounding the incident that stimulated the feeling.
3. One person in the room will volunteer to share a two-sentence recap of their story and the feeling that accompanies the story. This person is the “player.”
4. Others 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?

