



What's Behind the Judgmental Thinking?

NVC Chapter 2: Communication that Blocks Compassion

While you are waiting:

Think of something someone said to you that stopped communication. Write ONE stimulus below.

Breakout Room Activity #1:

1. Introduce yourself to your partner.
2. Categorize your phrase into the types of barriers described by Marshall Rosenberg in his book. Your statement may not match these exactly.

Communication that Blocks Compassion

Moralistic Judging	Making Comparisons	Denial of Responsibility	Communicating Our Desires as Demand
• Correcting: "I think you meant..." • Criticizing: "It will never work. We tried it 5 years ago." • Name-calling and labeling: "Are you nuts?" • Evaluating or Analyzing: "I know he was trying to make me look bad." • "Us" versus "Them": "I can't believe THEY did that!"	• Compare myself to others: "I'll never be able to cook like you." • Comparing others: "Your sister always did good in math" (implied "why can't you?"). • Comparing to an unrealistic achievement "Mozart finished a symphony by the age of 12." • Telling a better story: "Wait 'til you hear what happened to me...."	• Actions of others: "I hit my child because he ran into the street." • Group pressure: "Everyone else was doing it." • Dictates of authority: "I lied because the supervisor told me to." • Gender, social, age roles: "I hate cooking, but I have to do it." • Avoiding: "That reminds me of a time when I..." • Consoling or unrealistic reassuring: "I'm sure it will be better in the morning."	• Fixing or educating: "You should watch this video." • Giving unsolicited advice: "Have you thought about..." "Did you ever try..." • Moralizing: "If you cared about your children, you would..." • Explaining or using a logical argument: "You don't understand, the facts are..." • My idea better: "...hey, I've got another idea... how about"

Why do we use barriers to communication?

The phrases above are common. Why might we use them? What are the possible consequences?

Breakout Room Activity #2: Connecting to needs behind judgments

Breakout Room Roles:

1. **Player:** Explores and processes their own situation.
2. **Facilitator:** Guides the flow of the worksheet
3. **Empathy supporters:**
 - Silent witnessing: Sit with a quiet mind and an open heart, listening deeply with your whole being. Notice your own thoughts as they arise, and gently let them go, returning to presence.
 - Offering support: When invited, offer guesses about what feelings and needs might be present, using the provided sheet as a guide.



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Breakout room activity #2 – cont'd

Situation: Write what happened below (stimulus).

Feelings & Needs: Partner(s) will offer feeling and need guesses (empathy guesses). The player silently receives the guesses. Note the ones that resonate in the boxes below.

PLAYER'S FEELINGS:

PLAYER'S NEEDS:

EMPATHY FOR SELF: Having chosen the feelings and needs that resonate, the player will say aloud the training wheel sentence: "When I hear _____, I feel _____ because I need/want _____."

CONNECT TO THE NEED: Once the needs have been identified, sit with them for a minute. Notice how much you value these needs. Imagine what it would feel like to have them met.

ARE YOU WILLING? From this space, are you willing to guess the feelings and needs of the other person?

GUESSING THE OTHER'S FEELINGS:

GUESSING THE OTHER'S NEEDS:

EMPATHY FOR THE OTHER: Having guessed the feelings and needs of the other, the player will say aloud the training wheel sentence: "When they said____, I wonder if they felt____ because they wanted/needed____."

CONNECT TO THE NEED: Now that the player has guessed a need for the other person, take a moment to connect with this need. Notice how much you value this need. What would it feel like to have this need met?

Look at the stimulus — does it feel any different?

Debrief: What was this exercise like for you?



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Blame Game

In this space, I imply wrongness and rightness.
There is nothing wrong with this space.
We use strategies when they work for us.
Be aware of your choice.

Connection

In this space, I hear the universal needs behind judgments.
In this space, I feel open. I will **celebrate & mourn**.
We practice living in this space consciously.
Be aware of your choice.

I feel stuck

Value Judgments:

- Qualities we value in life
- They reflect our beliefs about how life can best be served.
- We choose to focus on choices that align with our values and needs rather than making **moralistic judgments** of people by calling the people themselves good or bad.

Five Ds:

DISTRACTION, notice when you haven't been paying attention

DIAGNOSES, judgments, labels, criticism, blame

DENIAL of responsibility for our own feelings and behaviors (or depriving another person of their responsibility for their own feelings and behaviors)

DEMANDs or demand energy – asking for compliance without willingness to consider the needs of the party being addressed

DESERVE-oriented thinking – thinking that certain behaviors or individuals deserve certain consequences in the form of reward or punishment

Life-alienating Communication:

1. Moralistic Judgments
2. Making Comparisons
3. Denial of Responsibility

Five Ds that Block Compassion:

1. **DISTRACTION**: Not paying attention
2. **DIAGNOSE**: Judge, label, criticize
3. **DENY** responsibility for one's action
4. **DEMAND** energy
5. **DESERVE**-oriented language

Life-alienating communication has deep philosophical and political roots (e.g. *should, have to, language of wrongness*).

These views stress humans' innate evil and deficiency and often try to control what is seen as inherently undesirable nature.