

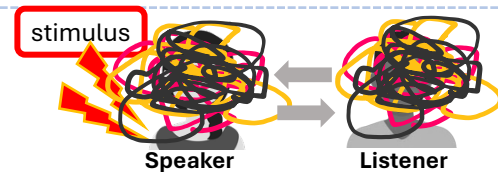


Witnessing with Presence

NVC Chapter 8: The Power of Empathy

By the end of our 90-minute practice session, you'll be able to:

1. Translate any expression into feelings and needs.
2. Use classical NVC and then express yourself in a more natural way.



Breakout Room Activity #1:

1. **Introduce yourself:** Start by sharing your name with your partner.
2. **Discuss with your partner:** Have you ever felt burdened after listening to someone offload intense stories and felt worse after talking to them?

Large Group Activity #1: Dear Amy

1. Read the following letter aloud.
2. Discuss the following questions:
 - Are there any clear observations without evaluations?
 - Are any words or phrases expressing actual emotions?
 - Can you guess what the writer might be feeling?
 - Does the writer name any needs?
 - Can you guess what needs are being expressed by the writer?
 - What is the writer's request? Is it clear, and do you think it could effectively meet their needs?

Note: You are not being asked to solve the problem. Focus on how the writer is communicating rather than the issue itself.

Dear Amy,

My mother has always been manipulative, controlling, and pushy, but now that she is in her seventies, these traits have gotten much worse. She believes she has the right to know everything and the right to tell people what to do all the time.

My mother knows no boundaries, fights with everyone and turns people off. Her incessant need to control and manipulate different situations and people has resulted in bad choices with bad consequences.

Unfortunately, her poor choices have affected and continue to affect us, her family, in a negative way. She causes unnecessary stress and drama in our lives.

My [brothers] and I have tried to confront her about issues in the past, but she has never taken responsibility for any of her actions.

My brothers and I are in our forties. Is it too late to address the situation? Now we feel guilty because she is elderly. I have to admit, though, that I cannot take it any longer. How do I suggest that she seek counseling for her unacceptable behavior, when I already know she will play the victim?

Excerpts from Advice Columnist Amy Dickinson in WSJ on Tuesday, Sept 30, 2008

NOTE: Everyone has an assigned number (from 1 to 12) next to their names.



Dissecting Dear Amy Using NVC

NVC Chapter 8: The Power of Empathy

Breakout Room Activity #2:

Working with your partner (breakout room): Identify feelings and need that might be behind the statement that coincides with your assigned number. The aim is to translate the statement into feelings and needs.

Thoughts	Feelings	Needs
1. My mother has always been manipulative, controlling, and pushy...		
2. ...now that she is in her seventies, these traits have gotten much worse.		
3. She believes she has the right to know everything...		
4. ...and the right to tell people what to do all the time.		
5. My mother knows no boundaries, fights with everyone and turns people off.		
6. Her incessant need to control and manipulate different situations and people has resulted in bad choices with bad consequences.		
7. Her poor choices have affected and continue to affect us, her family, in a negative way.		
8. She causes unnecessary stress and drama in our lives.		
9. My [brothers] and I have tried to confront her about issues in the past, but she has never taken responsibility for any of her actions.		
10. Now we feel guilty because she is elderly.		
11. I cannot take it any longer.		
12. How do I suggest that she seek counseling for her unacceptable behavior, when I already know she will play the victim?		



Responding using Classical NVC + Street Giraffe

NVC Chapter 8: The Power of Empathy

Large Group Activity #2: Practice out loud

We will practice hearing someone without judging the person, without trying to take responsibility for the person, and without trying to fix the situation or the person.

Round 1: The facilitator will start by saying the first sentence to person #1. Person #1 will respond with empathy using the feeling and need identified in the table on page 2. Use the phrase: "Are you feeling...because you need/want..." Then ask, "Is that it?"

When receiving empathy, receive the identified feelings and needs silently. And silently bring attention to your body when hearing the question, "Is that it?" Take a deep breath before proceeding.

Next, person #1 will say the second sentence to person #2. Continue this process until you reach #12.

Round 2: Same process, new flavor. This time, try *street giraffe*. Let go of the script and listen for what the person is really longing for. Respond in your own everyday words — the kind you would actually say if your only goal was to connect.

Summary

