



Have To vs. Choose To

NVC Chapter 9 (Part 2): Connecting Compassionately with Ourselves

Directions:

1. Write down one thing you do because you tell yourself you “have to” in the box below.

I have to (Example: *I have to drive the children to school.*)

2. Next, change “I have to...” to “I choose to...”

I choose to (Example: *I ~~have to~~ I choose to drive the children to school.*)

3. On page 2, write down the thoughts that come up when you think about choosing to do this thing.
4. Notice any **sensations** or **feelings** that arise with these thoughts.
5. What **needs** are these feelings and sensations pointing to? Some needs may be met by choosing this action, while others may not be. With this clarity, you may want to reconsider your choice.
6. Try out these phrases below using the needs you identified.

Option 1:

I choose to _____ because I value _____. I wish I could think of a way to meet my need for _____.

Example: I choose to drive the children to school in order to meet needs for nurturance and learning. I'm sad that this choice means getting out of bed earlier than I enjoy, so I will meet my need for rest by going to bed at 10 p.m.

Option 2:

I choose not to _____ in order to meet need(s) for _____.

If this leaves unmet needs around the choice, you can add: I will meet my need(s) for _____ by _____.

Example: I choose not to assign grades in order to meet my need for clarity. I will meet the need for accountability with learning portfolios.

7. Read these phrases out loud and notice how they feel in your body.



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Working with your partner: Identify feelings and need that might be behind the thoughts. The aim is to translate the thoughts into feelings and needs.

Thoughts	Feelings/ Sensations	Needs

So what? – What’s alive in you? What did you learn?

Now what? – What are you going to do with this learning?