

Non-violent Communication

Blame, attack, judgement, Criticism. Language nowadays has become mostly a tool to convey these things. This is what we often do using our language. Every species on the planet has their own unique ways of communication. Well-developed language system is one of the hallmarks of the human species through which we effectively communicate our feelings. But when we take a peep into the way we communicate nowadays, we will be able to spot a lot of violence.

Violent communication, with the four characteristics mentioned earlier – Blame attack, judgement and criticism – arises primarily from violent thoughts. Now, this is something which we should understand properly. The world recognizes violent actions, but it hasn't gone deep enough to understand how violent thoughts can be. Communication should be the language of compassion from the heart. The whole process of non-violent communication is all about coming back to that compassion and self-respect and beginning to understand where my blocks are – mentally and emotionally. And there are many useful practical tools to help us change the direction of

our thoughts and feelings, and to create heart to heart connection with people around us rather than going into fight or flight.

Let's look into some of the tools. One is the pause button. We all have a pause button. Just slow down the thoughts and feelings before even coming into sound and into relationships. The pause button is important.

Another tool can be the anagram SOS. **Stop, Observe** – in a detached compassionate way and **Steer** – the thoughts in another more accurate direction, away from the judgmental violent thoughts.

To arrive at a mutual desire to give from the heart, we focus the light of consciousness on four areas — referred to as the four components of the Non Violent Communications model.

First, we observe what is actually happening in a situation: what are we observing in the communication of the other person that is either enriching or not enriching our life? The trick is to be able to articulate this observation without introducing any judgment or evaluation—to simply say what people are doing that we either like or don't like. Next, we state how we feel when we observe this action: are we hurt, scared, joyful, amused, irritated? And

thirdly, we say what needs of ours are connected to the feelings we have identified. An awareness of these three components is present when we use Non Violent Communication to clearly and honestly express how we are.

Four components of NVC:

1. observations 2. feelings 3. needs 4. requests.

For example, a mother might express the first three components to her teenage son by saying, “Dear, when I see two balls of soiled socks under the coffee table and another three next to the TV (observation), I feel irritated (feelings) because I have a need for more order in the rooms that we share in common (my need).”

She would follow immediately with the fourth component—a very specific request: “Would you be willing to put your socks in your room or in the washing machine?” This fourth component addresses what we are wanting from the other person that would enrich our lives or make life more wonderful for us.

Thus, Non-violent Communication is to express these four pieces of information very clearly, whether verbally or by other means. The other part of this communication consists of receiving the same four pieces of information from others. We connect with them by first sensing what they are observing, feeling, and needing; then we discover

what would enrich their lives by receiving the fourth piece—their request.

As we keep our attention focused on the areas mentioned, and help others do likewise, we establish a flow of communication, back and forth, until compassion manifests naturally: what I am observing, feeling, and needing; what I am requesting from you to enrich my life; what you are observing, feeling, and needing; what you are requesting from me to enrich your life...

There are certain unmet needs at the root of violent thoughts and communication and it is important to address them. It can also be called

universal human values because everyone feels the need of these values. The most common unmet need I observe in human beings are – 1. A need to be listened to, 2. A need to be understood. 3. A need to be accepted, 4. A need to feel safe, and 5. A need to be respected. When these needs are met, I feel calm and contented and we feel open to communicate as we are. But if it is unmet, I will feel upset, uncomfortable, hurt and frustrated. When we feel upset, we should observe - which need is unmet? If I feel the need to be respected, rather than expecting that from outside, let me remind myself in my spiritual early morning practice – “I am valuable, I am lovable, I am

peaceful” Then my feelings begin to change and I will start responding positively rather than reacting to the other person.

When we start connecting to others from a more respectful place, we divinize our own life and we divinize the life of others too.

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