

Nonviolent Communication - List of Feelings

NAMING OUR FEELINGS

One of the four steps of learning NVC is to notice and compassionately connect to our emotions and feelings. This handout is created to help you match a word with a feeling you are experiencing.

USING THIS HANDOUT

There are two lists, the first one lists feelings we often associate with celebration, pleasure and contentment. The second one is for feelings we usually associate with mourning, displeasure and unhappiness. They are not an exhaustive list - there are many words for feelings in the English language.

FEELINGS ARE NOT STATIC STATES

Feelings emerge when we - often unconsciously - predict that our needs and wants are being valued or not valued. When we begin to meet and greet our feelings by bringing compassionate awareness to them, they can begin to move through us again (think: *e-motions*) rather than remaining stagnant. Depending on our life experiences, we may never have been taught how to name them or maybe we suppressed them to keep ourselves safe. Starting to notice and feel them again takes skill, practice, compassion and willingness. NVC teaches that it is also helpful - especially when communicating - to link our feelings with our deepest longings and needs.

BEGINNING TO NOTICE AND NAME YOUR FEELINGS

Feelings can manifest in the form of bodily sensations (tight throat or chest, butterflies in the tummy, clenched hands, tight jaw, fullness in heart area etc) as well as thoughts that repeat or won't settle. Oftentimes, the first thing we notice is our thoughts - so writing our thoughts down can help us wonder about what we might be feeling and needing. For example, a thought like "He/she is being passive-aggressive" could help you discover that you are feeling anxious. This in turn might help you see that you are longing for connection or a sense of safety.

Use the lists on page two and three to help identify a word that resonates with your current experience - If you find this difficult, you could start by finding a metaphor to describe how you feel then check the list - is there a feeling word that goes with that metaphor? Check with your body: does that word resonate?

Although we can shy away from feelings such as anger, frustration and fear, with the right accompaniment (either our own kind, inner witness or someone else's), these feelings can often soften and sweeten when we allow them to flow through us. Also some forms of pure sadness, grief and mourning can feel such a relief to experience. Indeed, allowing the flow of our emotions can be part of our healing process - especially when witnessed by someone willing to sit alongside us with unconditional acceptance and positive regard.

Feelings list suggestions for celebrating

- **AFFECTIONATE**
compassionate, friendly, loving, open hearted, sympathetic, tender, warm
- **GRATEFUL**
appreciative, moved, thankful, touched
- **ENGAGED**
absorbed, alert, curious, engrossed, enchanted, entranced, fascinated, interested, intrigued, involved, spellbound, stimulated
- **HOPEFUL**
expectant, encouraged, optimistic
- **EXCITED**
amazed, animated, aroused, astonished, eager, energetic, enthusiastic, giddy, invigorated, lively, passionate, surprised, vibrant
- **INSPIRED**
amazed, awed, wonder
- **CONFIDENT**
empowered, open, proud, safe, secure
- **REFRESHED**
enlivened, rejuvenated, relieved, renewed, rested, restored, revived
- **JOYFUL**
amused, delighted, glad, happy, jubilant, pleased
- **EXHILARATED**
blissful, ecstatic, elated, enthralled, exuberant, radiant, thrilled
- **PEACEFUL**
calm, clear headed, comfortable, centred, content, fulfilled, mellow, quiet, relaxed, relieved, satisfied, serene, still, tranquil, trusting

Feelings list suggestions for when our needs feel unmet

- **AFRAID**
apprehensive, dread, foreboding, frightened, panicked, petrified, scared, suspicious, terrified, wary, worried
- **ANGRY**
aggravated, annoyed, dismayed, disgruntled, displeased, exasperated, frustrated, impatient, indignant, irritated, resentful
- **RAGEFUL**
enraged, furious, incensed, irate, livid, outraged
- **AVERSION**
animosity, appalled, contempt, disgusted, dislike, hate, horrified, repulsed
- **CONFUSED**
ambivalent, baffled, bewildered, dazed, hesitant, lost, mystified, perplexed, puzzled, torn
- **DISCONNECTED**
alienated, aloof, apathetic, bored, cold, detached, distant, distracted, indifferent, numb, removed, uninterested, withdrawn
- **DISQUIET**
agitated, alarmed, discombobulated, disconcerted, disturbed, perturbed, rattled, restless, shocked, startled, surprised, troubled, turbulent, turmoil, uncomfortable, uneasy, unnerved, unsettled, upset
- **EMBARRASSED**
ashamed, chagrined, flustered, guilty, mortified, self-conscious
- **FATIGUE**
burnt out, depleted, exhausted, lethargic, listless, sleepy, tired, weary, worn out
- **GRIEF**
bereaved, heartbroken
- **PAIN**
agony, anguished, devastated, hurt, lonely, miserable, regretful, remorseful
- **SAD**
depressed, dejected, despair, despondent, disappointment, discouraged, forlorn, disheartened, gloomy, heavy-hearted, hopeless, melancholic, unhappy, wretched
- **TENSE**
anxious, cranky, distressed, distraught, edgy, fidgety, frazzled, irritable, jittery, nervous, overwhelmed, restless, stressed out
- **VULNERABLE**
fragile, guarded, helpless, insecure, reserved, sensitive, shaky
- **YEARNING**
envious, jealous, longing, nostalgic, pining, wistful