

## Nonviolent Communication - Self-Empathy Process

Use this sheet to transform your judgments into your feelings and needs.

**Observations** Write here the exact words or actions that triggered you See note 1

*What I saw/heard... Eg. She said "you're stupid"*

**Thoughts** Write down your thoughts about what happened. Include your judgments, criticisms, blame etc. about the other person and/or yourself See note 2

*When I connect to the observation, I'm telling myself... " Eg "She's the stupid one", "She is being petty, "I'm rubbish at learning" etc"*

**Feelings** Write down how you feel now when you remember what happened and when you connect to what you are telling yourself about the event See note 3

*I feel... Eg annoyed, ashamed, outraged, upset..."*

**Needs** Take some time to think about what universal needs were unmet for you and write them here See note 4

*I'm needing... Eg understanding, empathy, acceptance*

**Requests** Now that you are connected to your needs, what strategies, requests or next steps might you choose to make? Use this space to generate ideas that you think could help meet needs.

*Now I am connected to my needs, I choose to... Eg Let my friend know that that word 'stupid' landed painfully in me and ask her if she would be willing to tell me what was going on for her when she used it.*

## Notes

### 1 Observations

It is tempting to want to tell the whole story (including any backstory). For this exercise you are simply looking for the exact words or actions that led you from feeling calm to triggered in some way (the best you remember them). Eg 'She said 'No' and folded her arms', 'After 24 hours he hadn't replied to the three texts I had sent'.

### 2 Thoughts

Welcome and write down all the thoughts that come to your mind in relation to this trigger. These thoughts will help you connect to your feelings and needs in the next steps. They might be about the other person eg "They were so rude", "He is so lazy", "She doesn't give a damn about me", and/or they could be about yourself "I shouldn't have said that, it sounded so lame", "I'm pathetic", "I'm no good at learning" etc. If you notice shame as thoughts arise, know that you don't need to share these thoughts with anyone unless you choose to (and add 'shame' to the feelings section in the next step).

### 3 Feelings

As you remember the event and remind yourself about what happened, it is common for feelings to arise inside yourself. These are your feelings *now* (they may be different to the feelings at the time). Write down anything you feel now - be aware of what NVC calls "faux feelings"...find things that relate to you only - rather than ones that point a finger to the other eg 'I feel angry' (and I have a need for respect) points to the sensations inside of yourself, whereas 'I feel disrespected' points to the idea that the other person has *done* something to you.

### 4 Needs

Take some time to be with your unmet needs – let yourself mourn that they weren't present for you in the way you wanted at that time. See if you can notice where the constriction of the unmet needs lies in your body (throat, chest, stomach, other?). Allow yourself to see the *beauty* of those needs... to contemplate that those needs connect us all; they are needs that all humans share. See if you can experience the needs as living qualities in your body (to do this, close your eyes and imagine a time when those needs were met, experience how that feels in your body).

### 5 Requests

This could be a specific strategy you take to meet your own needs (a request to self) and/or a specific request to another/others. To be most effective, make your requests

- Specific. time-bound, doable
- What you do want (rather than what you don't want)
- Transparently connected to your feelings/needs
- With a willingness to hear a 'no'.