

NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

What is Nonviolent Communication?

- An approach to nonviolent social transformation which emphasizes communicative techniques for the purpose of achieving mutual understanding through relationship-building.
- A method attributed to Dr. Marshall Rosenberg which evolved from his effort to “find a way of rapidly disseminating... peacemaking skills”.

Useful Conceptual Frames

- Constructive Intent – Michael Nagler
- Human Needs Theory
- Three Faces of Power – Kenneth Boulding
- Conflict Triangle – Johan Galtung

Constructive Intent

“If you introduce positive energy into a situation, it gets better. If you introduce negative energy, it gets worse... the Buddha said that *‘there is no fire like desire, there is no rage like anger, there is no relationship better than trust’*... basically, we’re studying the nature of positive energy, how to develop it, and how to implement it in the social field. You might almost take that as my definition of nonviolence for right now.”

Michael Nagler, “Overview: Strategic and Principled NV; What to Look For I” (course lecture, PACS 164A Introduction to Nonviolence, University of California at Berkeley and Metta Center for Nonviolence Education, Berkeley, CA, August 29, 2006)
http://webcast.berkeley.edu/course_details.php?seriesid=1906978360, accessed 03/15/09

Human Needs Theory

- “The basic problem... lies not in conflicting positions, but in the conflict between each side’s needs, desires, concerns, and fears.”

Roger Fisher and William Ury
Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In

Three Faces of Power

by Kenneth Boulding

- **Threat Power** – “Do something I want or I’ll do something you don’t want”
- **Exchange Power** – “Give me something I want and I’ll give you something you want”
- **Integrative Power** – “I’m going to do what I believe is right, something authentic, and we will end up closer”

The Search for a Nonviolent Future, Michael Nagler

Conflict Triangle

Johan Galtung

- **Direct Violence** – Overt physical violence consciously perpetrated by a sending actor.
- **Structural Violence** – Indirect violence resulting from social structures.
- **Cultural Violence** – symbolic representations found in religion, ideology, language, art, science, law, media, education whose function is “to legitimize direct and structural violence”.

Johan Galtung

Peace By Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization

Summary of Conceptual Frames

- **Constructive Intent** – Nonviolent Communicator seeks to introduce positive energy into a dysfunctional and dehumanizing relationship dynamic.
- **Human Needs Theory** – Nonviolent Communicator seeks to communicate on a personal level in terms of “needs, desires, concerns and fears” rather than “positions”.
- **Three Faces of Power** – Nonviolent Communicator is exercising a form of Integrative Power, rather than Threat or Exchange Power.
- **Conflict Triangle** – Nonviolent Communicator is more likely to intersect the discourse on the level of cultural violence, rather than in direct action confronting structural and overt violence.

Nonviolent Communication (NVC)

- NVC, a.k.a. “*Compassionate Communication*” is a process developed by Marshall B. Rosenberg, Ph.D.
- Rosenberg describes NVC as “*a way of communicating that leads us to give from the heart*”.

<http://www.cnvc.org/en/learn-online/nvc-chapter-1/nonviolent-communication-language-compassion>

Two Purposes of Nonviolent Communication (NVC)

- **Create human connections that empower compassionate giving and receiving.**
- **Create governmental and corporate structures that support compassionate giving and receiving.**

<http://www.cnvc.org/en/online-learning/nvc-concepts/nonviolent-communication>

Four Components of Nonviolent Communication (NVC) Process

- The concrete actions we are **observing** that are affecting our well-being.
- How we **feel** in relation to what we are observing.
- The **needs**, values, desires, etc. that are creating our feelings.
- The concrete actions we **request** in order to enrich our lives.

<http://www.cnvc.org/en/learn-online/nvc-chapter-1/nonviolent-communication-language-compassion>

Skills associated with the process of Nonviolent Communication (NVC)

- Differentiating **observation** from evaluation, being able to carefully observe what is happening free of evaluation, and to specify behaviors and conditions that are affecting us;

<http://www.cnvc.org/en/online-learning/nvc-concepts/nonviolent-communication>

Skills associated with the process of Nonviolent Communication (NVC)

- Differentiating *feeling* from thinking, being able to identify and express internal feeling states in a way that does not imply judgment, criticism, or blame/punishment;

<http://www.cnvc.org/en/online-learning/nvc-concepts/nonviolent-communication>

Skills associated with the process of Nonviolent Communication (NVC)

- Connecting with the universal human *needs/values* (e.g. sustenance, trust, understanding) in us that are being met or not met in relation to what is happening and how we are feeling;

<http://www.cnvc.org/en/online-learning/nvc-concepts/nonviolent-communication>

Skills associated with the process of Nonviolent Communication (NVC)

- *Requesting* what we would like in a way that clearly and specifically states what we do want (rather than what we don't want), and that is truly a request and not a demand (i.e. attempting to motivate, however subtly, out of fear, guilt, shame, obligation, etc. rather than out of willingness and compassionate giving).

<http://www.cnvc.org/en/online-learning/nvc-concepts/nonviolent-communication>

Two Primary Methods of Nonviolent Communication (NVC) Process

- *Expressing honesty* through the four components.
- *Receiving empathically* through the four components.

<http://www.cnvc.org/en/learn-online/nvc-chapter-1/nonviolent-communication-language-compassion>

Feelings & Needs Inventories

- Review and discuss the Feelings & Needs Inventories with training participants:
 - Visit the CNVC Feelings List here: <http://cnvc.org/en/learn-online/feelings-list/feelings-inventory>
 - Visit the CNVC Needs List here: <http://cnvc.org/en/learn-online/needs-list/needs-inventory>

<http://www.cnvc.org/en/what-nvc/10-steps-peace/10-things-we-can-do-contribute-internal-interpersonal-and-organizational-peace>

10 Things We Can Do to Contribute to Internal, Interpersonal, and Organizational Peace

- Spend some time each day quietly reflecting on how we would like to relate to ourselves and others.
- Remember that all human beings have the same needs.
- Check our intention to see if we are as interested in others getting their needs met as our own.
- When asking someone to do something, check first to see if we are making a request or a demand.

<http://www.cnvc.org/en/what-nvc/10-steps-peace/10-things-we-can-do-contribute-internal-interpersonal-and-organizational-peace>

10 Things We Can Do to Contribute to Internal, Interpersonal, and Organizational Peace

- Instead of saying what we DON'T want someone to do, say what we DO want the person to do.
- Instead of saying what we want someone to BE, say what action we'd like the person to take that we hope will help the person be that way.
- Before agreeing or disagreeing with anyone's opinions, try to tune in to what the person is feeling and needing.

<http://www.cnvc.org/en/what-nvc/10-steps-peace/10-things-we-can-do-contribute-internal-interpersonal-and-organizational-peace>

10 Things We Can Do to Contribute to Internal, Interpersonal, and Organizational Peace

- Instead of saying "No," say what need of ours prevents us from saying "Yes."
- If we are feeling upset, think about what need of ours is not being met, and what we could do to meet it, instead of thinking about what's wrong with others or ourselves.
- Instead of praising someone who did something we like, express our gratitude by telling the person what need of ours that action met.

<http://www.cnvc.org/en/what-nvc/10-steps-peace/10-things-we-can-do-contribute-internal-interpersonal-and-organizational-peace>

NVC Resources:

- *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life* by Marshall B. Rosenberg, Ph.D.
- *Nonviolent Communication Companion Workbook* by Lucy Leu.
- According to the [Center for Nonviolent Communication](http://www.cnvc.org/) website (<http://www.cnvc.org/>), "All of the material on our website is available for public use. It can be downloaded reprinted and distributed freely." At their request, the following contact information is included here: The Center for Nonviolent Communication, www.cnvc.org, 5600 San Francisco Rd. NE Suite A, Albuquerque, NM 87109, Tel: +1.505.244.4041

Review & Discussion

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