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If you appreciate this booklet, kindly go express it by visiting her website: www.RecipeForPeace.com.

As always, I close with gratitude.



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The Center for Nonviolent Communication

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COMPASSIONATE COMMUNICATION



AND EMPATHY'S AWAKENING

By
John Cunningham

Revised in Spring 2008



Dedicated to Marshall Rosenberg

...in the future no human being is to find peace in the enjoyment of happiness if others beside him are unhappy...Every human being shall see in each and all of his fellow-men a hidden divinity... that every human being is made in the likeness of the Godhead. When that time comes...every meeting between one man and another will of itself be in the nature of a religious rite, a sacrament...

Rudolf Steiner, [The Work of the Angel in Man's Astral Body](#)

There is more to seeing than meets the eye.

Norwood Russell Hanson, [Patterns of Discovery](#)



FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

Through training we can become aware of the subtle clues which are hidden in the form of a sense object and which reveal the way in which it came into being. The form then begins to reveal its motion of becoming, its gesture. Our vision shifts out of space and into time, the stage of the ongoing work. With a time vision we can experience all sense objects as verbs instead of as nouns. Each object becomes itself in time.

Dennis Klocek, [Seeking Spirit Vision](#)

When the will becomes receptive, then consciousness becomes participative. It is when the will is assertive that the scientist is separated from the phenomenon, and consciousness 'becomes onlooker consciousness.' Participative consciousness means *conscious* participation in the phenomenon.

Henri Bortoft, [The Wholeness of Nature](#)

It is that man can in his soul dive down into sense-perceptible reality and experience thereby the spiritual aspect of sense-perceptible phenomena in such a way that he grows together with this spirit creatively living and weaving everywhere in nature. That is the greatness of Goethe's way of looking at the world—that it is directed towards this diving down into reality, and has the conviction that, insofar as one dives down into this reality, one arrives at its spiritual aspect and thus discovers the spirit inherent within it...

Rudolf Steiner (lecture on 11.10.1919)

Now the time has come to enliven and spiritualize the intellect which is already hardening again. The time has come to transform the formal power of thought through love into its intuitive form and to intensify the power of will, active in thinking, into clairvoyant thinking (Imagination). 'Upon this fact, that the ideas of the human being do not remain only thoughts but become a seeing within thinking, immeasurably depends.'

Sigismund von Gleich, [The Sources of Inspiration of Anthroposophy](#)

He rose to his feet again and asked, "Uncle, what is it that ails thee?"

Wolfram von Eschenbach, [Parzival](#)

ANTHROPOSOPHICAL RESOURCES

Dieter Brüll, [The Mysteries of Social Encounters](#)

Henri Bortoft, [The Wholeness of Nature](#)

Baruch Urieli & Hans Müller-Wiedemann, [Learning to Experience the Etheric World](#)

Nigel Hoffman, [Goethe's Science of Living Form](#)

Harry Salman, [The Social World as Mystery Center](#)

Henning Köhler, [Difficult Children: There is No Such Thing](#)

Baruch Urieli, [Male and Female: Developing Human Empathy](#)

Margreet Van Den Brink, [More Precious Than Light](#)

Michael Luxford, [Loving the Stranger](#)

Georg Kühlewind, [Star Children](#)

THE ARCHETYPAL SOCIAL PHENOMENON

The archetypal social phenomenon is our social organ of cognition.

Dieter Brüll, *The Mysteries of Social Encounters*



The social aspect of the spiritual life demands that I open myself to the other person, invite him to express himself in me. In this way I am able to experience his questions of inner development as my own. Dieter Brüll, *The Mysteries of Social Encounters*

When man faces man the one attempts to put the other to sleep and the other continuously wants to maintain his uprightness. But this is, to speak in the Goethean sense, the archetypal phenomenon of social science... [This sleeping-into] we may call the social principle, the social impulse of the new era: we have to live over into the other; we have to dissolve with our soul into the other.

Rudolf Steiner (11.10.1919)

Now it is a question of whether I can carry over into waking up what the other entrusted to me. To the degree to which I can hold this in my consciousness, I come to insights that I can bring into conversation by taking the word and putting the other to sleep. It involves practicing two skills: freeing a space for the other so that he or she can speak undisturbed, and the ability to hold in awakening what the other said... The archetypal phenomenon of social life only leads to this meeting when we learn to manage it in consciousness, that is, when we can consciously follow the movement of the pendulum between falling asleep and awakening and find the way to the heart of the other. We must develop abilities of soul like having a strong interest, listening, presence of mind, objectivity, and the skill to understand the other from the inside.

Harry Salman, *The Social World as Mystery Center*

In the act of accepting that the other person puts us to sleep, freedom and love are both involved. Surrendering our consciousness is a sacrificial deed of love: it can only be offered up in freedom... "Compassion and love enable us to come free of ourselves and to live within the other being."

Dieter Brüll, *ibid.*

In our time the asocial drive presents itself automatically. In contrast, the social drive—to provide the opportunity for the other person to be resurrected in our soul—is something that 'needs to be consciously nurtured.'

Dieter Brüll, *ibid.*

A socially sensitive person will not leave to his own judgment the permission to put another to sleep with his thoughts, feelings and impulses. Such a person will wait to be invited in by the other... And when the invitation is offered, he will make modest use of it. He will not strive to extend the 'sleep' of the other, but rather allow him to return to the unsocial, the 'wakeful state' in a timely manner... He accepts a great responsibility, namely to answer not based on his own opinion but on his fellow human's situation... His own view ('myself in your place') is appropriate only when his fellow human asks him to share the problem from his point of view, in other words, when he invites him to put him, in turn, to sleep.

Dieter Brüll, *ibid.*

The ego-sense is the Archetypal Social Phenomenon in us.

Karl König, *Man as a Social Being and the Mission of Conscience*

INTRODUCING COMPASSIONATE COMMUNICATION

This quality of inner interest, which demands a kind of 'turning' toward another, is to be found in its most archetypal form in Parzival's words, 'Uncle, what is it that ails thee?' Whenever one human being is willing to take an active interest in the existence and destiny of another, to turn toward him, a glimmer of Parzival's question breaks through and enables the person asking the question to extend part of his own being beyond its usual boundaries.

Baruch Urieli, *Learning to Experience the Etheric World*

☞ Where I'm Coming From

The purpose of this booklet is to provide you with support in your understanding and practice of Compassionate Communication. It includes an overview of Marshall Rosenberg's Nonviolent Communication, a sketch of the participatory and onlooker modes of consciousness, lists of feelings and needs, and sample dialogues.

Waldorf education has been a central part of my life for over thirty years as a parent, class teacher, and student of Rudolf Steiner. I have devoted myself to seeing this education thrive for our children and our future. Coming out of this anthroposophical background, I have included some quotes and resources that have given me quickening insights into the essential nature of Marshall Rosenberg's work. I am particularly interested in the similarities I see between the activity of empathy and Goethe's scientific way of seeing.

☞ Changing How We See

If other people can make me angry, I am not master of myself—or better stated, I have not yet found my "inner ruler". In other words, I must develop the inner faculty of allowing impressions of the outer world to reach me only in ways that I have myself chosen. Only if I do this, can I become a student of higher knowledge.

Rudolf Steiner, *How to Know Higher Worlds*

To develop a practice of Compassionate Communication is to empower our *inner ruler* and to awaken this *inner faculty*. Through its awakening, we discover how to choose the meaning we see, particularly in our relationship to ourselves and others. Through that choice, we find we learn to increasingly suffuse our daily lives with greater understanding, equanimity and compassion.

🌀 New Meaning

What do you see in the graphic below? A chaotic pattern of black and white blotches? That's usually the first impression. At some moment, however, we



suddenly see something else. We see a giraffe. The sensory information hasn't changed but we *see* it differently. We *see meaning*, meaning that was at first hidden. This meaning reveals the giraffe that was at first hidden. This revelation arises by way of an organizing idea—the concept *giraffe*—an idea we bring to our perception.

The same idea holds true in our speaking and listening. Compassionate Communication gives us the new organizing ideas that enable us to see and *read* new meaning in our encounters with others and in the dialogues we have with ourselves. It gives us greater capacity to foster understanding, connection and compassion. That is its intention, goal and possibility.

🌀 The Phenomenology of Communication

At the genesis of Compassionate Communication is an intention—the intention to connect such that everyone's voice matters, and what is alive for each is sacred. We focus on the basic phenomena present in our everyday communication. If we're clear and present, we discover four aspects, whether spoken or not, that are present: *observations, feelings, needs and requests*. *Something* happens that matters in our world, a feeling is stirred, we're aware that a need is calling, and we make a request. We *language* our becoming. We speak.

GOING FORWARD

What I want in my life is compassion, a flow between myself and others based on a mutual giving from the heart.

Marshall Rosenberg, Nonviolent Communication

We use the four phenomena of communication—*observations, feelings, needs and requests*—in order to be understood, in order to understand others as they want to be understood, and to create the quality of connection that enables everyone to get their needs met through natural giving.

At first, the step-wise structure of Compassionate Communication might seem a bit awkward. I would like to suggest a couple of ways to think of the model in the beginning. If it seems formulaic, think of it as a scaffolding that you'll use to build the temple; once the structure is secure, you can take it down, and move inside. We speak of it as the transition from 'classic giraffe' to 'street giraffe'. Each of us who seeks to learn this language longs for the day when we can begin to speak it with some fluency. When it sounds stiff and clunky, you can remind yourself you're learning a new language which at first, of course, you'll speak with a very thick accent. Think of it as empowering you to first visit and then reside in this new, compassionate land. I assure you that as you master these elements, you will naturally foster greater compassion in your life.

You saw in the parent-teacher examples given earlier that there are two reciprocal activities involved in a conversation—expressing what lives in us and seeking to read what lives in the other. At any moment we can choose to listen for feelings and needs. Every conversation becomes a weaving back and forth. We move from a self-connected inner emptiness to giving our presence unto the other, seeking to connect our becoming to their becoming, and participating together in the unfolding moment. As we weave this dance of presence, those core needs we have for understanding, connection and meaning come to be met with greater simplicity and ease. And for that, we celebrate. I hope this booklet has opened a door as you go forward in your life.

To keep that door open and develop a fluency in Compassionate Communication, I recommend taking a moment, three or four times a day, to practice self-empathy. I encourage you to attend workshops with a variety of trainers, find a local practice group, watch Marshall Rosenberg's videos, or study on your own. If you want to create your own practice group, many find Lucy Leu's book, Nonviolent Communication Companion Workbook, a useful resource.

May empathy awaken in our hearts—not I, but the other in me.

A CHOICE BEFORE US

ONLOOKER



INTENT TO CORRECT—*Goal is to analyze situations, find what's wrong and correct it.*

LIFE-ALIENATING—*Tends to alienate us from what is alive in the moment in ourselves, in others and in the world.*

HEAD—*Thinking, speaking and listening from the head. Making judgments.*

DEFY OR COMPLY—*Reacting to external pressure. Conditioned to authority.*

ALREADY BECOME—*What's already become is intellectualized into discreet 'Its' and bits. We're spectators of life.*

EXTRINSIC MOTIVES—*Conditioned to act for reward and approval, or to avoid punishment.*

POWER OVER OTHERS—*Creating relationships where one exerts power over another through fear, guilt or*

MORALISTIC JUDGMENTS—*What's good/bad, right/wrong.*

"JACKAL"—*Packs are organized based on the "top dog" enforcing a dominator/dominated hierarchical social structure; us/them gang or faction mentality.*

A change in the way of seeing means a change in what is seen.

Henri Bortoft, [The Wholeness of Nature](#)

PARTICIPATORY



INTENT TO CONNECT—*Goal is to create mutual understanding, enabling all needs to be met.*

LIFE-SERVING—*Tends to reconnect us to what is alive in the moment in ourselves, in others and in the world.*

HEART—*Thinking, speaking and listening from the heart. Sustaining connection.*

CHOICE—*Self-initiated activity in line with my own feelings, needs and values.*

BECOMING—*Life is a process of becoming. We participate in the coming-into-being of the life.*

INTRINSIC MOTIVES—*Creating our own meaning and purpose while honoring others' choices.*

POWER WITH OTHERS—*Creating relationships where everyone's needs matter and are considered.*

VALUE JUDGMENTS—*Based upon values and needs.*

"GIRAFFE"—*Has the largest heart of any land animal; its long neck suggests courage, vulnerability and a broad view; and its saliva digests thorns into life!*

☞ The Onlooker Matrix

Often, however, we're neither present nor clear about these four aspects. It's as if we're embedded in a matrix of language that mixes and muddles these basic phenomena and we end up languaging what's happening in ways that separate us. We're 'born into' a matrix of language—our cultural default setting—where evaluations mix with observations, thoughts with feelings, strategies with needs, and demands replace requests. We end up with expressions that focus on right/wrong, good/bad, *spiritually tactful* appropriate/inappropriate and the love affair with being right, defectivism and pathologizing. We excel at diagnosing what's amiss, analyzing, labeling, blaming and criticizing. In the onlooker matrix we're often left with crippled understandings, sabotaged connections and the fractious friction of all against all.

☞ A Participatory Vocabulary

In being human, each of us is gifted with universal human needs. An awareness of these needs grounds us in our common human experience and offers us a vocabulary to unlock a hitherto hidden dimension of human experience. It is a vocabulary that reveals and celebrates that each of us is simply in the process of becoming, and doing the best we can.

Individuality is always in the process of coming to be. The closer we can get to this sense of individuality, the more possible it becomes to also experience the world as always in the process of coming to be... The challenge of encountering the world through individuality is to meet the world through what we are coming to be, not through what we already know. This challenge is particularly acute in the domain of relationships.

Robert Sardello, [Love and the Soul](#)

From our first breath to our last, these human needs are rising: the need for meaning, understanding, connection; for safety, autonomy, integrity; the need to matter, to be seen, to be heard, as well as the profound need we have to serve life, to enrich life and to contribute to others; and, of course, the need to play. These needs come to presence in, and form a vocabulary for, our becoming. They are alive within us at all times and stir us to action. As we gain literacy in reading these needs, we see with new eyes.

Our feelings are rooted in our needs and let us know how our becoming is going. They ground us in the present and, with practice, can become cognitive, a way of self-knowing. Together with needs, they form an archetype of human experience. As we practice Compassionate Communication, we discover that when seen in terms of our feelings and needs, we feel understood and connected. In that, empathy awakens.

☞ Empathy's Awakening

Baruch Urieli defines empathy as “interest in and compassion for our fellow human being; it enables us to extend our inner being into that of the other person and directly experience something of his essential nature.” Surprisingly, the word *empathy* has only recently entered our language. Originally coined in 1912 as a translation for the German word *Einfühlung*—“to feel into”— Carl Rogers introduced the expression into the wider culture in the 1950s when he used *empathy* to describe a capacity he saw emerging in the younger generation.

If we can track the evolution of consciousness through the emergence of new words in a language—as Owen Barfield suggests in History in English Words—the arrival of the word *empathy* in our everyday language marked the arrival of a new reality in our midst. This new reality—empathy—is now opening up within our human community a new threshold in how we can meet, interact and inter-recognize each other. As a result, we can take this nascent capacity in hand and develop it into a social craft, becoming craftsmen of the heart. This is the threshold before us.

Compassion is the radicalism of our age.

Dalai Lama

☞ The Pioneer

Marshall Rosenberg's life work, laid out for us in his basic book, Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life, has pioneered the means to language this threshold. He uncovered the secret that enables us to accelerate the development of empathy. He did this by realizing that, at the heart of every packet of communication, there lies a universal human need. He then modeled for us how, by gaining fluency in the vocabulary of needs, we can change our way of seeing and co-create a participatory reality in becoming. We can see human becoming in its arising, and meet on that basis.

In empathy lies the seed for a new imagination of how we can meet in our shared humanity. Rumi spoke of the “land beyond right and wrong”. Compassionate Communication offers us the languaging to meet and live in that land as we forge empathy, the art of leaping beyond oneself.

...man is beginning in our time to cross the threshold of the spiritual world in the natural course of his development. This means that our present-day consciousness, which is limited in its perception to the physical world alone, is gradually supplemented by a capacity to perceive the world of living process.

Baruch Urieli, Learning to Experience the Etheric World



LISTENING WITH EMPATHY

The Nonviolent Communication Model

When you observe (see, hear, etc.)...?

OBSERVATIONS

Here we're listening for what may be triggering the other's reactions. What are they noticing?

Are you feeling ...?

FEELINGS

Here we're sensing what they might be feeling and checking to see if we understand. We participate in their present moment.

Because you're needing/you value...?

NEEDS

Here we're seeking to identify the needs that lie at the root of their feelings. What needs matter in the moment?

I'm wondering if...?

REQUESTS

Here we're guessing what they might be requesting. What might meet their needs?

AN EXAMPLE OF A TEACHER AT CHOICE

TEACHER SAYS TO PARENT: *"It seems like Jason is spending way too much time watching screens and he can't focus at all in class."*

TEACHER REPHRASES:

- *When I see* how Jason struggles to stay focused on his school work and he tells me he spends a lot of time at home watching TV or on the computer, and I reflect on what I've read about sensory-integration and child development. (observations)
- *I feel* concerned and helpless, (feelings)
- *Because I need* support for my efforts to protect this process of human development that happens in childhood. (need for support)
- *Would you be willing* to tell me what you're hearing me say? (a request)

PARENT BLAMES HERSELF: *"I'll never be a good enough Waldorf parent. I just can't do it all."*

TEACHER EMPATHIZES:

- *When I share* my concerns about Jason and his difficulty staying focused in class and how it might be related to his screen time, (observations)
- *Are you feeling* overwhelmed and discouraged? (feelings)
- *Because you're needing* some acknowledgment for your efforts, and some understanding for how difficult it might be to make some of these changes at home? (needs for acknowledgment and understanding)
- *I'm wondering if* you'd like to schedule some time for us to talk about how we might work together to support Jason? (request)



EXPRESSING WITH COMPASSION

The Nonviolent Communication Model

When I observe (see, hear, etc.) ...

OBSERVATIONS

What am I observing? Is it muddled with evaluation? Is there spin? Can I frame it so I can create common ground?

I'm feeling ...

FEELINGS

What am I feeling? Is it a feeling or a thought? Is it a faux feeling? Am I sharing myself with the other?

Because I'm needing/I value...

NEEDS

What am I needing? What needs are calling for attention? Am I confusing it with a strategy?

Would you be willing...?

REQUESTS

Am I asking for what I want? Do I want understanding, or do I have a specific, presently doable request? Am I open to either yes or no?

AN EXAMPLE OF A PARENT AT CHOICE

PARENT SAYS TO TEACHER: *"The class is out of control and my daughter's miserable."*

PARENT REPHRASES:

- *When I see how unhappy my daughter is when she comes home and tells me about some things that happen to her at school, (observations)*
- *I'm feeling heartbroken and alarmed, (feelings),*
- *Because I need clarity about what's going on for my daughter. I need to know that she is safe and supported at school. (needs for clarity and doing what's best for one's children)*
- *Would you be willing to share with me what you see happening and the steps you're taking to foster harmony among the children? (request)*

TEACHER REPLIES IN FRUSTRATION: *"Parents expect teachers to work miracles. Parents are so busy they're barely involved."*

PARENT EMPATHIZES:

- *When I bring my concerns about Emily's unhappiness in school and some of the behavior she has described (observations),*
- *Are you feeling overwhelmed and frustrated? (feelings)*
- *And needing some understanding around the challenges you face as well as support for your efforts? (needs for understanding and support)*
- *I'm wondering if I've understood you the way you'd like and whether there's something more you'd like to share? (request)*

BEGINNING A PRACTICE IN EMPATHY

We can choose how we listen to, and make sense of what comes to us. If we reflect a bit, we see that our choices have quite different results. For most of us, we respond out of habit, and as onlookers to the other. Through Compassionate Communication, we have a choice to participate with them.

For example, suppose someone says to us, "Do you have any idea how thoughtless you've been?" What are our choices?

When I hear this comment, I can choose to respond by...



Taking it personally. I internalize the judgment, blame myself for being thoughtless, tell myself I should be more thoughtful and begin a free fall toward shame, guilt and depression. I choose, "I'm at fault and to blame."

Concluding I'm under attack. I interpret what's been said as a critical judgment and react defensively. "That's not true. What about what you did!" I choose that the other person must be wrong and therefore to blame.

Or I have another option. I can choose to respond by...



Sensing my own feelings and needs. I can take a breath and connect to whatever might be stimulated in me when I hear what the other person is saying to me. I ask myself, "What am I feeling: frustrated, confused, scared? What am I needing: consideration, understanding, respect?" I choose to empathize with myself. This is self-empathy.

Sensing the feelings and needs of the other. I seek to sense what the person is feeling—frustrated? What the person is needing—consideration? I might guess to see if I understand them as they would like. If my guess *lands*, the person will feel understood. If not, they will say it again, or give me more information. It's not about me guessing correctly. I can try again. I am choosing to empathize. This is empathy.

As we bring our intention into how we choose to participate in life's arising, we cultivate the "inner faculty of allowing the impressions of the outer world to reach [us] only in ways [we] have chosen" (Steiner). We gain self-mastery.

...[participatory consciousness] can be entered into by plunging into looking, which means by a redeployment of attention into sense perception and away from the [onlooker] mind.

Henri Bortoft, The Wholeness of Nature

ONLOOKER CONSCIOUSNESS: BEING RIGHT, AT ODDS & ALONE



This language is from the head. It is a way of mentally classifying people into varying shades of good and bad, right and wrong. Ultimately, it provokes defensiveness, resistance, and counterattack. It is a language of demands.

Marshall Rosenberg, Nonviolent Communication

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| JUDGING | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moralistic Judgments • Good/Bad & Right/Wrong • Either/Or Binary Thinking |
| BLAMING | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fault-Finding • Deviance Detecting |
| LABELING | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classifying & Categorizing • Sexist, Racist & other Stereotypes • Making "You" into an "It" |
| OBEYING | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denying Choice • Denying Responsibility • Conditioned to Authority |
| DESERVING | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Punishments & Rewards • Behavior Modification • Dominator/Dominated Mentalities |
| COMPARING | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measuring, Testing, & Grading • Competing for Winners & Losers |
| BEING RIGHT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convincing & Persuading • Debating & Arguing • "Enlightening" Others Proactively |
| ASSUMING | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretations, Analyses & Diagnoses • Jumping to Conclusions |

The view that evaluates and assesses always does harm, whether it leads to positive results or not... The judgmental view forces a "You" into the world of "It."

Henning Köhler, Difficult Children: There is No Such Thing

The first request I call the "air traffic controller's request." It's about message sent, message received. We might frame it thus (and there are a variety of ways to phrase it): ***Would you be willing to tell me what you're hearing me say?*** We have taken some care in how we've spoken and we want to check to see that we've been heard as intended.

The second is an "invitational request." We've shared what's going on for us in the moment and with this request, we invite the other to share what's alive for them. It sounds something like this: ***Would you be willing to tell what's coming up for you in hearing what I'm saying?*** Or more colloquially: ***What's coming up for you now?*** With this request, we are saying that, yes, we have something coming up for us and, at the same time, we're interested in what's coming up for the other. In making this request, we prepare inwardly to give empathy.

🌀 Gratitude

Marshall Rosenberg has said that all we say is "please" and "thank you." When we speak we either have a request arising out of one of our needs, or we are expressing our gratitude for something someone has done.

Compassionate Communication enables us to deepen and bring precision to the practice of gratitude. We do this by being specific about what was done or said (the observation), we share the feelings that were stirred in us, and identify those needs that were met.

For example: ***When you arrive at the kindergarten whenever it snows and shovel a path for the children and families (observation), I feel relieved and grateful (feelings), because it meets my need for support and consideration (needs). Thank you!***

Rather than the positive evaluation—"You're so thoughtful"—we say what they did or said. We give them useful information. Through this practice, we come to recognize the many and various ways that we contribute to each other's lives. We also come to realize the power of the smallest deeds. When we receive such a gratitude we know exactly what we said or did that worked for the other person, and we tend to feel joy.

It is important to develop the life of feeling. Gratitude, reverence and holy awe are feelings that in later life come to expression as the power of blessing, as out-streaming human love.

Rudolf Steiner, Rosicrucian Esotericism

PRACTICAL SUPPORT

☞ Self-Empathy

Compassionate Communication begins with self-empathy, when we self-connect. Whenever a feeling arises, we can ask ourselves these two questions: *What am I feeling? What am I needing?*

When we are able to self-empathize, we create a space of freedom between the stimulus and response. We deepen our presence in the moment. In relationship, when something happens and we take a moment to identify our own feelings and needs, we become freer to choose whether to express ourselves compassionately, or empathize with the other.

To learn Compassionate Communication, developing a daily practice of giving oneself empathy is an effective way to become literate in the vocabulary of feelings and needs, and disentangle from our habitual thinking and ways of reacting. Through self-empathy, we stay responsibly present to our own needs, and thus present for our life as it comes into being.

☞ Geography of Presence

Where is our presence in the moment? Is it in our thoughts, or in our perceptions? In Compassionate Communication, there is a geography of presence. When we give ourselves self-empathy, our presence is *here* with ourselves. When we meet another person and give them empathy, our presence is *over there*. This is the geography of presence.

Our work in groups can foster deeper connections when we consciously choose where we are giving our presence. When we are able, as a community, to give our undivided presence to the speaker until they have been understood, healing, simplicity, connection and efficiency will follow. When the speaker is *complete*, we can move our presence either to ourselves or another.

☞ Requests

For requests to be effective, they need to be concrete, presently doable, and framed in positive language. When we think about making a request, we usually think of requesting an action that would meet our needs. However, there are two helping requests that are very useful in serving the intention to connect.

PARTICIPATORY CONSCIOUSNESS: FOSTERING UNDERSTANDING & PARTNERSHIP



...we learn to 'dwell' imaginatively in the form of living beings with a thinking that participates rather than remains as the external observer.

Nigel Hoffman, Goethe's Science of Living Form

OBSERVATIONS

- Are discriminated from **evaluations**.
- State what is, without spin.
- Are factual, observable phenomena.
- Are what a video camera might record.
- Support seeking common ground.
- Welcome clarification from the other person.

FEELINGS

- Are discriminated from **thoughts**.
- Give us information; thoughts interpret.
- Voice how our becoming is going.
- Are not caused by outer impressions.
- Are not "I feel that..." & "I feel like...", or "I feel you/she/they etc..."

NEEDS

- Are discriminated from **strategies**.
- Are universal; strategies are personal & specific.
- Language our human becoming.
- Are at the root of our feelings.
- Connect us to our shared humanity.
- Foster compassionate connection

REQUESTS

- Are discriminated from **demands**.
- Have conditions; requests don't.
- Best be positive, concrete & presently doable.
- Strive to meet everyone's needs.
- Clarify what's been heard, what feelings are present, or what action might meet the needs.

The social aspect of the spiritual life demands that I open myself to the other, invite him to express himself in me. In this way I am able to experience his questions of inner development as my own.

Dieter Brüll, The Mysteries of Social Encounters

CORE FAMILIES OF FEELINGS



JOY & CONTENTMENT

Adventurous	Curious	Giddy	Loving	Satisfied
Affectionate	Delighted	Glad	Moved	Stimulated
Alive	Determined	Grateful	Overjoyed	Surprised
Amazed	Eager	Happy	Peaceful	Thankful
Amused	Ecstatic	Hopeful	Pleased	Thrilled
Astonished	Encouraged	Inspired	Proud	Touched
Calm	Excited	Intrigued	Refreshed	Tranquil
Confident	Fascinated	Invigorated	Relaxed	Trusting
Content	Friendly	Joyful	Relieved	Upbeat

FEAR & ANXIETY

Afraid
 Alarmed
 Anxious
 Apprehensive
 Bewildered
 Cautious
 Concerned
 Confused
 Disconcerted
 Disturbed
 Dubious
 Embarrassed
 Impatient
 Nervous
 Overwhelmed
 Panicky
 Perplexed
 Puzzled
 Reluctant
 Restless
 Scared
 Shocked
 Stressed
 Terrified
 Worried

ANGER & FRUSTRATION

Aggravated
 Agitated
 Angry
 Annoyed
 Appalled
 Cranky
 Disgusted
 Exasperated
 Frustrated
 Furious
 Impatient
 Indignant
 Infuriated
 Irritated
 Resentful
 Upset

SADNESS & GRIEF

Bored
 Depressed
 Disappointed
 Discouraged
 Disheartened
 Dismayed
 Despairing
 Exhausted
 Helpless
 Hopeless
 Hurt
 Lonely
 Melancholic
 Sad
 Tired
 Troubled

FAUX FEELINGS

*Interpretations
 masquerading as feelings*

Abandoned	Ignored	Neglected
Abused	Intimidated	Put Upon
Attacked	Invisible	Rejected
Betrayed	Let Down	Rushed
Bullied	Manipulated	Unappreciated
Cheated	Misunderstood	Used

NEEDS: A VOCABULARY OF BECOMING



SUBSISTENCE

Clean Air & Water
 Food
 Rest
 Shelter

PROTECTION/SECURITY

Fairness
 Honesty
 Justice
 Honoring Agreements
 Nurturance
 Openness
 Order
 Safety
 Stability
 Trust

PARTICIPATION

Accomplishment
 Action
 Belonging
 Capacity
 Community
 Competence
 Connection
 Dependability
 Encouragement
 Harmony
 Mutuality
 Opportunities to Help Others
 Power Within One's World
 Recognition
 Respect
 Support
 To Enrich Life
 To Serve Life

CREATION

Creativity
 Expression
 Inspiration

AFFECTION

Companionship
 Intimacy
 Kindness
 To Matter to Someone

IDENTITY/MEANING

Acknowledgement
 Appreciation
 Challenges
 Clarity
 Integrity
 Learning New Skills
 Privacy
 Self-Development
 Shared Reality
 To Be Seen For One's Striving
 To Be Seen For One's Intentions
 To Be Seen In One's Biography
 To Be Someone
 To Make Sense of One's World

LEISURE

Celebration
 Comfort & Ease
 Play & Fun
 Recreation

FREEDOM

Autonomy
 Choices
 To Speak One's Mind

UNDERSTANDING

Consideration
 Empathy
 Peace of Mind
 To Be Heard

TRANSCENDENCE

Beauty
 Love
 Peace
 Rhythm