



INNERLIFE
ADVENTURES

Relating and Connecting Communication Skills

Four Components

- 1) *Observation*: Observation without evaluation consists of noticing specific concrete things and actions around us. We learn to distinguish between *judgment* and *what we sense in the present moment*, and to simply observe what is there. Non-judging, non-blaming.
- 2) *Feeling*: When we notice things around us, we inevitably experience varying emotions. Feelings are subjective physiological responses in the body. By checking in to our body, we can gain more emotional literacy, self-knowledge and we learn to distinguish between thoughts and feelings.
- 3) *Needs*: All individuals have needs and values that sustain and enrich their lives. When those needs are met, we experience comfortable feelings, like happiness or peacefulness, and when they are not, we experience uncomfortable feelings, like frustration or anger. Understanding that we, as well as those around us, have needs is essential to connecting with ourselves and others.
- 4) *Request*: If we want something to be different, we have to make a clear specific request. A request must be what we want someone to do, rather than what we don't want them to do. When we learn to request concrete actions that can be carried out in the present moment, we begin to find ways to cooperatively and creatively ensure that everyone's needs are met.

Two Foundational Keys

- 1) *Empathy*: Empathy goes beyond compassion, allowing us to put ourselves into another's shoes to sense the same feelings and understand the same needs; in essence, being open and available to what is alive in others. It also gives us the means to remain present to and aware of our own needs and the needs of others even in extreme situations that are often difficult to handle. Being able to understand another person's feelings and needs helps us connect and distinguish between what is ours and what is theirs.
- 2) *Honesty*: Honesty begins with truly understanding ourselves and our own needs, and being in tune with what is alive in us in the present moment. When we learn to give ourselves empathy and be honest with ourselves we can start to break down the barriers to communication that keep us from connecting with others.

Sample Template

When I see/hear _____ I feel _____
because my need for _____ is/is not met.
Would you be willing to _____?

Self-Check

- Is what I am saying bringing me closer or farther away from the person I am relating to?
Am I blaming or judging the other person?
Am I taking responsibility for my observations, my needs, and my feelings?

Adapted from NVC Instruction Guide

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