



Non-Violent Communication

**Contributes
Compassionately to Life**

*Mankind must evolve for all
human conflict a method which
rejects revenge, aggression, and
retaliation.*

*The foundation of such a
method is love.*

Martin Luther King

What is Non-Violent Communication?


- A state of heart and mind that is life-enriching, compassionate and peace-building
- Speaking that is honest, non-judgmental, and that communicates
 - Observations
 - Feelings
 - Needs
 - Requests
- Listening that is open-hearted and empathic
- Actions that use power with rather than power over



What is **Not** N-VC?

Communication That Blocks Compassion

- Diagnosing Ourselves and Others
 - “To Be” judgmental statements.
- Denying Responsibility for Our Actions
 - _____ made me do it.
- Using Deserve-Oriented Thinking and Language
 - Good vs bad
 - Punishment and reward
- Demanding of Ourselves and Others
 - Have to... Must... Need to... etc.
 - We use demands to get people to do what we want.



Diagnosing: Judging, Categorizing, Classifying, Labeling

○ “To Be” Statements

- Are a static language
- Indicate what we think a person is, was, etc.
- Very often precede evaluations and judgments
 - I am such a fool.
 - You are insincere and self-centered.
 - He is a complete jerk.
 - They are the most uncaring people I have ever met.



Denying Responsibility

How do we do it?

By implying lack of choice.

By blaming our actions on...

- Vague impersonal forces
 - ...because I had to.
- Personal history
 - ...because my parents always did.
- Actions of others
 - ...because you did it first.
- Dictates of authority
 - ...because my boss ordered me to.
- Group pressure
 - ...because my friends said I should.



Deserve-Oriented Language:

**You are bad and therefore
deserve to be punished!**

- Violence can result from thinking that the cause of conflict is due to the wrongness in our “enemies”.
- Classifying and judging people as “bad” can promote violence.
- When we believe “bad guys” deserve to be punished, violence can become enjoyable.

Demanding

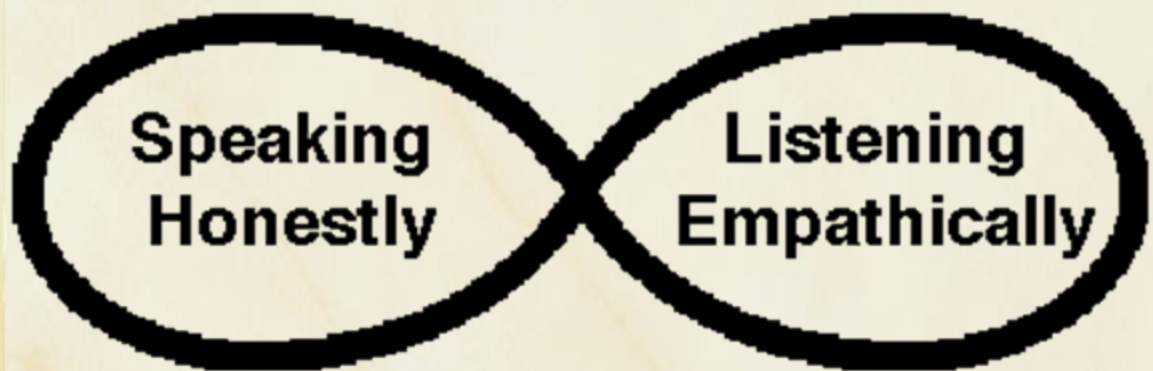
One desire: Do it my way! Many techniques.

- Forthright
 - I said do it this way!
- Threatening
 - Do it this way or you're fired.
- Sneaky
 - Well, you know, I'd really suggest you do it this way.
- Manipulative
 - If you cared about me you'd do it this way.
- Hidden
 - Would you mind doing it this way?
(If it's not done "this way" we get angry and then demand)

What Is N-VC?

2 Parts

4 Components



- I say what I observe.
- I say how I feel.
- I say what I need.
- I request what I think will meet my need.
- I guess what you observe.
- I guess how you feel.
- I guess what you need.
- I guess what request might meet your need.

How Does N-VC Compare With Violent Communication (VC)?

N-VC

- I say what I observe.
- I say how I feel.
- I say what I need.
- I request what I think will meet my need.

VC

- I diagnose or blame.
- I deny responsibility for my own feelings.
- I say what someone else deserves.
- I demand that someone else do what I want.




Speaking Honestly: Observation

- What we can see, hear – observe in any way
 - Pete only reads his text the night before an exam.
 - In the last week Mary has not said “hi!” to me when she has seen me.
 - My boss refused my request for a raise.
- Not an evaluation or interpretation
 - Pete procrastinates in studying.
 - Mary is such a princess!
 - My boss treated me unfairly.




Speaking Honestly: Feelings

- Feelings are emotions.
 - I feel sad, frustrated, regretful, discouraged.
- Feelings are not thoughts, even if we precede those thoughts with the word “feel”.
 - I feel that I should not have done that (assessment of an action).
 - I feel as if I failed (assessment of an outcome).
 - I feel like a failure (statement of what I think I am).
 - I feel I’m to blame (assignment of guilt).
 - I feel betrayed (interpretation of what another has done to me).



Speaking Honestly: Needs

- We all have the same basic needs. For example:
 - Sustenance
 - Safety
 - Love
 - Empathy
 - Recreation, play
 - Learning
 - Creativity
 - Community
 - Autonomy
 - Meaning



Speaking Honestly: Needs

- But we are likely to have different **strategies** to meet those needs.
 - Sustenance: I “need” a Big Mac.
 - Safety: I “need” a gun.
 - Love: I “need” you to love me.
 - Empathy: I “need” her to listen now.
 - Recreation: I “need” to go to the ball game.
 - Learning: I “need” to get into Harvard.
 - Creativity: I “need” to design the costumes for the play.
 - Community: I “need” all of you to be my friends.
 - Autonomy: I need to do this job my way.
 - Meaning: I need to head this non-profit foundation.



Speaking Honestly: Request

- Requests show that we value connection and meeting the needs of others as well as our own needs.
- Our requests are truly requests only if
 - The other person can say “no”
 - We accept “no” if we hear it
 - We do not then judge, intimidate or demand.



Listening Empathically

- Empathy is a crucial part of n-vc, whether we are listening to ourselves or others
- Empathy involves
 - Being completely present with the other person
 - Focusing on the now, not the past
 - Connecting with what is alive in the other person – their
 - Observations
 - Feelings
 - Needs
 - Requests



Listening and Responding Empathically:

Empathy is **not**...

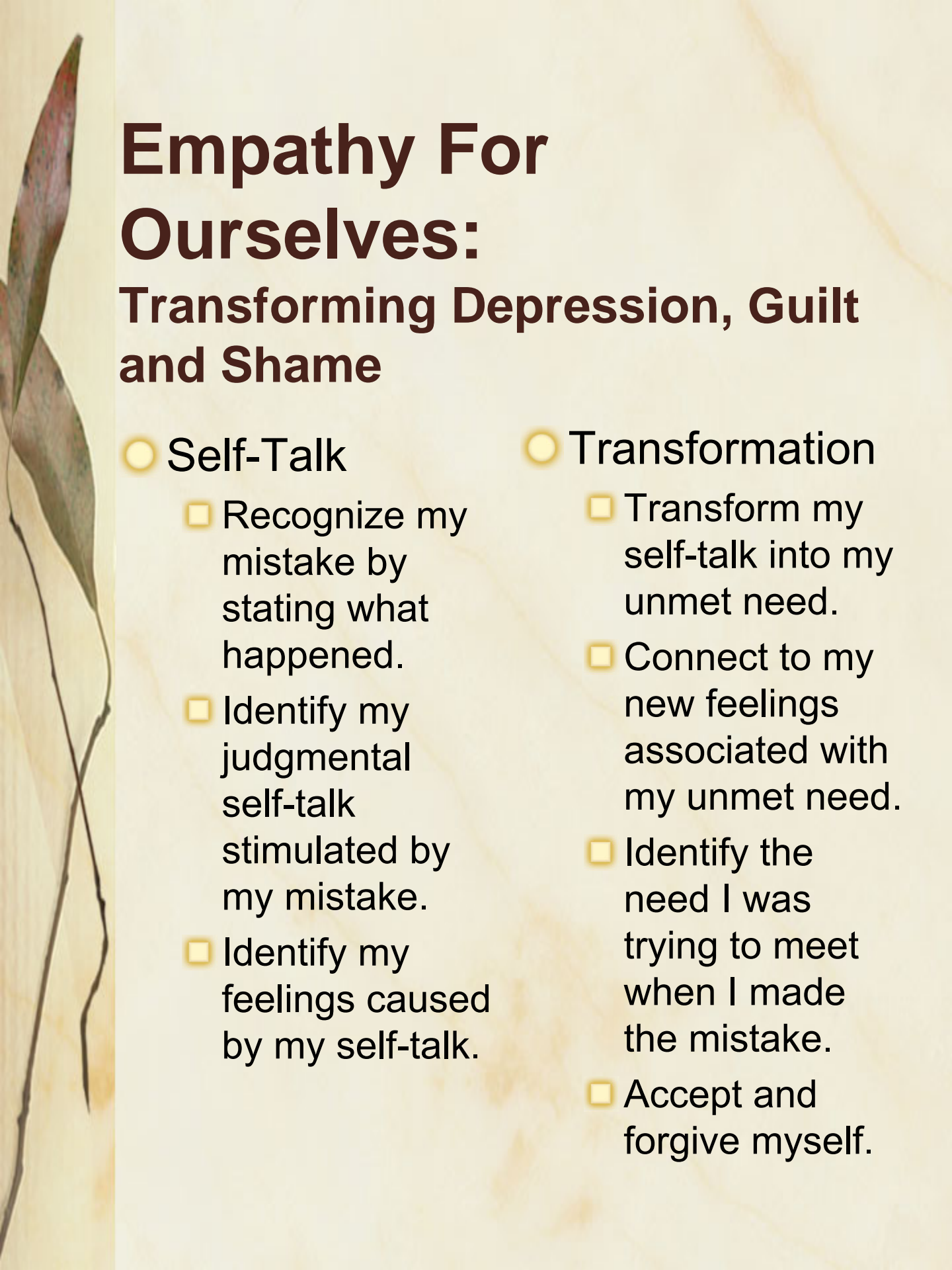
- Sympathizing: “Oh, how awful!”
- Consoling: “You did the best you could.”
- Advising: “I think you should...”
- Interrogating: “When did you start feeling this way?”
- Explaining: “I would have but...”
- Shutting down: “You are over-reacting. Get over it.”
- Blaming ourselves: “I’m so sorry I made you feel that way.”
- Judging the speaker: “You are too sensitive.”
- Blaming or judging another person: “He is such a jerk. It’s his fault not yours.”



Empathy For Ourselves: Dealing With Depression, Guilt and Shame

When someone (including ourselves) speaks violently to us we have four choices for response:

- Blame ourselves
 - → depression, guilt and shame
- Blame the other person
 - → anger
- Be compassionate with ourselves
 - → recognition of our deeper feelings and needs
- Be compassionate with the other person
 - → recognition of their deeper feelings and needs



Empathy For Ourselves:

Transforming Depression, Guilt and Shame

○ Self-Talk

- Recognize my mistake by stating what happened.
- Identify my judgmental self-talk stimulated by my mistake.
- Identify my feelings caused by my self-talk.

○ Transformation

- Transform my self-talk into my unmet need.
- Connect to my new feelings associated with my unmet need.
- Identify the need I was trying to meet when I made the mistake.
- Accept and forgive myself.



Empathy For Another: Dealing With Anger – Stimulus vs Cause

- What other people do or say does not cause our anger. **NEVER**
- What other people do or say may stimulate our anger.
- What we think about what other people do or say causes our anger. **ALWAYS**




Empathy For Another: Transforming Anger

○ Self-Talk

- Stop and breathe.
Recognize my anger.
- Identify my judgmental thoughts that are causing the anger.
- Connect these thoughts with my unmet need.
- Connect this need to my new feeling.

○ Transformation

- Express what the other person did or said.
- Express my feeling and unmet need.
- Make a specific request that will help meet my unmet need.



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

Marshall B. Rosenberg



© 2009 Patricia Bevan. All rights reserved.

All N-VC concepts in this presentation are based on the concepts and process of Nonviolent Communication developed by Marshall B. Rosenberg, PhD. For more information, visit <http://cnvc.org>