

NonViolent Communication Exercises

Here are 5 10-part exercises. The first four are about practicing each component on NVC. The fifth is about receiving empathically, about extracting your conversational partner's observations, feelings, needs, and requests from what they say.

1: Observation or Evaluation?

Are these statements observations, or evaluations? For any statement that is an observation mixed with evaluation, how would we remove the evaluation?

1. "John was angry with me yesterday for no reason."
2. "Yesterday evening Nancy bit her fingernails while watching television."
3. "Sam didn't ask for my opinion during the meeting."
4. "My father is a good man."
5. "Janice works too much."
6. "Henry is aggressive."
7. "Pam was first in line every day this week."
8. "My son often doesn't brush his teeth."
9. "Luke told me I didn't look good in yellow."
10. "My aunt complains when I talk to her."

2: Expressing Feelings

Do the following statements express a feeling? If not, how would you change it to verbally express how you are feeling?

1. "I feel you don't love me."
2. "I'm sad that you're leaving."
3. "I feel scared when you say that."
4. "When you don't greet me, I feel neglected."
5. "I'm happy that you can come."
6. "You're disgusting."
7. "I feel like hitting you."
8. "I feel misunderstood."
9. "I feel good about what you did for me."
10. "I'm worthless."

3: Acknowledging Needs

Which statements does the speaker acknowledge responsibility for their feelings? For every statement where the speaker doesn't acknowledge responsibility for their feelings, change it to better express the possible needs or thoughts underlying their feelings.

1. "You irritate me when you leave company documents on the conference room floor."
2. "I feel angry when you say that, because I am wanting respect and I hear your words as an insult."

3. "I feel frustrated when you come late."
4. "I'm sad that you won't be coming for dinner because I was hoping we could spend the evening together."
5. "I feel disappointed because you said you would do it and you didn't."
6. "I'm discouraged because I would have liked to have progressed further in my work by now."
7. "Little things people say sometimes hurt me."
8. "I feel happy that you received that award."
9. "I feel scared when you raise your voice."
10. "I am grateful that you offered me a ride because I was needing to get home before my children arrive."

4: Expressing Requests

Do the following statements clearly express that specific action be taken? If not, how would you change it to verbally express a specific request?

1. "I want you to understand me."
2. "I'd like you to tell me one thing that I did that you appreciate."
3. "I'd like you to feel more confidence in yourself."
4. "I want you to stop drinking."
5. "I'd like you to let me be me."
6. "I'd like you to be honest with me about yesterday's meeting."
7. "I would like you to drive at or below the speed limit."
8. "I'd like to get to know you better."
9. "I would like you to show respect for my privacy."
10. "I'd like you to prepare supper more often."


5: Receiving Empathically

Does person B respond empathically to what is going on with person A? Why, or why not?

1. Person A: How could I do something so stupid?
Person B: Nobody is perfect; you're too hard on yourself.
2. Person A: If you ask me, we ought to ship all these immigrants back to where they came from.
Person B: Do you really think that would solve anything?
3. Person A: You aren't God!
Person B: Are you feeling frustrated because you would like me to admit that there can be other ways of interpreting this matter?
4. Person A: I think that you take me for granted. I wonder how you would manage without me.
Person B: That's not true! I don't take you for granted.

5. Person A: How could you say a thing like that to me?
Person B: Are you feeling hurt because I said that?
6. Person A: I'm furious with my husband. He's never around when I need him.
Person B: You think he should be around more than he is?
7. Person A: I'm disgusted with how heavy I'm getting.
Person B: Perhaps jogging would help
8. Person A: I've been a nervous wreck planning for my daughter's wedding. Her fiancé's family is not helping. About every day they change their minds about the kind of wedding they would like.
Person B: So you're feeling nervous about how to make arrangements and would appreciate it if your future in-laws could be more aware of the complications their indecision creates for you?
9. Person A: When my relatives come without letting me know ahead of time I feel invaded. It reminds me of how my parents used to disregard my needs and would plan things for me.
Person B: I know how you feel. I used to feel that way too.
10. Person A: I'm disappointed with your performance. I would have liked your department to double your production last month.
Person B: I understand that you're disappointed, but we have had many absences due to illness.

Answer Key:

 NVC Answer Key