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The Exercise – Shifting Toward Compassion



Even though this is an online exercise, you still need a pen or pencil and a piece of paper with a blank side. I created this exercise so people can have what I call a "Shift". By that I mean experience a "shift" in what you are thinking about and a shift in how you feel. To understand "shift," I have found it helpful to imagine a line like the one below labeled "Connection Continuum". On one end is rage, disconnect and violence....on the other is compassion, connection and peace. In any given moment we are all somewhere on this line (many or most of us in the middle somewhere).

The Connection Continuum

<<< You and me (always moving back and forth) >>>



<http://www.nycnvc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/nvcexe1.gif>

The Key

When we interact with other people, we are constantly moving back and forth on this line, often from moment to moment, at times even second to second. This exercise is a tool to move yourself toward a more compassionate state, even in difficult moments.

The Exercise

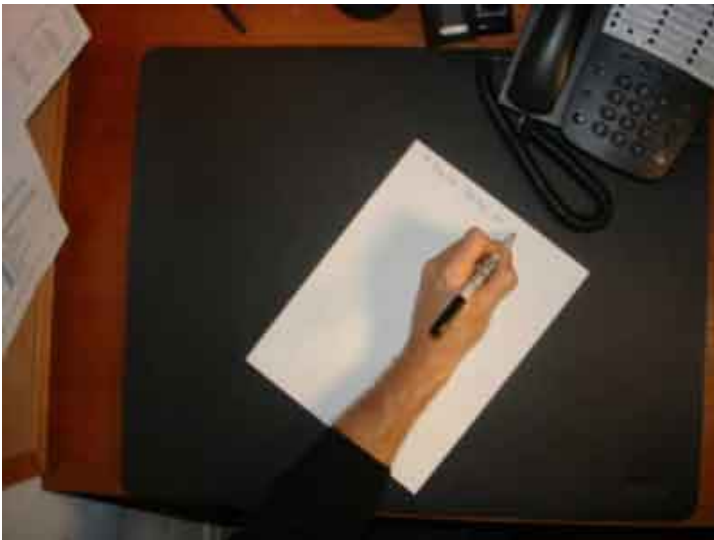
You can increase your benefit by taking your time, reading it completely and following the hints. You can do "The Exercise" as many times as you like and keep using it with different situations.

Hints before you begin...

- 1) Leave yourself an uninterrupted 20 to 30 minutes. This exercise can require a fair amount of concentration.
- 2) The exercise uses 2 online sheets/lists. Many people find it helpful to print them so they don't get distracted switching windows back and forth (not to mention they're handy to have around). To do this (when you're on the page you want to print) you can click your "Print" button on your browser or click on "File," then click "Print."

NOTE: The exercise itself does not print well due to it's size and all the photos.

- 3) This exercise is on a single continuous web page (except for the lists) so you can scroll up and down OR click your way through it.



Step 1

Take a blank side of paper and at the top, write down something somebody said to you that you didn't like hearing.

Hints:

- 1) People who choose a less than traumatic, yet "stimulating" situation seem to have greater success early on.
- 2) Think of the exact quote. No story line or background is needed for this exercise, just the quote.

When you're done scroll down or [CLICK HERE](#)

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Step 2

Now draw a "T" shape on the top half of the paper and write an "F" on the left side and an "N" on the right, just like in the picture here.

When you're done scroll down or [CLICK HERE](#)

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Step 3

On the left side, under the "F" column, write down how you're feeling when you think about that quote. [CLICK HERE](#) (<http://www.nycnvc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Feelings-Sheet-as-of-5-18-15.1.pdf>) to see a list of FEELINGS to be used with this exercise. HINT: You can print the list or keep it open as a separate window so you can refer to it throughout the exercise. When you are finished with this column scroll down or [CLICK HERE](#)

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Step 4

On the right side, under the "N" column, write down what you are (or were) needing and not getting the moment you heard the words. [CLICK HERE](http://www.nycnvc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Needs-Sheet-as-of-5-18-15.2.pdf) (<http://www.nycnvc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Needs-Sheet-as-of-5-18-15.2.pdf>) to see a list of NEEDS to be used with this exercise. HINT: You can also print this list or keep it open as a separate window so you can refer to it throughout the exercise.

When you are finished with this column you can scroll down or [CLICK HERE](#)

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Step 5

Take a minute....Close your eyes and relax. After some time, look at the list again. If you feel certain this list represents what you were experiencing then [CLICK HERE](#) If you feel like something's missing, go back to the [FEELINGS](#) (<http://www.nycnvc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Feelings-Sheet-as-of-5-18-15.1.pdf>)and [NEEDS](#) (<http://www.nycnvc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Needs-Sheet-as-of-5-18-15.2.pdf>)lists and look again until you feel complete. Then either scroll down or [CLICK HERE](#).

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Step 6
Draw an second "T" shape on the bottom half of the paper with an "F" on the left side and an "N" on the right, just like before. When you're done you can scroll down or [CLICK HERE](#)

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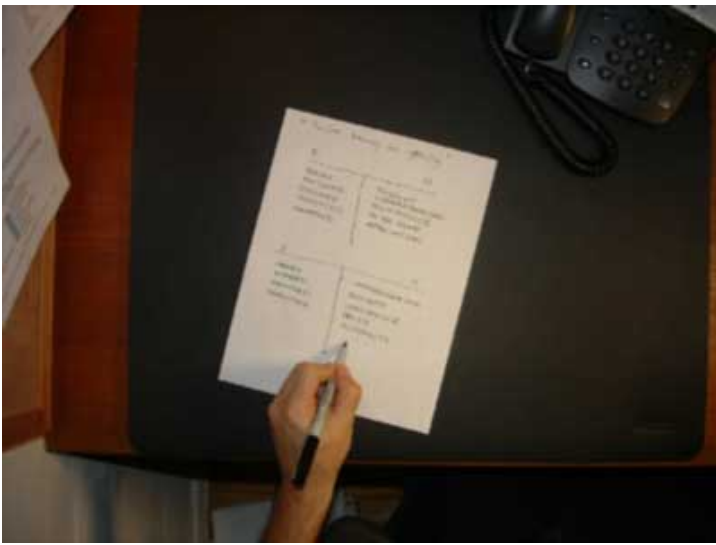
Step 7

On the left side, under the "F" column, write down what you imagine the other person was feeling when you heard what they said. If you really can't think of what they were feeling, you can try going back to [Step 5](#) and double checking your own list. [CLICK HERE](#) to go back to step 5. Most people have difficulty doing "Step 7" until their own list is really complete ("Step 5").

If you closed the window with the "FEELINGS" list you can [CLICK HERE](http://www.nycnvc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Feelings-Sheet-as-of-5-18-15.1.pdf) (<http://www.nycnvc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Feelings-Sheet-as-of-5-18-15.1.pdf>) to open it again. It should still open in a separate window so you can print it or refer to it for this part of the exercise.

When you are finished with this column you can scroll down or ["CLICK HERE"](#)

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Step 8

On the right side, under the "N" column, write down what you imagine the other person was needing and not getting in the moment you heard their words. Just like "Step 7" if you really can't think of what they were needing, you can try going back to Step 5 and double checking your own list. CLICK HERE to go back to step 5. Most people have difficulty doing "Step 8" until their own list is really complete ("Step 5").

If you closed the window with the "NEEDS" list you can CLICK HERE (<http://www.nycnvc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Needs-Sheet-as-of-5-18-15.2.pdf>) to open it again. It too should still open in a separate window so you can refer to it to finish the exercise.

When you are finished with this column scroll down or "CLICK HERE"

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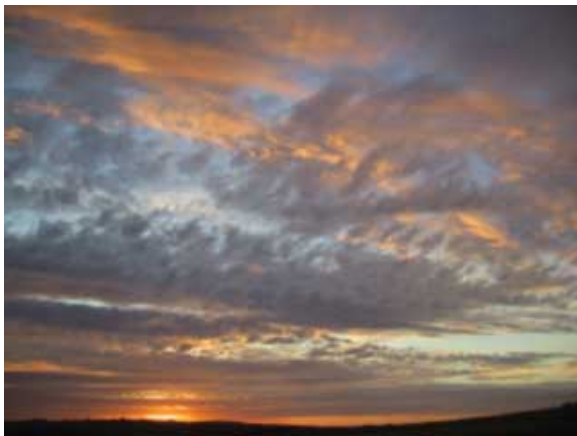


Step 9

Take a minute. Close your eyes and relax. Look at the list again. If you feel comfortable this list represents what they were experiencing then [CLICK HERE](#)

If you feel like something's missing, go back and look at the lists again until you are sure you are complete. Only then, [CLICK HERE](#)

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Step 10

Check with yourself and see if you notice a shift in how you feel about what was said to you or how you feel toward the person that said it. Check if you think you may have a way of thinking about this that wasn't there before.... or if you just feel less upset than when you started. If you do, then you've had a shift. You've consciously moved yourself toward compassion. I hope you enjoyed it. If you feel the same or worse you may want to try again with the same quote or one on a subject that's not as "hot" for you. Please note: About 20% of people that do the exercise DO NOT shift on the first time through. 100% of people who keep trying eventually do. 2nd TO LAST HINT: People who practice this over and over report more success in "shifting". It's like developing a muscle. Please keep in your mind that this is a "taste" of NVC and there is a larger body of work and practice that is far more powerful when we increase our skills through learning and practice.



[\(http://www.nycnvc.org/about-2/our-organization/\)](http://www.nycnvc.org/about-2/our-organization/)

Learn More

If you would like to learn more about the New York Center for Nonviolent Communication, please click on the graphic above.



[\(http://www.nycnvc.org/contact-us/\)](http://www.nycnvc.org/contact-us/)

Feedback

It is helpful to hear from folks who have done the exercise. If you would like to share your experience, please email our Course Coordinator by clicking on the graphic above.



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"The Exercise" is designed to give anyone who has access to a computer an experience of NVC. If you would like to appreciate us, support us, or empower us to keep on doing this and more to create a more compassionate world, click on the graphic above to make a donation. Thanks.

*please note, NYCNVC does not hold 501(c3) status and donations may not be tax deductible.



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