



A SELF-EMPATHY TOOLKIT

The *Empathy* Walk

A gentle, seven-step practice for meeting yourself with honesty and compassion, in the spirit of Marshall Rosenberg's Nonviolent Communication.



What is the *walk*?

Self-empathy is the quiet skill of turning toward your own experience the way you would toward a dear friend, with curiosity instead of judgment.

The Empathy Walk is a gentle, embodied way to practise Nonviolent Communication: seven colour-coded stations you move between, letting your body carry you through a process your mind alone might rush. This toolkit brings the walk onto the page so you can practise anywhere, with a pen, a few quiet minutes, and a willingness to be honest.

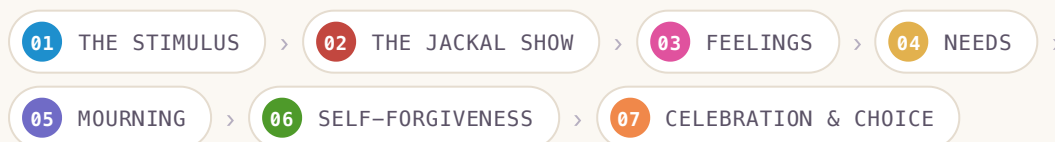
There is **no right order** and no finish line. Move between stations as you need to. If old anger flares while you're naming needs, step back to the Jackal Show and let it speak again. The walk is a spiral, not a straight line.

How to use this toolkit

- 1 Find ten undisturbed minutes and something in you that's stirring.
- 2 Read each station's invitation, then write freely in the space below it.
- 3 Go slowly. Let the body catch up with the words.
- 4 Be honest before you're kind. The jackal is welcome here.
- 5 Close by noticing what has softened, however slightly.



THE SEVEN STATIONS





The Stimulus

Name the moment, exactly as a camera would see it.

Step onto this station with something that is stirring in you: a moment you keep replaying, a thing you said or did, or something someone else did. Describe it as a plain observation, free of evaluation, the way a video camera would have captured it. No story, no blame, no "always" or "never," just the bare facts.



"When she left the room while I was still speaking...", not "When she disrespected me..."

When I remember... what actually happened was...



The Jackal Show

Give the inner critic the stage, uncensored, on paper.

Before we soften, we let the harsh voice speak. Marshall Rosenberg called it the "jackal," the part that judges, blames, demands and catastrophises. Don't argue with it or clean it up. Spill every should, every "how could they," every "what's wrong with me." Getting it onto the page is what lets it stop running in the background.



"They're so selfish." · "I always ruin things." · "This shouldn't be happening."

The loudest, least kind thoughts I have about this are...



Feelings

Translate the noise into the true feelings underneath.

Now read back the jackal show and listen for the feeling beneath each judgment. Reach for words that describe your inner weather, like sad, tender, frightened, weary, furious, tight, and set aside the pseudo-feelings that smuggle in blame ("betrayed," "ignored," "let down"). Those are thoughts about others; here we want what is actually moving in your body.



hurt · anxious · lonely · discouraged · restless · raw · heavy

Underneath all of that, I am feeling...



Needs

Find the beautiful need each feeling is pointing to.

Every feeling is a messenger for a need, something universal and precious that is either met or unmet in this moment. This is the heart of the walk. Ask each feeling: "What are you longing for?" Needs are never about a specific person or outcome; they are the deeper values (connection, respect, ease, meaning) that make us human.



to be seen · trust · belonging · rest · consideration · autonomy · love

The feelings are pointing me toward a need for...



Mourning

Stay with the ache of the unmet need, without fixing it.

This station asks for stillness. Rather than rushing to a solution, let yourself feel the loss of a need that went unmet. Mourning is simply full, gentle attention on the need, a soft "yes, this matters to me, and it hurt." Breathe. Notice where the feeling lives in your body. Nothing to solve here; only to honour.



Place a hand where you feel it. Let the breath be slow. You are allowed to mind that it mattered.

What I most want to grieve or make space for is...



Self-Forgiveness

See that even the hard choice was an attempt to meet a need.

If the jackal was aimed at you, this is where you come home to yourself. Whatever you did, you did it trying to meet some need, even clumsily. Name the need you were serving then, and the need you're aware of now. Two parts of you, both worthy of care. Forgiveness is not excusing; it's holding both needs with tenderness.



"I snapped because I needed rest, and I also long for the connection I feared I was losing."

When I did that, I was trying to meet my need for... and now I also value...



Celebration & Choice

Notice what has shifted, and choose one gentle next step.

The walk closes not with a fix but with freedom. From this softer, clearer place, notice: what has changed in how you're holding this? What need feels more met simply for having listened to yourself? Then, if a next step wants to arise, a request to yourself or someone else, let it come from your needs, not from the jackal.



A request is doable, specific and positive: "I'd like to ask for ten quiet minutes tonight."

What has shifted, and the one kind step I choose is...

KEEP THESE CLOSE

Feelings & *Needs*

A starter vocabulary for the walk. Let these prompt you; the right word is the one that rings true in your body.

Feelings when needs are *met*

peaceful grateful warm

hopeful tender curious

alive relieved content

moved open confident

Feelings when needs are *unmet*

sad anxious lonely

tired angry hurt

confused restless

discouraged tense afraid

heavy

Universal *needs*

connection to be seen respect belonging trust safety

rest ease autonomy meaning honesty support play love

space consideration



"Every criticism, judgment, or expression of anger is the tragic expression of an unmet need."

· MARSHALL B. ROSENBERG

NVC RISING

Ready to take the walk further, together?

nvcrising.org