



A NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION PRACTICE TOOL

Feelings & Needs

A working vocabulary for meeting *yourself*, *your people*, and *your world* with honesty and care.

● PRINT IT • KEEP IT CLOSE • PASS IT ON

“Every criticism, judgment, diagnosis, and expression of anger is the tragic expression of an unmet need.”

MARSHALL B. ROSENBERG, PH.D.

NVCRISING.ORG

When needs are *being met*

This is a vocabulary, not a diagnosis. Scan for the word that lands, the one that makes your shoulders drop slightly when you read it. That physical recognition is the point.

CALM & AT EASE

calm
centered
comfortable
content
equanimous
fulfilled
mellow
peaceful
quiet
relaxed
relieved
satisfied
serene
still
tranquil
trusting

WARM & LOVING

affectionate
compassionate
friendly
loving
open-hearted
sympathetic
tender
warm

GRATEFUL

appreciative
moved
thankful
touched

GLAD & PLAYFUL

amused
delighted
glad
happy
joyful
jubilant
light-hearted
playful
pleased
tickled

CURIOUS & ENGAGED

absorbed
alert
curious
enchanted
engrossed
fascinated
interested
intrigued
involved
spellbound
stimulated

HOPEFUL & CONFIDENT

empowered
encouraged
expectant
open
optimistic
proud
safe
secure

ALIVE & ENERGIZED

animated
ardent
eager
ecstatic
elated
energetic
enthusiastic
excited
exhilarated
exuberant
giddy
invigorated
lively
passionate
radiant
thrilled
vibrant

INSPIRED

amazed
astonished
awed
dazzled
in wonder

RESTED & RENEWED

enlivened
refreshed
rejuvenated
renewed
rested
restored
revived

GROW THE VOCABULARY

These clusters are a starting point, not a ceiling. When a feeling of yours has no word here, add it in the margin. A richer emotional vocabulary is itself a practice.

When needs are *not being met*

These are not “negative” feelings. Grief is not a malfunction; it is information. Each word here points toward a need that is asking for attention.

AFRAID

apprehensive
dread-filled
frightened
mistrustful
panicked
petrified
scared
suspicious
terrified
wary
worried

ANNOYED & ANGRY

aggravated
angry
enraged
exasperated
frustrated
furious
impatient
incensed
indignant
irritated
livid
outraged
resentful

SAD

dejected
despairing
discouraged
disheartened
forlorn
gloomy
grieving
heavy-hearted
hopeless
melancholy
unhappy
wretched

HURT & LONELY

anguished
bereaved
devastated
heartbroken
lonely
miserable
regretful
remorseful

CONFUSED & TORN

ambivalent
baffled
bewildered
dazed
hesitant
lost
mystified
perplexed
puzzled
torn

UNSETTLED & TENSE

agitated
alarmed
anxious
disconcerted
disturbed
edgy
frazzled
jittery
nervous
overwhelmed
rattled
restless
shocked
startled
stressed
troubled
uneasy
unnerved
upset

EMBARRASSED

ashamed
chagrined
flustered
guilty
mortified
self-conscious

DISCONNECTED

alienated
aloof
apathetic
bored
cold
detached
distant
distracted
indifferent
numb
withdrawn

TIRED & DEPLETED

burnt out
depleted
exhausted
lethargic
listless
sleepy
weary
worn out

VULNERABLE

fragile
guarded
helpless
insecure
reserved
sensitive
shaky

YEARNING

envious
jealous
longing
nostalgic
wistful

SOUNDS LIKE A FEELING, ISN'T ONE

*Abandoned ·
attacked · betrayed
· disrespected ·
ignored ·
manipulated ·
misunderstood ·
rejected · unheard ·
used*

Each of these is a judgment about what someone else did, wearing a feeling's clothing. Quick test: if you can put “by you” after the word, it's probably a judgment. Look underneath for the real feeling: often lonely, scared, or hurt.

Universal human *needs*

Needs are universal: every human being has all of them, in different intensities at different moments. What differs between people is not the needs but the **strategies** used to meet them.

CONNECTION

acceptance
affection
appreciation
belonging
closeness
community
companionship
compassion
consideration
empathy
inclusion
intimacy
love
mutuality
nurturing
respect & self-respect
support
trust
warmth
to be seen & known
to matter

AUTONOMY

choice
dignity
freedom
independence
space
spontaneity
having a say in what
affects you

HONESTY

authenticity
integrity
presence
transparency
being met with what is
true

PEACE

balance
beauty
communion
ease
equality
harmony
inspiration
order
wholeness

MEANING

awareness
celebration
challenge
clarity
competence
contribution
creativity
discovery
growth
hope
learning
mourning
participation
purpose
self-expression
understanding

PHYSICAL WELL-BEING

air
food
water
health
movement
rest & sleep
safety
shelter
sexual expression
touch

PLAY

adventure
fun
humor
joy
lightness
relaxation

NEEDS ARE NOT STRATEGIES

"I need you to text me back faster" is not a need; it is a strategy. The need underneath might be reassurance, consideration, or to matter. Needs never conflict; strategies do. When a conversation is stuck, drop from the strategy to the need beneath it, and new strategies appear.

HOW TO USE THESE PAGES

In a charged moment, pause and scan: *what am I feeling?* Then ask the question that changes the conversation: *what need of mine is this feeling pointing to?* Do the same, silently, for the other person.

These lists are neither exhaustive nor definitive. They are a doorway into a process of self-discovery and honest connection. Share this document freely. Rooted in the work of Marshall B. Rosenberg, Ph.D. and the Center for Nonviolent Communication (cnvc.org).

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