



# Flex Your Empathy Muscle

*“Embodied Nonviolent Communication as Personal Practice”*

- NVC KATA: Movements to embody principles and process of NVC
  - PRACTICES for learning and integration
    - List of universal, human NEEDS
  - List of FEELINGS, EMOTIONS, SENSATION
    - Dynamic (circular) MODEL of NVC

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*The “NVC KATA” and its application are works in progress: Development & Copyright by Maja Bengtson, Inner Leadership, Inc. Lists of needs and feelings words are compiled by Maja Bengtson with contributions from CNVC, BayNVC, Words That Work, JBK Solutions, and Core Connexion. Dynamic Model of NVC was inspired by Liv Larsson in Sweden. THANKS!*

# “NVC KATA”

## *- Movements to embody the PRINCIPLES and PROCESS of NVC*

### WARMUP

- **Neck:** rub, breathe into area; bend head front/back, side, other side, look over shoulder, other shoulder, circles in one direction, then other.
- **Hips:** rub lower back, breathe into area: forward circles; swing side to side.
- **Knees:** rub, breathe into area, small circle w knees
- **Feet:** weight on one foot, rotate other foot/ankle around toe; both directions. Change feet.

### CENTERING

- **GROUND:** Sense the contact with a surface that is holding you up. Inhale. Exhale into the earth, imagining roots growing through hips, legs, feet and into the earth.
- **UPRIGHT:** Inhale into your uprightness, breath travels up the spine and neck and out through the top of your head and out towards the sky.
- **FIELD:** Sense your field in six directions - below, above, in front, behind, left, right.
- **CORE:** Sensing yourself at the center of all those directions. Put hand on belly.
- **HOLDING NEEDS:** Form a sphere with hands in front of your core, shape and reshape, illustrating the ongoing changes and shifts of needs.
- **CENTER IN MOTION:** Two-step movement from your core, turn and face other direction.

### BREATH – SELF CONNECTION (O/F/N/R)

1. Shallow breath + hands holding head. “Breathing into **mental clarity**, finding what is going on, what is my **observation**.”
2. Breathe into chest + hands on heart. “Breathing into my **heart**, connecting with what **feelings** or emotions are alive right now.”
3. Breathe into your **whole body** + hands on heart and belly. “Breathing into my whole self, connecting with what **universal needs** are alive now.”
4. Breathe again into your **whole body** + hands on heart and belly. “What **request** could I make right now, to increase my need being met?”(who could I ask? to do or say what? when?)

### RELATIONSHIP/CONVERSATION

1. **Advocating** your clarity (small step forward forming a triangle shape, hands extended)
2. **Expressing** your process (hands on chest and belly, then extending out)
3. **Making** a request (forming a cup with your hands: "Are you willing ...")
4. **Listening** to other person (arms/hands opening to receive)
5. **Moving** into empathy (“two-step” to stand next to other person, seeing the world/ the topic from their perspective)
6. **Responding** to request. Breathe into your whole self, find if your answer is “yes” or “no”; Then
  - a. Opening arms/hands "Yes" (if you like what was asked of you)
  - b. Holding up arms/hands "No" (if you don't want to do what was asked of you)

## Practices for various situations:

### FLOW OF SELF EXPRESSION

1. Center (Make contact with ground, uprightness, field, and core)
2. Breathe to self connect (mental clarity/observation, heart/feelings, core/needs, core/request).
3. Motion for expressing your process (hands on chest and belly, expand out) + Speak out loud.
4. Motion for making request (form a cup with your hands) + Speak out loud.

**FLOW TO DEAL WITH A TRIGGER** (or anytime you're swept up by "Personality", attachment to outcomes, blame, guilt or shame...)

1. Step to the side.
2. Center (Make contact with ground, uprightness, field, and core)
5. Breathe to self connect (mental clarity/observation, heart/feelings, core/needs, core/request)
3. From here you can CHOOSE:
  - Express your process, include a request
  - Listen to other, move into empathy guesses
  - Make integrated decisions (also outside of conversations)

### FLOW OF LISTENING EMPATHICALLY

1. Listening pose.
2. Move into empathic position (two-step).
3. Breathe into your mental clarity, heart, whole self – *silently* guessing what is going on (observation, feelings, needs and request) *for the other* person.
4. Hand motion + speak your guesses out loud: "is this what is going on for you?... "
5. When they respond, move back (two-step) to listening pose.
6. Repeat the flow until both speaker has been heard to their satisfaction.

**FLOW TO MAKE A COUNTER REQUEST** *when my response to their request is "no":*

1. Breathe to self connect (mental clarity/observation, heart/feelings, core/needs, core/request).
2. Motion for expressing your process (hands on chest and belly, expand out) + speak out loud.
3. Make a new request, including both of your needs: Motion for request (hands form a cup) + speak out loud.

## Practices for further integration:

### REHEARSE VOCABULARY

Spend a minimum of 5 minutes each day with the lists for feelings and needs. Options:

- Read 10 words. Put the list away and recall as many as you can. Do it over with the other list.
- Pick a word (randomly) and ask yourself: "If I was feeling 'X'/ needing 'Y', what shape, mood, movement, level of presence, breathing patterns, other sensations would show up in my body?"
- Pick a need: "What would it be like if I *become* this need?" What does your body want to do?

### SELF OBSERVATION

Take a moment a minimum of 3 times per day (e.g. around noon, end afternoon, end evening) to connect with yourself, with your wholeness.

1. Center (connect with ground, upright, field, and core)
2. Self Connect (Breathe into mental clarity, heart, whole self)

# List of Universal Needs

*(without reference to specific people, actions, things - partial list)*

Love, Connection, Acceptance  
Community, Belonging  
Autonomy, Choice, Freedom  
Equality, Respect, Consideration  
Meaning, Contribution, Creativity  
Celebration, Play, Ease  
Understanding, Clarity  
Presence, Awareness  
Wholeness, Integrity  
Cooperation, Support, Stability  
Power, Influence  
Peace, Harmony, Flow  
Growth, Learning, Efficacy  
Sustenance, Nourishment, Rest, Touch  
Communion, Beauty, Order  
Safety, Security, Protection  
Honesty, Authenticity  
Purpose, To matter  
To know/ Be known  
To see/ Be seen

# List of Feelings, Emotions & Sensations

absorbed	buzzy	distant	floored
ache	calm	distracted	flowing
adventurous	centered	distraught	foreboding
affectionate	chagrined	distressed	forlorn
afraid	chills	disturbed	fragile
aggravated	clammy	dizzy	frantic
agitated	clear headed	dread	frazzled
agony	cold	dull	friendly
airy	comfortable	eager	frightened
alarmed	compassionate	ecstatic	frozen
alert	concerned	edgy	frustrated
alienated	confident	elated	fulfilled
alive	confused	electric	furious
aloof	congested	embarrassed	fuzzy
amazed	constricted	empowered	giddy
ambivalent	contempt	enchanted	glad
amused	content	encouraged	gloomy
angry	cool	energetic	goose bumpy
anguished	cranky	energized	grateful
animated	curious	engaged	grief
animosity	damp	engrossed	guarded
annoyed	dazed	enlivened	guilty
anxious	dazzled	enraged	happy
apathetic	dejected	enthralled	hate
appalled	delighted	enthusiastic	heartbroken
appreciative	dense	entranced	heavy
apprehensive	depleted	envious	helpless
ardent	depressed	equanimous	hesitant
aroused	despair	exasperated	hopeful
ashamed	desperate	excited	hopeless
astonished	despondent	exhausted	horrified
aversion	detached	exhilarated	hostile
awed	devastated	expanding	hurt
baffled	disappointed	expansive	impatient
beat	discombobulated	expectant	incensed
bereaved	disconcerted	exuberant	indifferent
bewildered	disconnected	faint	indignant
blissful	discouraged	fascinated	insecure
bloated	disgruntled	fatigue	inspired
blocked	disgusted	fidgety	intense
bored	disheartened	flaccid	interested
breathless	dislike	fluid	intrigued
brokenhearted	dismayed	flushed	invigorated
bubbly	displeased	flustered	involved
burnt out	dissatisfied	flutter	irate

irked	perturbed	sleepy	vulnerable
irritable	petrified	smooth	warm
irritated	pinning	sorrowful	wary
itchy	playful	spacious	weary
jagged	pleased	spasming	wistful
jealous	pounding	spellbound	withdrawn
jittery	pressure	spinning	wobbly
joyful	prickly	startled	wonder
jubilant	proud	still	worn out
jumbled	puffy	stimulated	worried
jumpy	pulsing	stress	wowed
leery	puzzled	stringy	wretched
lethargic	quaky	strong	yearning
light	quiet	suffocating	
listless	quivery	surprised	
lively	radiant	suspicious	
livid	radiating	sweaty	
lonely	rapturous	sympathetic	
longing	rattled	tender	
lost	refreshed	tense	
loving	regretful	terrified	
melancholy	rejuvenated	thankful	
mellow	relaxed	thick	
mild	relieved	thrilled	
mischievous	remorseful	throbbing	
miserable	removed	tickled	
mistrustful	renewed	tight	
mixed	repulsed	tightness of skin	
moist	resentful	tingly	
mortified	reserved	tired	
moved	rested	torn	
moving	restless	touched	
mystified	restored	tranquil	
nauseous	revived	tremble	
nervous	sad	tremulous	
nostalgic	safe	troubled	
numb	satisfied	trusting	
OK	scared	turbulent	
open	scattered	turmoil	
open hearted	secure	twitch	
optimistic	self-conscious	uncomfortable	
outraged	sensitive	uneasy	
overwhelmed	serene	unhappy	
pain	shaky	uninterested	
panicked	sharp	unnerved	
paralyzed	shivery	unsettled	
passionate	shocked	upset	
peaceful	shudder	vibrant	
perplexed	shy	vibration	

# DYNAMIC MODEL OF NVC

