

# Conscious Communication

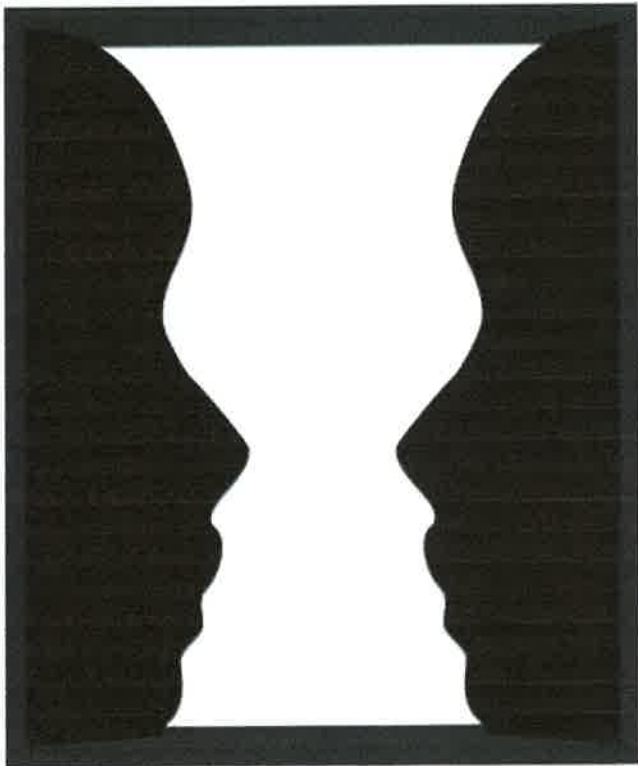
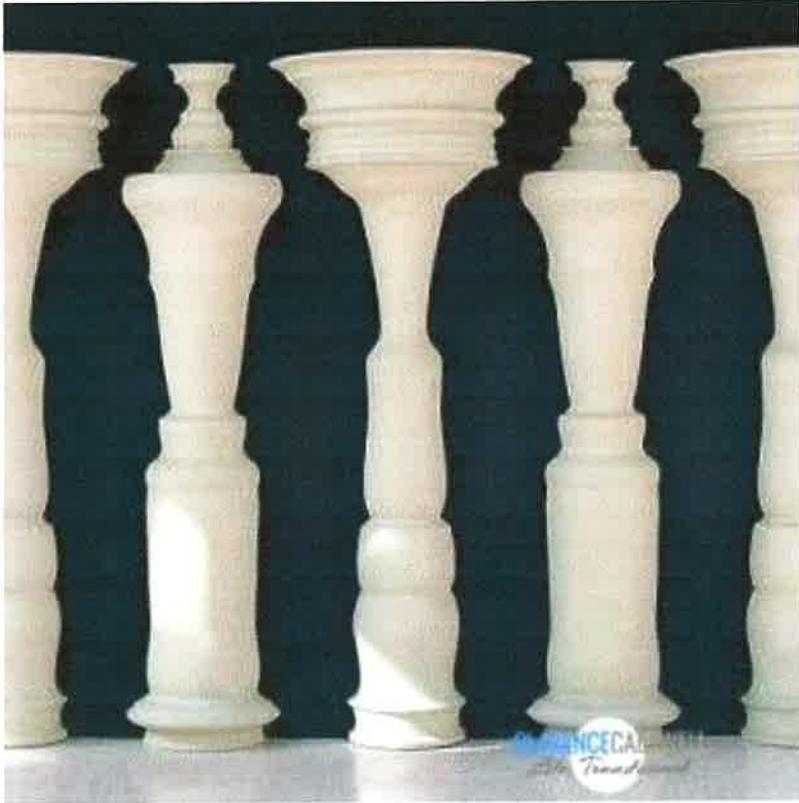
With Grace and Grit

*Allow* & THRIVE

Tina Boljevac and Luke Manson

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What do YOU see?

# Feelings



## ➤ Feelings Associated with Met Needs

### AFFECTIONATE

compassionate  
fond  
loving  
openhearted  
tender  
warm

### ENGAGED

absorbed  
curious  
engrossed  
enchanted  
enthralled  
entranced  
fascinated  
interested  
intrigued  
involved  
open  
spellbound  
stimulated

### EXCITED

amazed  
ardent  
aroused  
dazzled  
energetic  
enlivened  
enthusiastic  
exuberant  
invigorated  
lively  
passionate  
surprised  
vibrant

### EXHILARATED

enthralled  
radiant  
electrified  
euphoric  
overjoyed  
thrilled

### GRATEFUL

appreciative  
moved  
thankful  
touched

### HAPPY

amused  
blissful  
cheerful  
delighted  
ecstatic  
elated  
giddy  
glad  
jolly  
joyful  
jubilant  
merry  
overjoyed  
pleased  
rapturous  
tickled

### HOPEFUL

confident  
expectant  
jazzed  
lighthearted  
sanguine  
up  
upbeat

### INSPIRED

amazed  
eager  
enthused  
motivated  
moved  
psyched  
stimulated  
stirred  
wonder

### PEACEFUL

calm  
comfortable  
centered  
content  
equanimity  
fulfilled  
mellow  
open  
quiet  
relaxed  
relieved  
satisfied  
serene  
tranquil

### REFRESHED

recharged  
rejuvenated  
renewed  
rested  
restored  
revived



## ⊗ Feelings Associated with Unmet Needs

### ANGER

aggravated  
angry  
animosity  
annoyed  
contempt  
disgruntled  
enraged  
exasperated  
furious  
hate  
hostile  
incensed  
irate  
irritated  
irked  
livid  
miffed  
nettled  
outraged  
peevd  
resentful

### AVERSION

abhorrence  
appalled  
bothered  
displeased  
disgust  
dislike  
enmity  
horrified  
loathing  
repulsion

### CONFUSION

ambivalent  
baffled  
bewildered  
conflicted  
dazed  
discombobulated  
disoriented  
mixed  
mystified  
perplexed  
puzzled  
torn

### DISCONNECTION

apathetic  
bored  
closed  
detached  
distant  
indifferent  
listless  
numb  
withdrawn

### DISQUIET

agitated  
alarmed  
concerned  
distraught  
disconcerted  
dismayed  
disturbed  
frustrated

### DISQUIET (continued)

rattled  
restless  
shocked  
startled  
surprised  
troubled  
turbulent  
turmoil  
uncomfortable  
uneasy  
unnerved  
unsettled  
torn  
upset

### EMBARRASSMENT

ashamed  
chagrined  
discomfited  
flustered  
mortified  
self-conscious

### FATIGUE

beat  
burnt out  
depleted  
exhausted  
listless  
pooped  
sleepy  
tired  
weary  
wiped out

### FEAR

afraid  
anxious  
apprehensive  
dread  
fearful  
foreboding  
frightened  
guarded  
insecure  
leery  
mistrustful  
panicked  
petrified  
scared  
shaky  
terrified  
trepidation  
wary  
worried

### PAIN

aching  
agony  
anguished  
devastated  
grief  
heartbroken  
hungry  
hurting  
lonely  
miserable  
regretful  
remorseful

### SADNESS

depressed  
dejected  
despairing  
despondent  
disappointed  
discouraged  
disheartened  
forlorn  
gloomy  
heavy hearted  
hopeless  
melancholy  
miserable  
unhappy  
wistful

### TENSION

anxious  
closed  
distressed  
edgy  
fidgety  
frazzled  
frustrated  
jittery  
nervous  
overwhelmed  
restless  
stressed out

### YEARNING

longing  
nostalgic

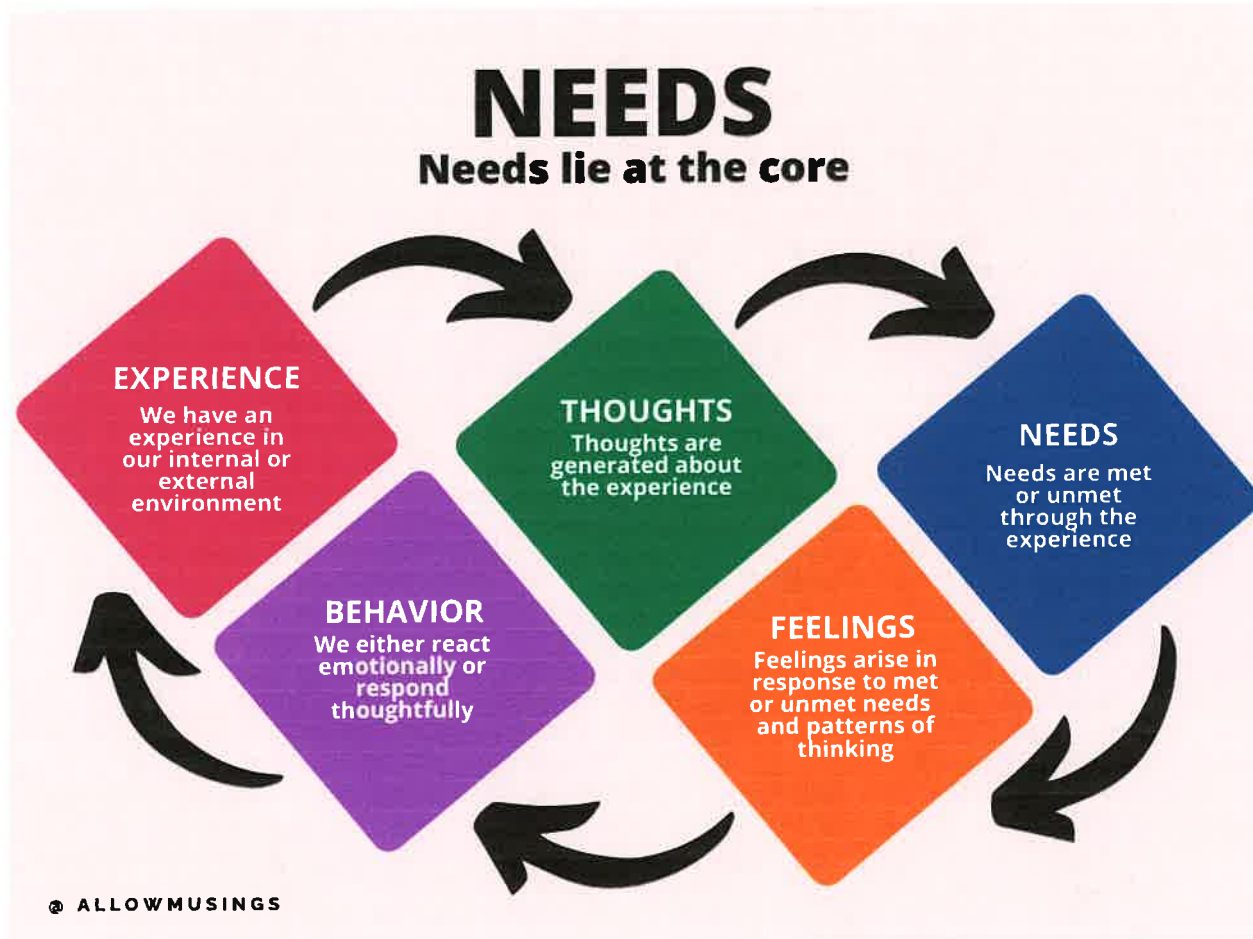
**INDIVIDUAL HANDOUT 6.5**

**Words which Express Thoughts instead of Feelings**

<b>THOUGHTS:</b> Experience or Evaluative Words	<b>POSSIBLE FEELINGS:</b>		<b>THOUGHTS:</b> Experience or Evaluative Words	<b>POSSIBLE FEELINGS:</b>
abandoned			manipulated	
abused			mistrusted	
attacked			misunderstood	
belittled			neglected	
betrayed			overpowered	
blamed			overworked	
bullied			patronized	
caged/boxed in			pressured	
cheated			provoked	
coerced			put down	
cornered			rejected	
criticized			ripped off/screwed	
disliked			taken for granted	
disrespected			threatened	
distrusted			thwarted	
dumped on			trampled	
harassed			tricked	
hassled			unappreciated	
ignored			unheard	
insulted			unloved	
interrupted			unseen	
intimidated			unsupported	
invalidated			unwanted	
invisible			used	
isolated			victimized	
judged			violated	
left out			wronged	
let down				

## INTERCONNECTEDNESS BETWEEN THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, NEEDS, BEHAVIOR AND EXPERIENCES

We have an experience. It generates thoughts about the experience (evaluation). There are needs we each have, which have or have not been met through the experience. This generates feelings, which precede behavior. We either react (emotionally), or step back and respond (thoughtfully). *Here is the point where we can break the cycle. The witnessing of feelings and reframing thoughts.* We act in the world. Behavior creates new experiences, giving rise to new thoughts.



## Helpful points to remember going into a difficult conversation:

- ★ Emotions that we are feeling are fueled by the thoughts we are having. The thoughts come from conscious contemplations and unconscious programming.
- ★ Our reactions to things are fueled by feelings. Instead of sharing feelings, when we are in the state of *reacting*, we quickly resort to judging, blaming, criticizing (self or other). We tend to “act out.”
- ★ Our *responses* are guided by thought processes. When we share feelings from this place (of composure), we can generally identify our feelings, needs, contributions to the problem, and can articulate a request.
- ★ All of our behavior (actions, words, delivery of messages we are conveying) is a conscious or unconscious attempt to meet a need.
- ★ By acting in the world, we co-create our external experiences. These external experiences are then providing information to our senses that gets interpreted at a conscious level (thoughts) or subconscious level (conditioned patterns of thinking). Which generates feelings. So here we see a cycle.

### How do we break the pattern of unhelpful thoughts or undesirable feelings?

We can train ourselves to notice whichever feelings arise, allow ourselves to feel them, name them, then step back to observe which thoughts are running our mind. If the feelings are undesirable and this is not a good time to move through them, the easiest way to let go of them is to shift the thoughts that fuel the feelings. When we do this successfully, the feelings fall away without us actively trying to “let them go.” When we become aware of our thoughts, we distance ourselves from our reactivity (impulses) and can generally respond from a place of composure. If we succumb to the feelings (or, identify with them), we behave in a way that is, quite literally, “thoughtless” and tends to cause harm to others.

### Example of someone aware of this process:

*Person A is discouraged by the lack of depth present in the recent conversations with Person B.*

Person A: “I just had this urge to go deeper...It is challenging to keep treading the surface sometimes. But I also know talking over text hasn’t been very effective, and I dislike talking on the phone, so we can just practice telepathy I guess.”

Person B: “You’re welcome to share and I’ll do my best to postpone my response if I’m triggered in some way so I can come from the place (emotional state) I desire.”

**Example** of feelings being influenced by thoughts:

Excerpt from a journal entry:

“I was deeply disappointed because my expectations based on my understanding of who [my partner] was as a person and how much I meant to him - how much he valued me - were not met. My understanding of who he was did not align with his behavior.” *(There is an implicit unmet need for congruency/authenticity/trust)*

**Note the complexity!**

- ★ While generally it serves us to think that feelings are generated by thoughts (because if we shift our thoughts, our feelings will follow suit), thoughts are also influenced by feelings. This can create a vicious cycle unless we are aware of this and can consciously break it (also this often leads to self-fulfilling prophecies).
- ★ There are times when the external stimulus can trigger feelings (i.e. fear) and thus reactions (i.e. running away). The thought is still there (“I am not safe”) but the stress response that has been activated in response to the stimulus doesn’t allow time to process the thought consciously (it is happening subconsciously). In this scenario, the need that one is trying to meet is to protect oneself.
- ★ There is also INTUITION. Strong, gut feeling that is beyond thought. It is related to the energy you feel, the “vibe,” or the connection you have with something bigger than yourself.

# Needs and Values

## Things We All Want in Our Lives

### **AUTONOMY**

choice  
dignity  
freedom  
independence  
self-expression  
space  
spontaneity

### **CONNECTION**

acceptance  
affection  
appreciation  
authenticity  
belonging  
care  
closeness  
communication  
communion  
community  
companionship  
compassion  
consideration  
empathy  
friendship  
inclusion  
inspiration  
integrity  
intimacy  
love  
mutuality  
nurturing  
partnership  
presence  
respect/self-respect  
security  
self-acceptance  
self-care

### **CONNECTION**(continued)

self-connection  
self-expression  
shared reality  
stability  
support  
to know and be known  
to see and be seen  
trust  
understanding  
warmth

### **MEANING**

awareness  
celebration  
challenge  
clarity  
competence  
consciousness  
contribution  
creativity  
discovery  
efficiency  
effectiveness  
growth  
integration  
integrity  
learning  
mourning  
movement  
participation  
perspective  
presence  
progress  
purpose  
self-expression  
stimulation  
understanding

### **PEACE**

acceptance  
balance  
beauty  
communion  
ease  
equanimity  
faith  
harmony  
hope  
order  
peace-of-mind  
space

### **PHYSICAL WELL-BEING**

air  
care  
comfort  
food  
movement/exercise  
rest/sleep  
safety (physical)  
self-care  
sexual expression  
shelter  
touch  
water

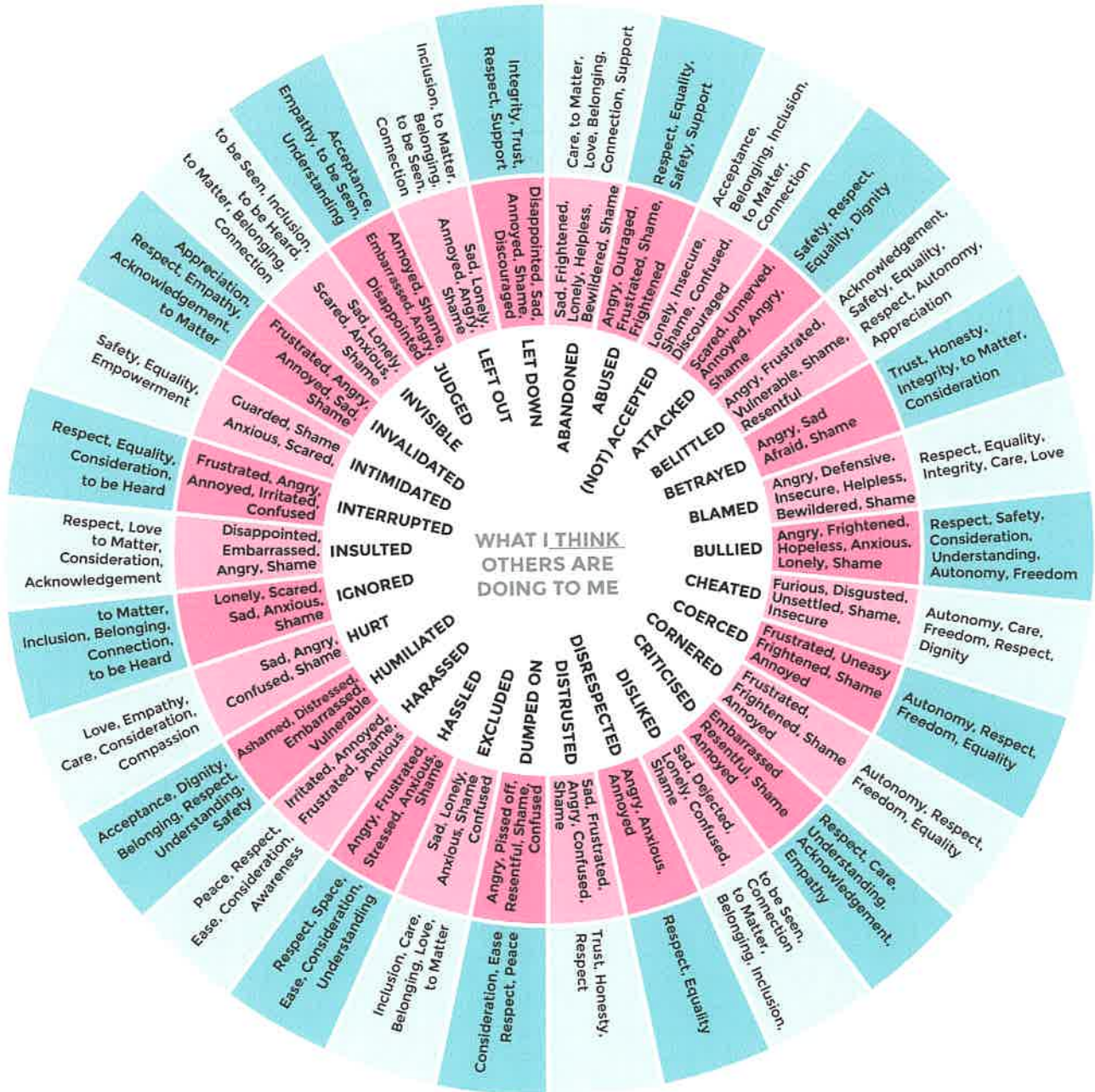
### **PLAY**

adventure  
excitement  
fun  
humor  
joy  
relaxation  
stimulation

To use this list to create more peace, harmony and understanding in your life, go to [www.theexercise.org](http://www.theexercise.org). You can also attend "First Mondays," a free intro and workshop on the skills of creating human connection. For more information go to [www.firstmondays.org](http://www.firstmondays.org), visit [www.nycnvc.org](http://www.nycnvc.org) or call 646.201.9226.

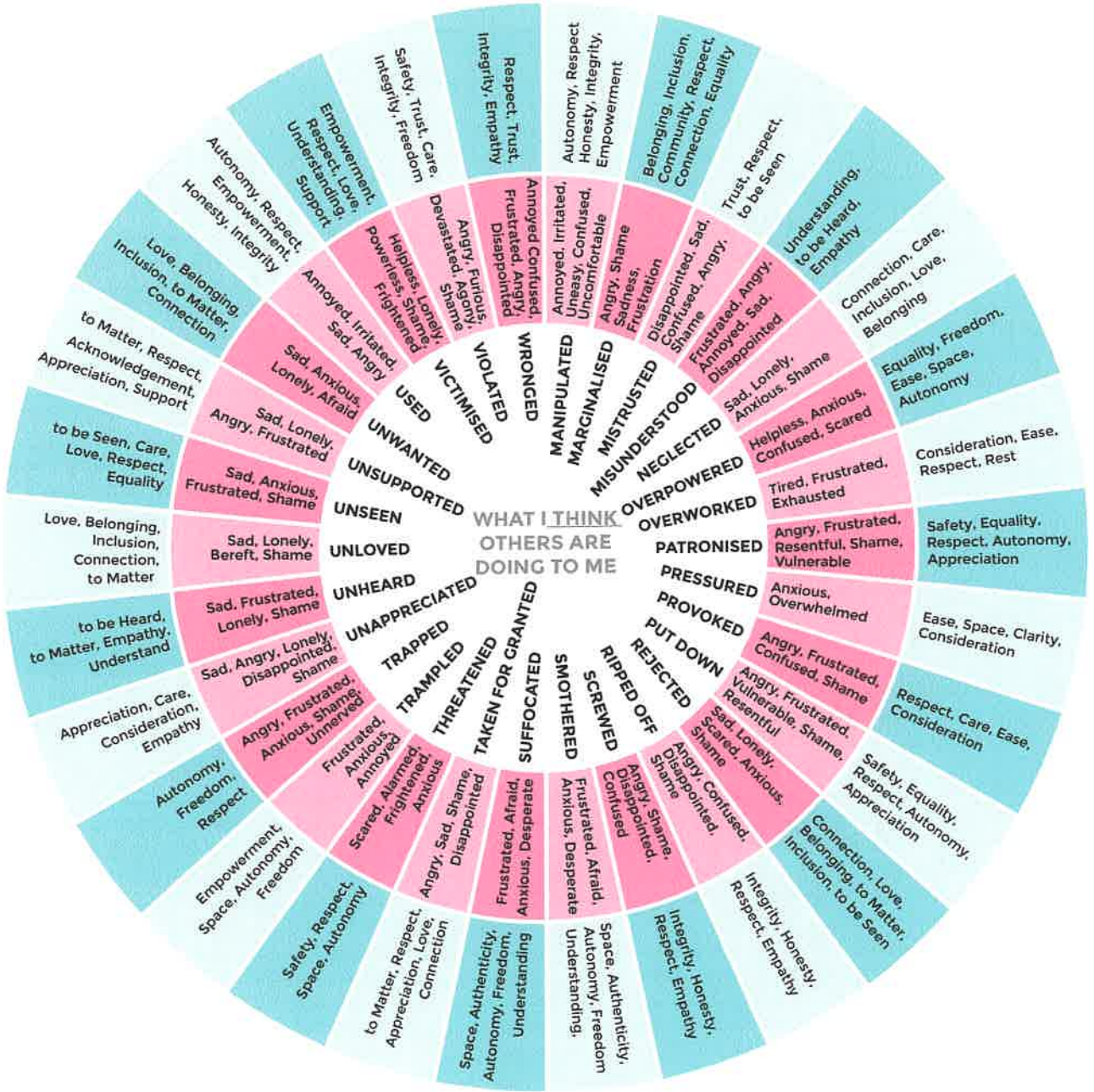


# SUGGESTED FEELINGS AND NEEDS beneath Words that we commonly confuse with Feelings



**FRIEND:** I'm feeling left out.  
**EMPATHY GUESS:** Are you feeling sad and longing for inclusion?

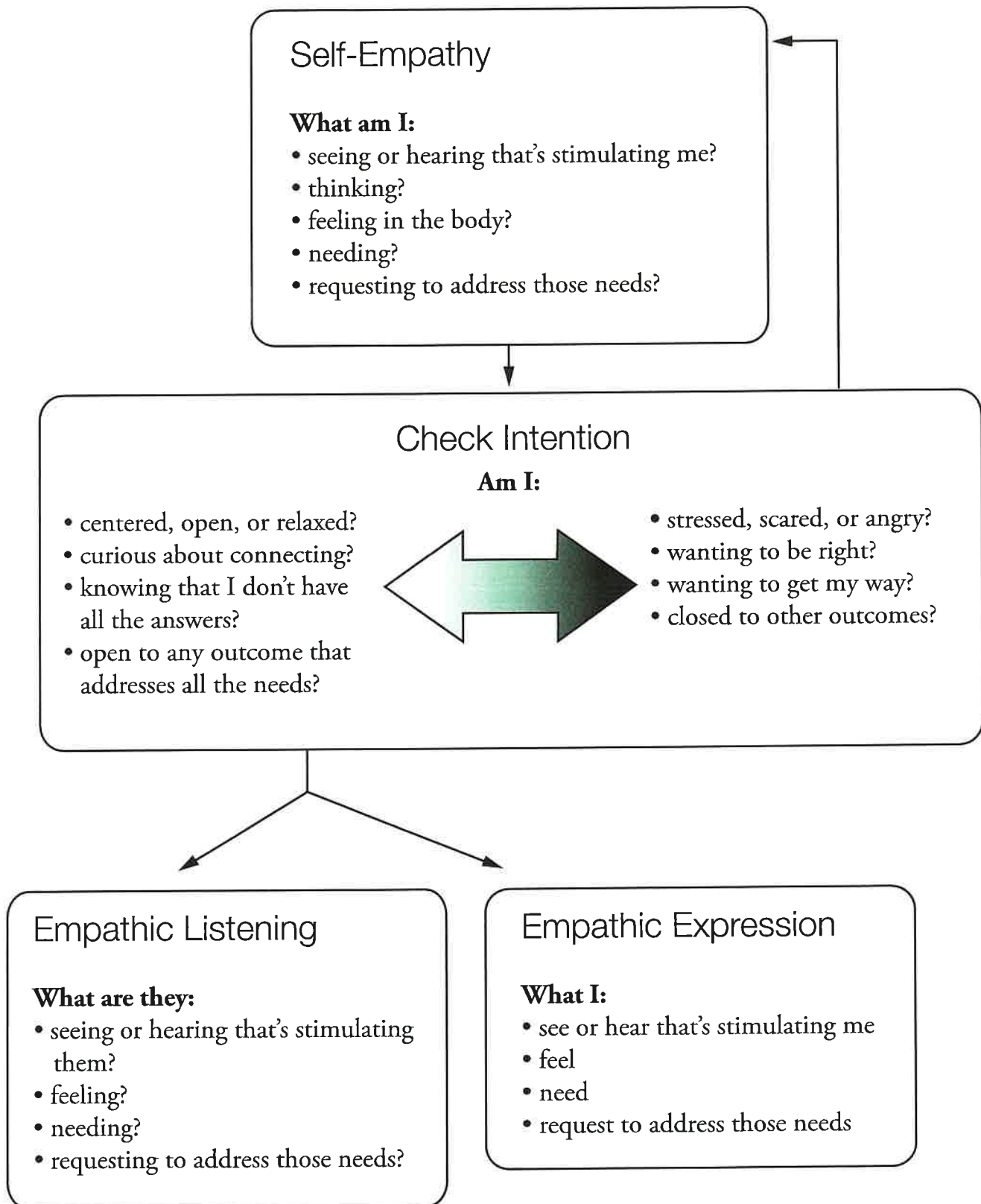
# SUGGESTED FEELINGS AND NEEDS beneath Words that we commonly confuse with Feelings cont.



**ME:** I'm feeling misunderstood.  
**SELF EMPATHY:** I'm feeling annoyed and wanting some understanding,

<b>Difficult Conversations Synopsis</b>	<b>A Battle of Messages</b>	<b>A Learning Conversation</b>
<p><b>The “What Happened?” Conversation</b></p> <p><b>Challenge:</b> The situation is more complex than either one of us can see.</p> <p>#1 The Truth Assumption</p>	<p><b>Assumption:</b> I know all I need to know to understand what happened.</p> <p><b>Goal:</b> To persuade you I'm right.</p>	<p><b>Assumption:</b> Each of us is bringing different perceptions, interpretations and beliefs about the situation to the table; there are likely to be important things that each of us is unaware of.</p> <p><b>Goal:</b> Explore each other's stories. How does each of us understand the situation and why.</p>
<p>#2 The Intention Invention</p>	<p><b>Assumption:</b> I know what you intended.</p> <p><b>Goal:</b> To let you know you were wrong to say or do what you did.</p>	<p><b>Assumption:</b> I know what I intended, and the impact of your actions on me. I am not able to know for sure what you meant/intended unless you tell me.</p> <p><b>Goal:</b> To share the impact on me, and find out what you were thinking. Also, to find out what impact I had on you.</p>
<p>#3 The Blame Frame</p>	<p><b>Assumption:</b> It's all your fault. (Or, it's all my fault.)</p> <p><b>Goal:</b> To get you to admit blame and take responsibility for making amends.</p>	<p><b>Assumption:</b> We have both contributed to finding ourselves in this situation.</p> <p><b>Goal:</b> To understand the contribution system – how our actions interact(ed) to produce this result.</p>
<p><b>The “Feelings” Conversation</b></p> <p><b>Challenge:</b> The situation is emotionally charged.</p>	<p><b>Assumption:</b> Feelings are irrelevant and wouldn't be helpful to share. (Or, my feelings are your fault and you need to hear about them.)</p> <p><b>Goal:</b> Avoid talking about feelings. (Or, I'll just let you have it!)</p>	<p><b>Assumption:</b> Feelings lie at the heart of the situation and are usually complex. I might have to dig a bit to understand my feelings.</p> <p><b>Goal:</b> To address feelings (mine and yours) without judgments or attributions; to acknowledge feelings before problem-solving.</p>
<p><b>The Identity Conversation</b></p> <p><b>Challenge:</b> The situation threatens our identity.</p>	<p><b>Assumption:</b> I'm competent or incompetent, loveable or unlovable, a good or a bad person. There is no in-between.</p> <p><b>Goal:</b> To protect my all-or-nothing self-image.</p>	<p><b>Assumption:</b> There might be a lot at stake psychologically for both of us. We are both complex individuals and are neither perfect nor utterly deficient.</p> <p><b>Goal:</b> To understand the identity issues we both are struggling with. Build a more complex self-image to maintain my balance and composure more easily.</p>

# Communication Flow Chart



## Making a Transition to Using Nonviolent Communication in Daily Life

- ★ Be aware of the four components (*observations, feelings, needs, requests*) and incorporate them into your message.
- ★ Release any feelings of restriction to following the formula precisely (*i.e. When this happens...I/you feel...because I/you need...and my/your request is...*)
- ★ When you use NVC “by the book,” you may run into some challenges at first. Folks who are familiar with NVC and Marshall’s voice will likely hear his voice coming through (and not yours), which they might interpret as patronizing or disingenuous, since that’s not the way you generally speak. Same might happen for folks who are not familiar with NVC yet still know that this way of communicating isn’t what they are used to from you. It could create a sense of unease, even distance from people; they might think that you’re trying to speak as a therapist would.
- ★ Initially, it is easier to follow the formula. Let the other party know that you are practicing a new way of connecting through communication because your intention is to gain deeper understanding and nurture the relationship.
- ★ Use your own voice while being conscious of all four components of NVC. It’s okay to leave some components implied, if they are *clearly implied*. (sounds like an oxymoron but here is an example: “I ran as fast as I could. I was so scared.” (The unmet need was safety). Sometimes a wish is an implied request. (“I would really like to talk to you if you’re willing, as soon as your schedule clears up.”)
- ★ Speak kindly (or playfully), in your own voice.
- ★ You can still ask for clarification of feelings or needs or intentions or requests or whatever you need to get clarity if the other person leaves you unsure of what to do with their words.

I have learned through my own experience that if a person gives me permission to speak from an emotional state (so as to feel more connected to my experience) and then they respond in a calculated way (like a therapist would, using their words carefully and being vague), it comes across as condescending. Of course, that is triggering, because it seems detached. Detached from an experience in which I am barely keeping my head above water. Maybe when people speak from an emotional state, we hold space. We don’t use our NVC training outwardly. We use our understanding of NVC to gain an awareness of why the person is acting the way they are acting, or saying what they are saying, without picking their words apart. We let them be emotional. When the opportunity comes to reflect on the experience from a place in which both people are somewhat removed from the emotional turmoil, then we can use our carefully structured sentences and approach the conversation intellectually.

## BREAKING DOWN WALLS

In the context of interpersonal communication, if the intention is to communicate in a way that fosters connection rather than contributes to alienation, as presenters of information, our responsibility lies in careful consideration of our intentions and the delivery of our message. We are not responsible, though, for the way each person receives the information we are communicating, because we can only take responsibility for things which we can control. The way our messages are perceived - our impact - isn't one of those things.

As receivers of information, our responsibility lies in suspending judgment, remaining curious, and understanding that each person speaks their own truth in light of their own experiences, feelings, needs, values and beliefs. Our responsibility also lies in remembering to resist the temptation to assign intent to the person delivering the message. We can experience an impact of the message, but we cannot know what the intention behind the message was, unless we get curious and ask. We are solely responsible for the way we receive the information and the ways we choose to respond to it.

In order to foster an authentic connection that allows for a brave expression of both person's needs, communicate what is necessary and true for you in a way that is kind toward the other, and receive what is communicated with an open heart and an open mind, suspending judgment. And if you absolutely must make assumptions, always assume that the other person's intentions are good.

TINA BOLJEVAC

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## GRACEFUL COMMUNICATION

Peaceful and graceful communication is one free of shaming. It is one in which we express our own truths about how we feel and what we need in light of what is real for us, and then invite the other for a discourse aimed at understanding each other better. It is one where curiosity is the vehicle and a desire for connection is the fuel; the one where no one aims to harm and no one is preparing a defense. In this openness, we operate from a heart-space, which has the capacity to bring about magnificent shifts. We can only inspire, and not demand transformation. And we do so not by attempting to prove that we are right, but by allowing our light to illuminate the darkness, without attaching to any particular outcome.

Tina Boljevac

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## *Examples of real-life scenarios and conversations. Let's dig in!*

### THIRD STORY & AN INVITATION TO ENGAGE

#### **Scenario #1**

*A couple of co-workers deal with children's challenging behaviors in a very different way. One tends to ignore the behaviors, and the other tends to jump in to fix it, even at the expense of other things that are happening at the time.*

To start a conversation, try this approach (invitation to engage):

"It seems that you and I have a different way of approaching this issue in the classroom, and we both know that we need to find common ground on this so that we are not giving the children mixed messages. Would you be willing to talk about this with me after work today?"

#### **Scenario #2:**

*One of the family members is discouraged by the lack of involvement on part of the other family member in a meaningful dialogue about a pressing issue. Person A recently communicated this to Person B. After a couple of days, Person B replies:*

Person B: "I think what limits my communication with you about the deep serious stuff, beyond being unclear what is going on for me, is the lack of convenience in doing so. Just came to me. You lean on the ability to write to articulate yourself. I lean on processing verbally with the other. You prefer not to talk by phone and our opportunities to speak in person are limited." *(describes the challenge/invites engagement)*

Person A: "I can talk on the phone when I can sense full engagement. I have witnessed many times that full engagement is not what people offer when having phone conversations. When I talk to someone in person, or we write back and forth, there is a 100% engagement. If I devote my time and attention to a phone conversation, I expect the same in return and when it's not there or is partially there, I disengage. It's about reciprocity and respect for my time and attention."

Person A: "Thanks for communicating that. That is quite helpful. I would like to arrange a time with you to talk again with my full attention on the conversation to discuss your most recent note. When are you up for that?"

*You can think of a third story as an objective summary... the way a mediator might describe the situation:*

"A couple of family members are having a hard time finding opportunities to engage in a deep dialogue. In the absence of opportunities to speak in person, which would be the preferable option for both, one prefers to communicate by writing, one prefers talking on the phone. The person who would rather process and express their thoughts through writing strongly dislikes talking on the phone; the person who would rather have a phone conversation isn't keen on writing, as they process their thoughts better through the back and forth interaction."

## PROVIDING EMPATHY (EMPATHETIC CONNECTION)

### Example

Person A: "I feel really angry in light of what happened because I have a strong need for autonomy and this leaves me feeling stuck and helpless, which is not how I want to feel."

Person B: "I hear you. You are feeling angry because you would have wanted more choice in the matter."

### **Scenario:**

*Ex partners reflecting on the end of their relationship that happened years ago.*

"I imagine you felt deeply disappointed, and scared, and lost, and angry, resentful and hurt (*empathizing with feelings*) at the realization that I didn't want to seek counseling in the end. That I chose to end the relationship, when you had made a commitment to work on yourself and wanted to keep working on the relationship (*empathizing with implied need for acceptance, connection, understanding, contribution*). When I told you I loved you and appreciated you, yet I still wanted to shift our relationship from what it was to the friendship I thought we could rebuild. I imagine you felt defeated, and helpless, and sad when you would hear me talk about how I was envisioning us down the road, but would not consider staying together. You felt like (*idiom: this is really a thought, not a feeling*) you were doing all you could to save the relationship, and I had given up on it."

## SELF-EMPATHY

### Example

Instead of:

"I must be dense because I'm not understanding this material."

Try:

"I'm getting restless and fidgety (*behavior*) because I am feeling overwhelmed (*feeling*) by all this new information and I'm in need of some understanding (*need*) of how challenging it is for me to follow along without getting ample opportunities to stretch and play (*strategy*)."

## WHEN IT'S YOUR TURN TO SHARE:

### Examples

*Consider the following ways to begin expressing what's alive in you:*

"I've been thinking a lot about what you said... The impact that the events had on you...your feelings and associated thoughts and unmet needs..." (*paraphrase*)

"I never knew... It must have been difficult to feel so conflicted..." (*empathic connection*)



"I said some of this before, but I would like to reiterate that part of the reason..." *(your story, during which you clarify intentions, acknowledge impact)*

"I am glad, though, that I now know what was going on for you during those times as this will inform the way I go about this issue in the future..." *(offer a way to move forward and an invitation to problem-solve together)*

## MAKING OBSERVATIONS versus INFERENCES

### Example

"When you come home, slam the door shut, and stomp up the stairs *(observation)*... I feel..." vs.  
 "When you come home all pissed off, I feel..." *(inference made based on the observation of behavior)*

## EXPRESSING FEELINGS:

### Example

"I am disappointed that you didn't seek to understand where my words were coming from or what my feelings or needs were when I was asking the questions that triggered you."

## POSITIONS VS. INTERESTS

*Differing positions is what conflict seems to be about; seemingly incompatible interests is what the conflict is actually about.*

### **Scenario #1:**

Mother: "Can you turn the music down?!!!"  
*(I am trying to hear your grandmother on the phone)*

Son: "I can't turn it down!"  
*(I am trying to learn the lyrics for tomorrow's play practice)*

### **Scenario #2:**

Friend A: "Could you close the window?"  
*(I am freezing)*

Friend B: "I want it open!"  
*(I need fresh air, I am feeling nauseous)*

**Scenario #3:**

Co-worker A: "Could you please not eat that sandwich in the classroom?"  
*(The smell of onions is so strong I might get sick)*

Co-worker B: "I need to eat."  
*(I don't get another break and I can't leave the classroom)*

**IDENTITY CONVERSATION****Scenario:**

*Something has happened and the trust is diminished between two old friends.*

Person A says to Person B: "It's not that I don't trust your intentions. What I don't trust is that your actions would necessarily be aligned with your intentions; or that you would speak the whole truth."

*(can be very triggering to someone who has a strong identity as a trustworthy or honorable person)*

**PROBLEM SOLVING:****Scenario #1:**

*A child has engaged in behavior with a neighbor that was not desirable. A conversation took place between the child and the mother, and the child asked the mother not to relay the information to the father (after the information had already been shared).*

*In this example, the mother is having a follow up conversation with the father:*

Mother: "Kai says that he doesn't want you to know about it because he doesn't want to have another conversation about it."

Father: "I can relate to that for sure. That is challenging for me because I want to explore things with him and it seems clear that you do, too. Logistically it is not possible to have those conversations all together each time." *(Implied request here: "would you be willing to help problem-solve?")*

Mother: "I don't see there needing to be just one approach to this. Sometimes, we can talk about important things all together. Sometimes, it will be either you or I that talks to him and we can relay the information with his knowledge and tell the other person that the conversation felt complete. The other person reserves the right to revisit this with him at some later time when the opportunity presents itself, if he is willing to engage. Other times, we can communicate to him that multiple conversations and perspectives are sometimes necessary so that the maximum amount of learning and understanding can take place."

Father: "That sounds good to me."

## Scenario #2

*Co-parents who are also close friends attempt to bring more clarity to their dynamic going forward.*

Person A to Person B: "Maybe we let go of any unhelpful emotional attachment and shift our focus from what was or could have been to what is - we practice equanimity - and focus primarily on our co-parenting relationship, in which we come together as a family for the little and big things and tend to them together...and when not physically together, then in spirit and through sharing, like we have been. And we continue to respect, and value, and appreciate each other for all that we bring to this child's life. We do what we can for our son to thrive."

## MAKING REQUESTS

### Examples

Instead: "Would you not spend so much time at work?"

Try: "Would you be willing to spend two evenings a week at home?"

Instead: "Would you please start cleaning up after yourself?"

Try: "Would you be willing to put away your dishes?"

Instead: "I'd like to spend some time with you this evening."

Try: "Would you be willing to spend some time with me this evening?"

## MAKING A REQUEST, DECLINING A REQUEST, OFFERING EMPATHY

### Example

Person A: "Would you be willing to come over at 7 pm this evening to finish our conversation?" (*request*)

Person B: "Are you eager to finish what we started and need closure? (*empathy*) I am really overwhelmed (*feeling*) with the amount of work that is due by the end of day tomorrow. I think that if I keep working on it for a couple of hours tonight I might be in a good place to leave the rest for tomorrow (*need for ease/peace of mind, understanding*). How about I come over at 9 pm and we can talk then?" (*request that attempts to meet both needs*)

## CONSCIOUS COMMUNICATION OR NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION

*Either is fine! Conscious communication means being intentional about words you are saying.*

### Scenario #1:

*There was betrayal. Partners are trying to work through it. They have made a commitment towards open communication. Now they have spent some time together and they offer each other a gentle embrace as a goodbye. One of the partners pulls away quickly, and communicates this later:*

#### Conscious Communication:

Person A to Person B: "This is what is going on for me: whenever there is any sort of physical contact with you now, especially prolonged, I fight the thoughts and feelings that don't serve me from coming to the surface. So there is a lot of energy that I'm expending to keep myself from going where I don't want to go. I don't always want to be experiencing this internal battle so it's easier to not have any physical contact. I am also aware that this is not how I want things to be and would like to see ease and freedom there once was. I am not sure how to get there."

#### Modified Nonviolent Communication:

"I feel fearful when in close physical proximity to you (*observation*) because trusting you with my body has been seriously compromised (*need for trust and safety was unmet*)...and the ways in which that had played out keeps coming up for me (*need for ease*). My *request* is for understanding, and patience."

### Scenario #2:

*Joe and Amanda are friends. Joe shares with Amanda that on a couple of occasions, he has taken something from Amanda without asking. Amanda, upon hearing this, asks if Joe has taken something that recently went missing. The next day, Amanda playfully inquires about yet another thing that went missing, wondering if Joe has taken that, too. Joe gets upset and communicates that he no longer wishes to come over because he has no interest in being asked if he has taken anything else from Amanda's house.*

Amanda: "Is it possible that you feel dismayed at the prospect of my thinking that you might have taken these things, and have a need to be trusted that you wouldn't take things without asking? And your request is for me to trust that you wouldn't take anything, rather than inquire if you have taken something that might be missing in the future?" (*NVC - receiving empathically*)

## **PRACTICE:**

*Search for conscious communication signs and/or components of NVC!*

### **Activity:**

*Think about a time when you have expressed a grievance (to a friend, family member, co-worker, or officially) - it can be a text message, or a series of back and forth text messages - maybe it's an email.*

*If it's easy to pull up, pull it up so that it is readily available to you.*

*If you can't find one, scroll through your texts or emails and see if you can find some where you are actively engaged in a dispute, arguing over something, or problem-solving.*

*If you found it, screenshot it.*

*If you can't, don't worry, you can study the examples provided.*

### **Scenario #1:**

*A parent writes to a school administrator regarding a child's reported absences.  
See attached email.*

### **Scenario #2:**

*A director communicates expectations to staff.  
See attached email.*

### **Scenario #3:**

*One parent writes to another, following the other parent's unexpected visit for a playdate with their child. The parents are separated, and are currently going through a difficult time working through an issue that led to separation.*

*"I have dinner on the stove so can't come out at this moment to greet you properly and spend time together. Also, I would like Lennox to see pleasant interactions and not this sad coldness that is currently present between us. So my request is to let me know in advance when you are coming so I can be ready for it. Thank you." (request is stated - though worded more like a demand; and the implied need - through the wish expressed; feelings are not expressed but what comes through is frustration, disappointment, sadness - depends on the tone the other person assigns to the words)*

Continued communication through text:

*"I'm not implying that this coldness is coming from you currently. It is coming from me. (contribution) I don't feel that when we talk over text, because when I write to you, I imagine you as the whole person that*

I know and care about, not just the part of you that was responsible for the damage. But when I see you, I am reminded of your behavior and feel disgusted by it as I'm still deeply in pain over it. *(sharing a story; also sharing observations and feelings)* I believed we shared a genuine connection, had great communication, were honest and authentic with one another, that we understood each other...and all that was shattered [when you told me about the betrayal] *(implies unmet needs)*. I have been trying to understand it - to understand YOU - this whole time, in hope that I can feel differently when I see you in person one day... So I need advance notice when I can expect to see you in person so I have time to talk myself into feeling differently. *(stated as a need but is actually an implied request; also implies understanding that thoughts influence feelings)*. I am honestly concerned about how this is currently affecting Lennox and it is in my interest to change how I feel when I see you." *(implies desire to change behavior/level of contribution)*.

Continues:

"My intention in writing this is for you to understand where the in-person coldness is coming from. And that I am actively working on trying to shift this, and until I can shift this so these feelings aren't automatically called to the surface, my request is to let me know when I might see you. This is not so I would be able to put on an act, but actively shift my thoughts to shift my emotional responses." *(Intentions clarified, underlying dynamics behind the request are clarified)*

### Scenario #3:

*One friend reflects back to another about her experience of what just transpired over text. They were going to get together to discuss recent events but in light of the current energy brought about by a text exchange, one chooses not to follow through with the plans.*

"I'm sad *(feeling)* that my messages triggered you to the point of saying what you've said earlier, and inspired the feelings of anger, irritation and disgust, and resulted in you choosing not to come over to have a conversation we were going to have *(observation, facts)*. I am disappointed, too, *(feeling)* because I was looking forward to learning more about what you have come to understand *(unmet expectation; unmet need for understanding)*. Maybe you can write it out, or we can revisit it at another time altogether, when/if you're willing. *(problem-solving; request)*"

### Scenario #4:

*Ex business partners discuss the missing piece - empathy - that they both would have liked to have received from each other after their business was dissolved. This is what one of them writes to the other:*

"You didn't seem to be willing to put yourself in my shoes...to try to understand where I was coming from. I tried to explain to you what the need was I was trying to meet at the time...but you wouldn't hear it, as you were so engrossed in your own version or an idea of what was happening. *(identity conversation - the other partner could have received this in a way that would knock him off balance, even though there was no accusation made here, simply interpretations of observations; this would have landed better in person than over text)*. And I haven't been able to empathize with you either, because I was so bent on not understanding how you didn't understand where I was coming from, and not taking some responsibility for the state of our business..." *(tip: give before receiving; i.e. Listen, acknowledge, empathize with the other person before you expect them to do the same for you. And if you can't give before receiving it first, give yourself self-empathy)*.



EXAMPLE

Tina Boljevac <tina.boljevac@gmail.com>

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## Kian's absences on report card

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Tina Boljevac <tina.boljevac@gmail.com>

Sun, Jun 27, 2021 at 1:56 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: Luke Manson <lucienmanson@gmail.com>

Hi [REDACTED]

I meant to inquire about Kian's absences when we got the report card after the second trimester, but I haven't gotten around to it till now. I'm looking at the last report card and it says that Kian was absent twice in the second trimester and four times in the third trimester. I am wondering how and when the attendance is generally taken and recorded because Kian hasn't missed a day of school this past year!

While it is likely that these "absences" don't present an issue, I would like to see official records reflect accurate information, hence my inquiry.

Is there anything we can do on a daily basis next school year and going forward, that would be helpful in preventing such inaccuracies?

Thanks so much,

Tina

Tina Boljevac  
Allow, L3C  
[allowplayandyoga.com](http://allowplayandyoga.com)  
+1 802 391 0960

Intuitive play. Mindful movement. Insightful parenting.  
*Inspiring and Empowering Families through Engagement, Yoga and Compassionate Connection.*

*Excerpt from a director's email to staff:*

### **Notifying Director of Unexpected Absence:**

- **Work Days** - text by 7:00am if you are unable to work. State the reason (no need for super details or elaboration. If I have questions I will ask!). If you are unwell and know for sure you will not be at work the following day, you may text me at night but know that I typically turn my phone to "do not disturb" by 8:00pm.
  - If you cannot text me by 7:00am for whatever reason, then you **MUST** call the school and speak to someone at 7:30. Calling or texting me between 7:00-7:45 conflicts with my parenting and getting the Buechler clan through our morning chaos!
- **Weekends** - send an email with the "issue" as the email subject (example: "Julie - sprained ankle!") Email communication allows me to accept information when I am able to and am not caught off guard by information that I was not prepared to receive. I understand things happen on the weekend, and for many, their first instinct is to notify me. I kindly ask that you do not text or call me on the weekends.
  - Before you write your email, consider the level of professionalism you will present. Oversharing is uncomfortable in most circumstances. Personally, it affects my ability to sort through what is important and relevant to our work. Again, if I have questions or need clarity on anything that is shared in your email, I will surely reach out! I will reply to the email, letting you know that I have received the note and if there are any follow up steps or policy/exclusion reminders.



Reflection Exercise

## **Contemplating Dynamics Underlying Difficult Conversations**

*Study the Difficult Conversations Synopsis chart, then answer these questions:*

How do I treat people when I enter a conversation with goals and assumptions set out under A Battle of Messages?

How do I react when I am treated this way?

How would my behavior or demeanor change if I were to shift to the assumptions and goals of A Learning Conversation?

Would there be a difference in outcome? How might it change?

How do I react to critical feedback? Do I get angry? Frozen? Hurt? Defensive? Avoidant? Curious?

Does the source, tone, or content affect my reaction? How? What identity issues might become activated?

How do I feel about giving critical feedback? Reluctant? Fearful? Uncertain? Confident? Calm? What identity issues might become activated here?

## Exercise

### **Discovering the Underlying Need**

*There are many layers of needs behind things we commonly say. Let's explore.*

My physical therapist says I need to do my exercises every day.

My mother needs me to drive her to her doctor's appointment tomorrow.

I need you all to finish your NAEYC portfolios by March 6th!

I need to finish this project by the end of this weekend or I will lose my mind!

I need the children to respect me.

I need my partner to have a conversation with me without getting angry.

I need chocolate!

I need you to stop talking.

You need to see a therapist.

He seems troubled. You need to steer clear.

I need my children to pick up their mess!

I need you. I can't imagine living my life without you.

I need your help.

My car needs serious repairs and I'm broke. I have no idea what to do. I need a functioning car!

She needs to chill out.

Daddy is disappointed when you don't finish your food.

I need a mental health day!

I need a back rub.

I haven't eaten in two days. I'm starving.

## Self-Empathy Worksheet

*Very helpful for journaling and/or as preparation for a difficult conversation. Think of a specific situation you've struggled with recently and work through these steps.*

### **1a. Observation:**

What am I reacting to? What actually happened? What would a video camera record?

### **1b. My Thoughts About Observation:**

What story am I telling myself about what happened? How am I evaluating what happened?

### **2. Need:**

What need is unmet for me? What am I longing for? *Needs don't reference any particular person, location, time, action, or object. Remember the distinction between your needs and your strategies.*

### **3. Feeling:**

What am I feeling when I think about this need? *Remember the distinction between expressing your thoughts and expressing your feelings.*

### **4. Request:**

What would I like? What would make my life more wonderful? *Requests are strategies (actions) to meet needs; stated in the positive, specific and doable in the present.*

## Reframing in NVC and Responding Consciously with Grace and Grit

Read the following statements:	Note if you see J, T, S, D	Rewrite the statement using the language of NVC: Observations, Feelings, Needs, Requests (Versus Judgements, Thoughts, Strategies, Demands)
<p>Every time I make a suggestion, you shoot me down. You make me feel so unimportant. I need you to be considerate of my feelings. Could you do that for me?</p>	<p>J, T, S</p>	<p><i>Lately, it seems that whenever I make a suggestion, you disagree with it and interrupt me before I'm even done talking. I feel discouraged when that happens because I have a need for consideration and harmony. Would you be willing to let me finish expressing myself and allow yourself some time to consider my suggestions?</i></p>
		<p><b>Now instead of reframing the original statement, respond to consciously:</b></p>
		<p><i>It seems that you need more consideration and feel discouraged when I interrupt you or voice disagreement before you're done talking. Thank you for sharing. I will do my best to give you time and space to express yourself because your opinion does matter to me and I'm noticing that this doesn't come across when I act the way I do.</i></p>
<p>You're late again!! You make me so mad when you show no respect for my time. I need you to show up when you say you will or I won't be making plans with you any longer.</p>	<p>Note if you see J, T, S, D</p>	<p><b>Rewrite the statement using the language of NVC: Observations, Feelings, Needs, Requests</b></p>
		<p><b>Now instead of reframing the original statement, respond to it consciously:</b></p>

	<b>Note if you see J, T, S, D</b>	<b>Rewrite the statement using the language of NVC: Observations, Feelings, Needs, Requests</b>
Samantha is so unmotivated. She just sits there and does nothing. I have to pick up all the slack and, honestly, I'm sick of it. Is she totally oblivious or just plain doesn't care?		
		<b>Now instead of reframing the original statement, respond to consciously:</b>
	<b>Note if you see J, T, S, D</b>	<b>Rewrite the statement using the language of NVC: Observations, Feelings, Needs, Requests</b>
I can't work with her. She never listens to anything I say. I was trying to get her to engage more with the children during lunch but she didn't say a word to me or them. I feel unheard and disrespected.		
		<b>Now instead of reframing the original statement, respond to it consciously:</b>

<p>You make me feel so frustrated because you always grunt when I ask you to do something and don't follow through on anything I ask you to do.</p>	<p><b>Note if you see J, T, S, D</b></p>	<p><b>Rewrite the statement using the language of NVC: Observations, Feelings, Needs, Requests</b></p>
		<p><b>Now instead of reframing the original statement, respond to it consciously:</b></p>
<p>I'm frustrated because every time you go to the bathroom, you're gone for at least 10 minutes and I'm left to manage all the children by myself.</p>	<p><b>Note if you see J, T, S, D</b></p>	<p><b>Rewrite the statement using the language of NVC: Observations, Feelings, Needs, Requests</b></p>

			<b>Now instead of reframing the original statement, respond to it consciously:</b>
		<b>Note if you see J, T, S, D</b>	<b>Rewrite the statement using the language of NVC: Observations, Feelings, Needs, Requests</b>
I am so upset because he won't talk to me. I tried to approach him in all the ways I could think of, and he just pushes me away. It breaks my heart. I need him to give me a chance and hear me out.			
			<b>Now instead of reframing the original statement, respond to it consciously:</b>
		<b>Note if you see J, T, S, D</b>	<b>Rewrite the statement using the language of NVC: Observations, Feelings, Needs, Requests</b>
He left one of the toddlers in the bathroom during a fire drill. He shouldn't be working with children. Period.			

			<b>Now instead of reframing the original statement, respond to it consciously:</b>
		<b>Note if you see J, T, S, D</b>	<b>Rewrite the statement using the language of NVC: Observations, Feelings, Needs, Requests</b>
There is always something up with you. I can never rely on you being available when I need you. You say you're here for me but then you're silent or always in some kind of predicament.			
			<b>Now instead of reframing the original statement, respond to it consciously:</b>
		<b>Note if you see J, T, S, D</b>	<b>Rewrite the statement using the language of NVC: Observations, Feelings, Needs, Requests</b>
You make me feel worried that it's only me who is invested in this friendship. You barely respond when I reach out, and almost never initiate an interaction. Do you even care anymore?			



			<b>Now instead of reframing the original statement, respond to it consciously:</b>
		<b>Note if you see J, T, S, D</b>	<b>Rewrite the statement using the language of NVC: Observations, Feelings, Needs, Requests</b>
You didn't do anything wrong. I told you countless times that it's not you. I just get so pulled into my head and so overwhelmed with everything that I have nothing left in me to give.			
			<b>Now instead of reframing the original statement, respond to it consciously:</b>
		<b>Note if you see J, T, S, D</b>	<b>Rewrite the statement using the language of NVC: Observations, Feelings, Needs, Requests</b>
Could you please just let me know where we stand? What do you want from me? This push and pull dynamic is driving me crazy and I don't know how to be around you anymore.			

			<b>Now instead of reframing the original statement, respond to consciously:</b>
		<b>Note if you see J, T, S, D</b>	<b>Rewrite the statement using the language of NVC: Observations, Feelings, Needs, Requests</b>
For the love of god, will you just be quiet?!!			
			<b>Now instead of reframing the original statement, respond to it consciously:</b>
		<b>Note if you see J, T, S, D</b>	<b>Rewrite the statement using the language of NVC: Observations, Feelings, Needs, Requests</b>
<p>"Oh my god, you won't believe what she just told me! Apparently, her boyfriend flat out told her he slept with someone else. Multiple times! Kept her in the dark till now. She's all torn up about it. I feel for her, but, I mean, what could she have expected given that she's so ridiculously understanding! Did you know she was totally ok with him hanging out with her? So foolish! She should have known better."</p>			

			<b>Now instead of reframing the original statement, respond to it consciously:</b>
		<b>Note if you see J, T, S, D</b>	<b>Rewrite the statement using the language of NVC: Observations, Feelings, Needs, Requests</b>
I just had a conversation with "the boss" and she is practically accusing me of perpetuating these issues with Gregory! I am completely unsupported here. I keep telling her that he's the problem here and she keeps pointing the finger at me, saying I have an attitude problem. Me?!			
			<b>Now instead of reframing the original statement, respond to it consciously:</b>
		<b>Note if you see J, T, S, D</b>	<b>Rewrite the statement using the language of NVC: Observations, Feelings, Needs, Requests</b>
This is so frustrating! Every time Leila comes in, she throws these ridiculous tantrums and I'm sure it's because there are no boundaries at home. She wouldn't be acting like she's out of her mind if her parents were even remotely responsive to her needs!			

Now instead of reframing the original statement, respond to it consciously:		

Notes:

## Nonviolent Communication Worksheet

Upon experiencing something that makes you feel uncomfortable, instead of saying:  
"You're such a ...", "I hate when you always..." or "You make me feel..."

### Do the following:

1. Without criticizing, write down what you actually saw/heard. Be specific. (Write only those things that would be visible on a video recording, not what you think they were thinking or doing or being...)

*When I hear/see... or When (this happens) ...*

2. Express your feelings, without implying any intention on the part of the other.

*I feel....*

3. Express your need, and avoid connecting it to the other person.

*Because I need....*

4. Make a request that leaves the other feeling free to say yes or no. Make the request actionable.

*Would you be willing to ...?*

### Now put it all together:

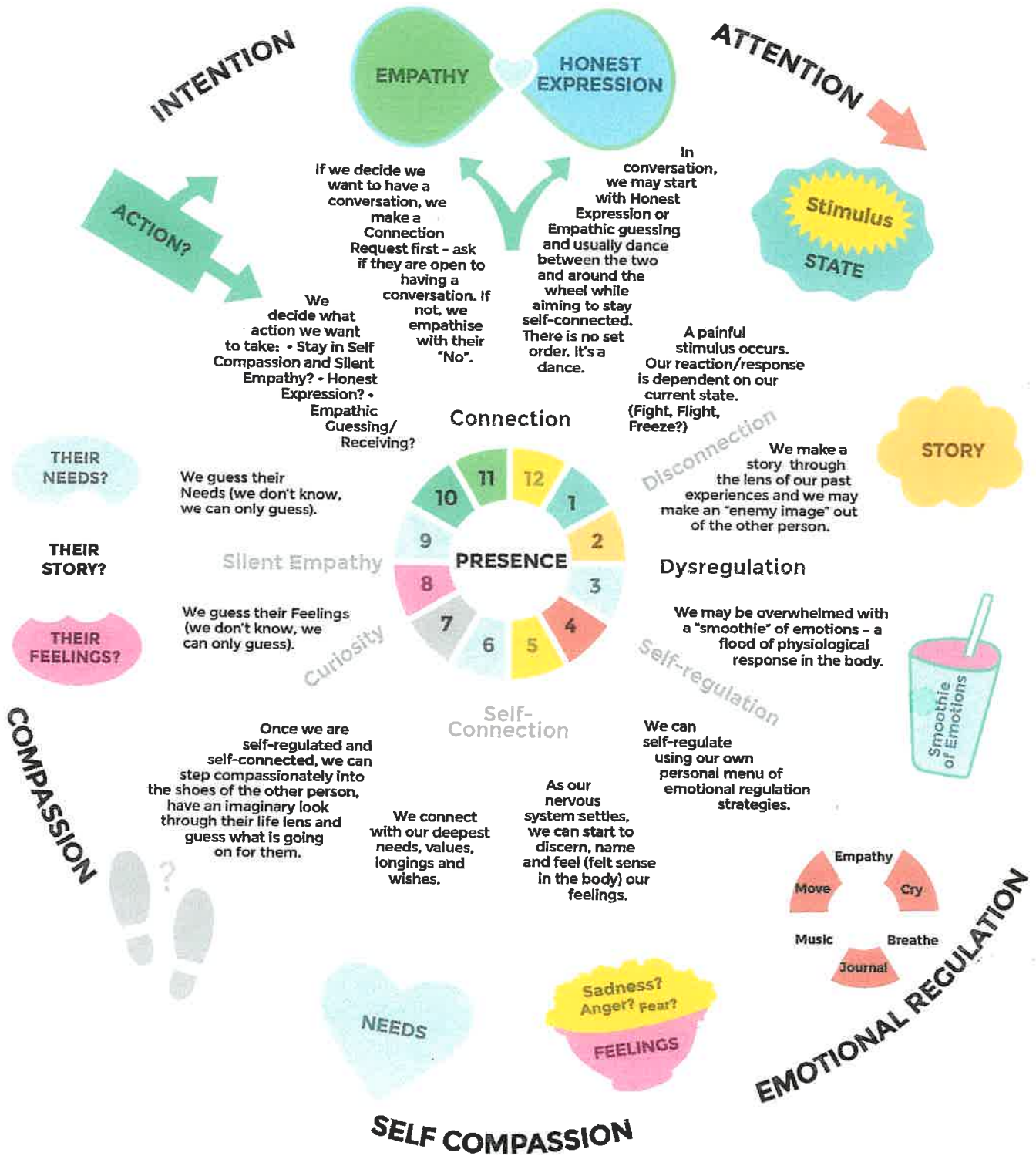
*When (this happens)* \_\_\_\_\_,

*I feel* \_\_\_\_\_,

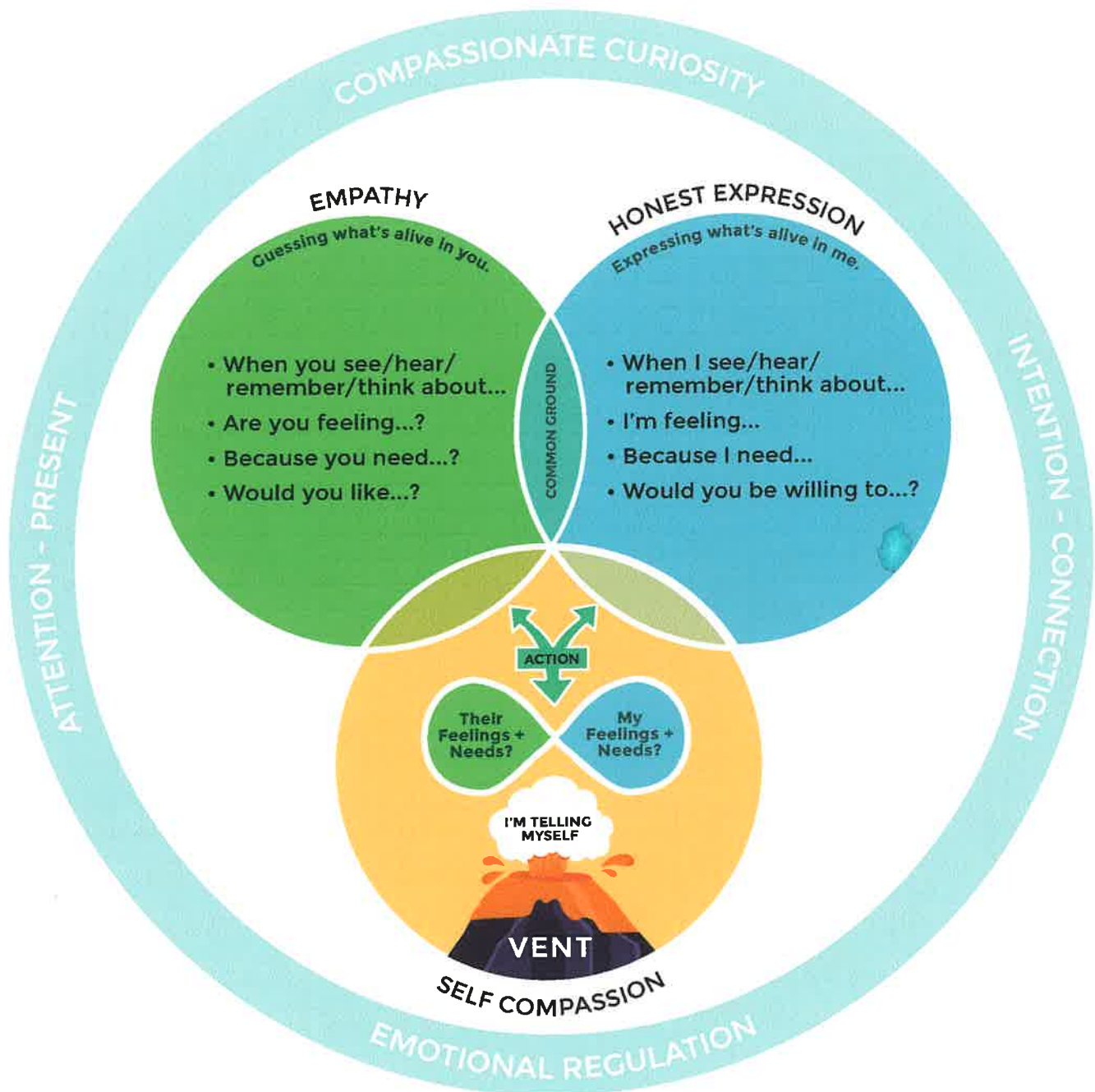
*Because I need* \_\_\_\_\_,

*Would you be willing to* \_\_\_\_\_?

# THE WHEEL OF CONNECTION



# An Overview of COMPASSIONATE COMMUNICATION

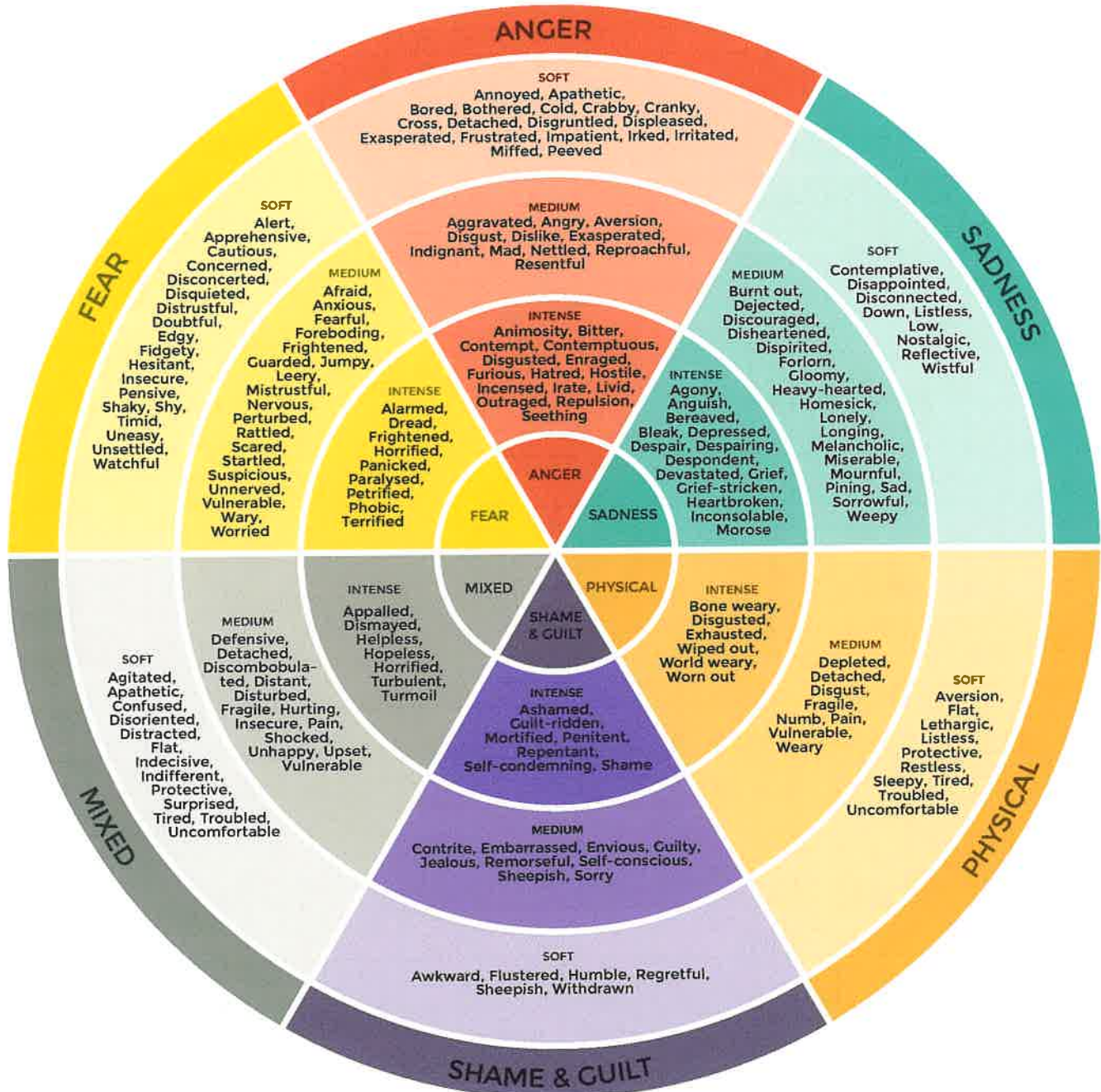


# FULFILLED FEELINGS

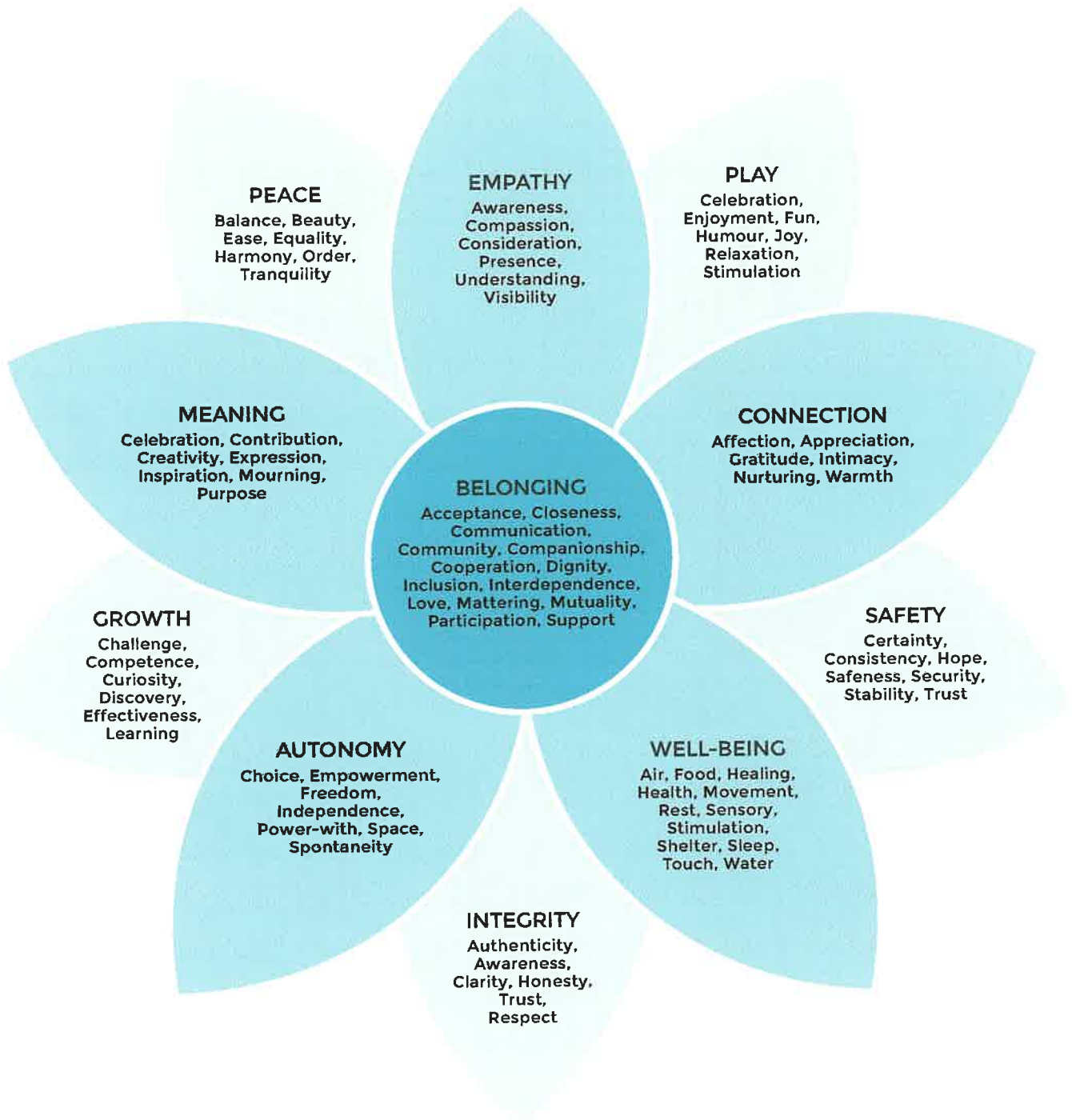




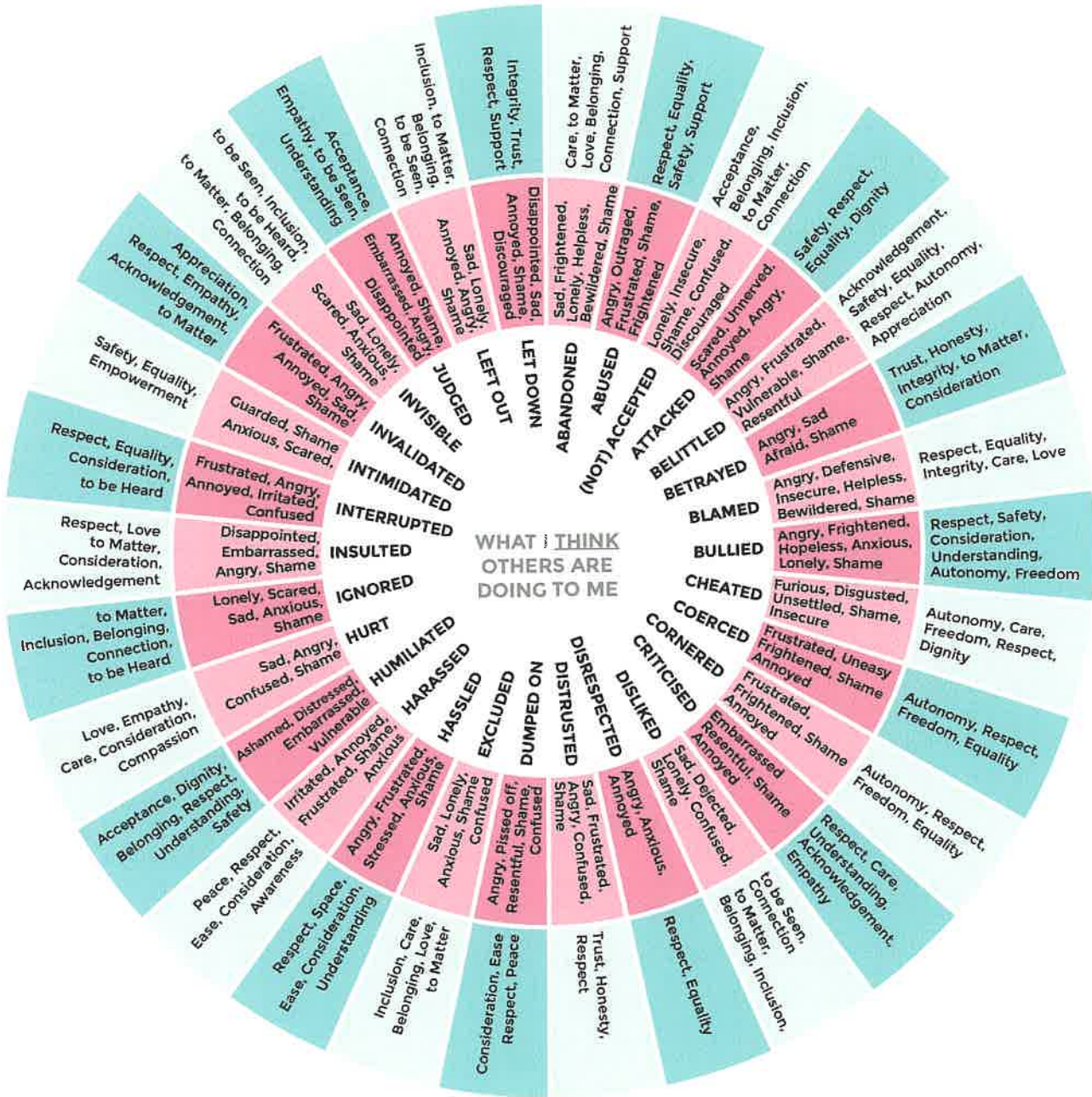
# UNFULFILLED FEELINGS



# UNIVERSAL HUMAN NEEDS



# SUGGESTED FEELINGS AND NEEDS beneath Words that we commonly confuse with Feelings



**FRIEND:** I'm feeling left out.  
**EMPATHY GUESS:** Are you feeling sad and longing for inclusion?

