

MAY 6

There is a vitality, a life force, an energy, a quickening, that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all time, this expression is unique. And, if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and will be lost.

—Martha Graham

Making Requests Count

The first three components of the Nonviolent Communication process clarify our observations, feelings, and the needs we are trying to meet. The fourth component is to make a specific and doable request. The request completes the communication by stating specifically what we would like from someone else to meet our need. Without the request, our communication can be confusing and can easily be seen as a demand.

Say you come home from work and find your children watching TV. The living room has dirty dishes and clothes strewn throughout, and you say, “When I come home and see dirty dishes and laundry in the living room, I feel annoyed because I value mutual respect and orderliness.” Then you walk out of the room. Now your children must decide for themselves what you want. You could want the room to be picked up right now. But when that’s done, will you still be mad? Or maybe it would be OK with you if the house were picked up in a half hour. Or maybe you want something else. If you end your communication with a request, what you want is clear to everyone. Try this: “When I come home and see dirty dishes and laundry in the living

room, I feel annoyed because I value mutual respect and orderliness. Would you be willing to pick up the living room within thirty minutes?" You may still need to debate the timing of when the room is picked up, but it is clear to them what you are asking. When people know what you want, you have a better chance of meeting your needs.

Make clear requests of people today, and notice if you are more successful at meeting your needs.



MAY 7

*It is right and necessary that we should be individuals.
The Divine Spirit never made any two things alike—
No two rosebushes, two snowflakes, two grains of sand,
Or two persons. We are all just a little unique for each
wears A different face; but behind each is
One Presence—God
—Ernest Holmes*

Universal Needs

Every human being has the same universal needs. For instance, we all need support but we may choose different methods to receive it. When I am under a stressful deadline, I prefer quiet, uninterrupted time to accomplish my task. In that situation, if people allow me my quiet space, my need for support is met. We all need companionship, but we choose different people to be our friends and lovers. We all need food, but we like different kinds. We all breathe the same air. We all love, cry, and grieve.