

## **Calling All Giraffes!** **Nonviolent Communication® Peacemaking in a Crisis**

Those of us who are trained in NVC have received a gift that is of paramount value now; we can self-soothe with Self-empathy. Self-empathy is always the first step in a crisis; the method to create enough peace within ourselves so that Empathy for others becomes possible. Those of us who observed Marshall as he created peace from chaos and cooperation from hatred can replicate his remarkable results using Self-empathy and Empathy as he did. As we faced the realities in Washington on January 6<sup>th</sup> that were so shocking to many of us, we were simultaneously given an opportunity that is rare in The United States in previous years. If you have studied Nonviolent Communication® you are a trained peacemaker and now you have unlimited opportunities to practice with all the citizens who have long considered themselves disenfranchised from certain rights and privileges and isolated from those in power. Marshall considered empathetic people to be like giraffes, the land animal with the biggest heart; let us become his Giraffe Team.

Marshall worked in Palestinian refugee camps in Israel; he had faith that he could survive, using the skills he had developed as a psychotherapist, calming desperate, angry, and terrified patients. Many of us have survived indescribable dangers ourselves which we did not seek; by contrast; imagine Marshall's choice to travel to refugee camps.

Today, like many of you, I ask myself this question; “what is enough of a commitment to peacemaking for me?” Where do each of us become “part of the solution” rather than reminders of “when good men do nothing”; what actions do I take for the right reasons?

There is no right or wrong in NVC; there is no judgment in NVC and that is the remarkably unique gift I found during my first introduction to Marshall after decades of meditation practice and communication training. When we live with Feelings and Needs instead of “right” and “wrong” we have the most amazing internal shift into non-duality even if our inner state has not yet reached the pinnacle of commitment to social change as had Marshall's during his extraordinary life.

As we consider the tens of thousands of angry, frightened, and sad Americans whose need for respect, financial security, and peace have not been met for a long time let us continue to contemplate the most effective actions we can take to shift the rage within this population that feels hopeless that their needs can ever be met. In addition, how do we stay safe by applying the Nonviolent Communication® practice of “protective use of force”?

**Katy Tur, newscaster on MSNB January 15, 2021 asked “What happens when you continually call your opponents evil and make them the enemy of not just you, but of the people you say you want to represent?”**

**Norm Ornstein, American Enterprise Institute Emeritus Scholar replied, “You completely delegitimize the entire political system and the culmination of this is that after this horrific attack ...we could have seen our whole system obliterated.”**

This is our opportunity; threats of violence have come from the left and the right; from Democrats and Republicans. Can we connect to their unmet needs without voting ourselves? Can we remain in Marshall’s state of Self-empathy so that we can make a difference by safely offering Empathy?

**Empathizing with Those who are Extremely Angry because their Needs are Not Met:**

As an expert in avoiding and healing Domestic Violence and as a certified Mediator I know that to contribute to peace, we must self-soothe within 4 ½ minutes and always before communicating in any way. From the moment we feel our inner state shift to fear, anger and/or sadness we must begin, and these may be some of your feelings and unmet needs which are alive in many of us right now. Please notice that I have added BREATHE, a deep yogic breath to each “round of Self-empathy” as so many of my clients have demonstrated that when they feel frightened, angry and/or sad they forget to breathe normally. In Self-empathy we first notice that we feel triggered:

1. Are you feeling triggered when you think about the invasion of the Capitol?
2. Are you feeling triggered when you think about the upcoming impeachment trial of Donald Trump?
3. Are you feeling triggered about the behavior of certain law enforcement officers?
4. Are you feeling triggered by the current financial situation in America caused by Covid 19?

**Here are examples of Self-empathy.**

When I think about: (Select one of the Triggers above or one that is alive in your right now)

FEELINGS	NEEDS	BREATHE
I feel Anxious because my need for Peace isn’t being met		BREATHE
I feel Worried because my need for Understanding isn’t being met		BREATHE
I feel Frustrated because my need for Hope isn’t been met		BREATHE
I feel Scared that my need for Safety may not be met		BREATHE

If this resonates with you; if you deeply enjoy being a giraffe, then let us co-create an additional way to honor Marshall with a Giraffe Team that addresses our country's current urgent needs for social change and if you have already done so please contact me and share the details.

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