

## October 2020 — Time to Take a Time-In

Dear Parents,

Stop! Take a few deep breaths. What do you need right now?

Victoria heard from a client recently how surprised he was to discover the power he had to change what was going on by just *stopping* to *notice* what was happening in him.

This was a college student Victoria has been working with to develop NVC communication skills. He'd been triggered by something a friend said, and was on the verge of punching something and using language he would regret in his rage—which habit was exactly the reason he'd wanted to learn about NVC in the first place. All of a sudden, he remembered his “homework” from a previous session with Victoria: to stop every now and then during the day to *take a time-in*. And he did it! He stopped himself in his tracks and asked himself, “What do I feel right now, and what do I need?”

He reported that when he did this, before he'd even had time to fully identify a feeling or a need, his anger had already shifted from red-hot and ready to punch somebody to a calmer state. A state that was much more like the person he really wants to be when he's triggered.

And there it was once again: the power of NVC to quickly shift a situation from out of control to manageable. We've seen the shift with clients, we've felt it ourselves, and this was another reminder of how effective it can be to *take a time-in*.

“Take a time-in” is a term we came up with when we were writing [Respectful Parents](#), [Respectful Kids](#). “Take a time-out” was a well-worn phrase by that time, and it didn't describe the action we wanted to inspire—which is to move closer to what is going on in you rather than away from it. Since then, we have come to see taking a time-in as a quick, realistic choice we can make anytime (not just in situations when we're triggered) to realign with what is important to us.

Can you imagine taking a time-in yourself and going into that internal place for a moment before you confront your partner about something that didn't go the way you wanted it to, or your child about doing her homework? Before you launch into a “You should...” lecture? How might that change your world?

## Personal Practice

We invite you to make a practice of *taking a time-in* to realign with yourself. Do it a few times a day, whether you're feeling triggered or not. Like playing scales on an instrument or brushing your teeth, this helps you develop skill and routine.

Here's how you do it:

1. Stop! Take a few deep breaths. Notice any physical sensations in your body. You might even want to close your eyes to sense what is going on internally.
2. Ask yourself this question: "What do I feel and what do I need right now?"

If you're triggered, discovering your need will probably be enough. Once you've identified a need or two, take a few more deep breaths with each need in mind. Hold it gently, like a gem you have just discovered, then return to what you were doing.

Our guess is that you will return to your day with a slightly different view of what you were doing, more energy for it, or even an idea about what to do next. But you don't have to sit and think about solutions. Trust that by identifying your needs, you have primed a needs-meeting capacity in you that is likely to deliver multiple possible strategies and/or solutions for you to choose from.

## Family Activity

At your next family meeting, share what you are learning about taking a time-in. Ask whether your family members are willing to try it for themselves and share with you what they discover.

If you try this NVC mindfulness practice yourself, we would love to hear about your experience. Please email us at the addresses below!

Always wishing you well,

— Victoria & Sura

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