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THE INTENTIONS AND CONSCIOUSNESS BEHIND NVC

NVC CONSCIOUSNESS

WHEN WE ARE living Nonviolent Communication, all we can see is the feelings and needs of the other person. [10]

NVC-ERS NEVER WANT approval from other people. NVC-ers never give that power away and have other people tell them what to do. This is what we'd say in NVC:

Here's what I want. I'd like to know where you stand in relationship to that. I want to know your needs as well as mine, not because when I hear your needs I am going to give mine up or give in. I am conscious that I cannot benefit at your expense. Your needs are equally important to me as my needs. And I'm clear that doesn't ever mean having to give up my needs. [1]

I'M VERY CONFIDENT that you have never done anything wrong; you never will. [15]

WE WANT TO take action out of the desire to contribute to life rather than out of fear, guilt, shame, or obligation. [34]

EVERY MOMENT, EVERY living phenomenon is trying to do the most wonderful thing in the world they can. [15]

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE, I believe, for somebody to see an opportunity to enrich life as other than a precious gift. [16]

WHEN WE MEET that need to enrich life, we have a natural energy. It's a natural remembering, a thing we're doing every day; we start the day with a period of time to bring our consciousness to this beauty that each of us has, this power to make life wonderful. [17]

WHEN WE ARE aware of the power we have to enrich life, how we can serve life, it feels good. . . . There's nothing that is better, nothing that *feels* better, nothing that's more enjoyable than using our efforts in the service of life by contributing to one another's well-being. [8]

I BELIEVE THAT the most joyful and intrinsic motivation human beings have for taking any action is the desire to meet our needs and the needs of others. [34]

THE FACT REMAINS that when people get connected to the needs behind the anger, frustration, and violence, they move into a different

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world. They're in the world that Rumi, the thirteenth-century Sufi mystic and poet, talks about: "Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing there is a field: I'll meet you there." [8]

THAT WORLD THAT Rumi talks about when he says there's a place beyond rightness and wrongness . . . I'd like to spend as many moments of my life as possible in that world. [18]

ANY NEED WE have for ourselves, we have for everybody in the world. [19]

I PREDICT THAT when we have that—don't do anything that isn't play—in mind, we will see that the most fun game in the world is making life wonderful. [3]

NVC REQUIRES US to be continually conscious of the beauty within ourselves and other people. [10]

LIFE-ENRICHING HUMAN connections have three characteristics:

1. The people are empathically connected to what each is feeling and needing—they do not blame themselves or let judgments implying wrongness obscure this connection to one another.

2. The people are aware of the interdependent nature of their relationships and value the other's needs being fulfilled equally to their own needs being fulfilled—they know that their needs cannot be met at someone else's expense.

3. The people take care of themselves and one another with the sole intention of enriching their lives—they are not motivated by, nor do

they use coercion in the form of guilt, shame, duty, obligation, fear of punishment, or hope for extrinsic rewards. [4]

IF TWO PEOPLE have this consciousness, all they hear ever coming from one another is a thank you or a gift. [20]

NVC IS A way of keeping our consciousness tuned in moment by moment to the beauty within ourselves. [34]

SO NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION is a way of . . . not saying anything that we think might in any way tarnish people's consciousness of their own beauty. Nonviolent Communication shows us a way of being very honest, but without any criticism, without any insults, without any put-downs, without any intellectual diagnosis implying wrongness. Because the more we use words that in any way imply criticism, the more difficult it is for people to stay connected to the beauty within themselves.

And Nonviolent Communication shows us a way of staying with that beauty in ourselves and with other people, even when *they* are not using Nonviolent Communication. [10]

NOTHING IS MORE enjoyable than using our efforts in the service of life. [8]

ARE WE REALLY getting what we want from this moment in life? And, if not, let's do something about it! Each moment is too precious, too precious. So when our vitality is down and we're starting to become one of those nice, dead people, let's wake up. Let's do something about it. [23]

SO GIRAFFES DON'T waste any time thinking what kind of person they are. They think moment by moment about "What is the life in me at this moment?" Not "What am I?" "What is the life that's going on in me at this moment?" [23]

IF YOU ARE using Nonviolent Communication to get your way, you're not using Nonviolent Communication. [26]

WHEN WE HEAR the other person's feelings and needs, we recognize our common humanity. [34]

PEOPLE WHO SEEM like monsters are simply human beings whose language and behavior sometimes keep us from seeing their humanness. [5]

MIRACLES CAN HAPPEN when we can keep our consciousness away from analyzing and classifying one another. [34]

WHEN OUR COMMUNICATION supports compassionate giving and receiving, happiness replaces violence and grieving! [34]

ONE OF THE things that gives me seriously great pleasure is how little it takes to make human beings happy. [22]

CREATING PEACE

PEACE REQUIRES SOMETHING far more difficult than revenge or merely turning the other cheek; it requires empathizing with the fears and unmet needs that provide the impetus for people to attack each other. Being aware of these feelings and needs, people lose their desire to attack back because they can see the human ignorance leading to these attacks; instead, their goal becomes providing the empathic connection and education that will enable them to transcend their violence and engage in cooperative relationships.

When people get connected to their needs, they don't have this anger that drives them to want to punish others. We do need to make evaluations about our needs: Are they being met or not? But we do this without going up into our heads and making enemies and villains out of the people who in some way are not fulfilling our needs.

Every time we go up into our head and make a judgment of others instead of going into our heart and seeing the needs, we decrease the likelihood that other people will enjoy giving to us. [8]

I WOULD LIKE us to create peace at three levels and have each of us to know how to do it. First, within ourselves. That is to know how we can be peaceful with ourselves when we're less than perfect, for example. How we can learn from our limitations without blaming and punishing our self. If we can't do that, I'm not too optimistic how we're going to relate peacefully out in the world. Second, between people. Nonviolent Communication training shows people how to create peace within themselves and at the same time how to create connections with other people that allows compassionate giving to take place naturally. And third, in our social systems. To look out at the structures that we've created, the governmental structures and other structures, and to look at whether they support peaceful connections between us and if not, to transform those structures. [34]

I BELIEVE, AS did Teilhard de Chardin, that a peaceful world is not only possible, it's inevitable. I think we're evolving in that direction. Of course, he was very patient because he was a paleontologist; he thought in terms of tens of thousands of years. And he wasn't naïve about all the violence that's going on now, but he saw the violence as just an evolutionary snag. He sees our evolution, and I do, too, but I'm not as patient as he is. I can't wait thousands of years for it, so I'm interested in how we can speed it up. But I think it's inevitable and, unless we destroy the planet in the meantime, I think we're moving in that direction.

I, along with my associates at the Center for Nonviolent Communication, will continue to provide this education for people so they can create a world within themselves that will support and sustain an outer world of peace. We do this because we want people to know how to create peace in their relationships—and also know the power they have to create structures that support compassionate interactions, compassionate exchanges of resources, and compassionate justice. [8]

BEING SELF-FULL

GIRAFFE REQUIRES A consciousness of self-full-ness. In jackal land we only know *selfish*, *selfless*. We're now bringing in a whole different concept of *self-full-ness*. So anything that persons do for another person that isn't done purely out of self-full-ness, we pay for in this way: it is taking them away from the divine game we're talking about. [16]

GIRAFFES NEVER MEET anybody's needs but their own. They are self-full. Not to be confused with selfish. Not to be confused with selfless. Self-full. [22]

IF I'VE BEEN educated to be selfless, I'm not giving other people the opportunity to nurture. To meet their need for giving. If I'm the only giver, I'm hogging the good stuff. [16]

WHAT WE CALL selfishness is, I would say, tragic self-full-ness. [18]

THE PEOPLE THAT I'm calling self-full realize that we don't do anything for others. We do things only for ourselves and what is the most fun game in town? Contributing to people's well-being. So, we do that to meet our need for meaning, for purpose in life, joy. The joy comes in enriching life for others, you see; we're doing that for ourselves. That's the most fun game in town. [18]

SELFISHNESS IS JUST limited self-full-ness. You get some needs met but at the cost of others. If I put in all of this energy to get this one need met . . . I'm ruining my chance of getting other very important needs met. So I'm really not taking very good care of myself. [18]

WE'VE BEEN SO deeply ingrained with, and so exposed to tactics motivated to get us to do what's good for us and society through those tactics, that it's pretty hard to get pure giving going between human beings. So that's why I like to check myself, to make sure I never do anything for others, never, only for self-full reasons. Only when it's play. [16]

SEEING NEEDS AS A GIFT

IF OUR PARENTS were in so much pain because their needs weren't getting met, it's very likely that every message that we got—or many of the messages we got—[with regard] to our needs was a message of pain, instead of somebody receiving a gift. And . . . we didn't have giraffe ears, so we started to conclude that what's alive in us is something ugly. [16]

THE MOST IMPORTANT part of expressing our needs is really not even the language we use, it's the consciousness we have about what our needs are. See, the culture we've been educated in educates us to think that to have needs is to be needy, dependent, weak, selfish. So, then, when we have carried that consciousness with us, when we do get our courage up to express our needs and requests, we do it with what I call a "kick-me" energy. [19]

MOST OF US need to do a lot of work to come to see our needs as a gift, which I think they are. It's what's alive in us. And to add a request to the other person, gives them another gift—an opportunity to do what human beings like more than anything else, to enrich life. So if we have that energy, that consciousness, the mechanics of the words are secondary. It's that consciousness about our needs which is the hardest to develop . . . to see our needs as a gift. [19]

PEOPLE DON'T MAKE good slaves when they see their needs as a gift. [19]

IF THE OTHER person accurately hears your need, they'll receive a gift. That's helped me immensely. So as soon as I see in the other person's eyes, you know, I know they didn't receive the need. The damn jackal

postal delivery service. I sent out a beautiful gift, they delivered something ugly. But I don't want to assume that it's my need that can ever stimulate those looks or "Do it yourself" or "What do you think I am, a slave?" [19]

AND I'VE TRIED to look inside myself, to try to find out, why do I still have so much trouble seeing my needs as beautiful? And it came to me one day: because of how many people have given to me out of energy other than memnoon [a request that blesses the one who is asked]. Am I afraid that people will say no? No, I don't have any fear of no; hardly ever have people said no to me. I'm much more afraid of a *yes*—that people have given with that other stuff mixed in, so then it leads me to associate my need with a burden. [20]

FINDING OUR NATURAL COMPASSION

NVC HELPS US connect with each other and ourselves in a way that allows our natural compassion to flourish. It guides us to reframe the way we express ourselves and listen to others by focusing our consciousness on four areas: what we are observing, feeling, and needing, and what we are requesting to enrich our lives. NVC fosters deep listening, respect, and empathy and engenders a mutual desire to give from the heart. [5]

WHEN WE ARE internally violent toward ourselves, it is difficult to be genuinely compassionate toward others. [5]

WHAT I WANT in my life is compassion, a flow between myself and others based on a mutual giving from the heart. [5]

CREATING LIFE-ENRICHING SYSTEMS

IF YOU WANT to serve life, you want to create life-enriching systems. [3]

LIFE-ENRICHING IS THE key concept in my paradigm: every action comes out of an image of seeing how human needs would be met by the action. That's the vision that mobilizes everything. A life-enriching organization is one in which all work in the organization, everything that every worker does, comes out of seeing how it's going to support life in the form of meeting needs—needs of the physical planet, trees, lakes, or human beings or animals—and it's clear how life will be served through meeting of needs. And that's the vision that inspires the actions, purely. In a life-enriching structure, nobody works for money. Money plays the same role as food for a mother who is breastfeeding her infant. She doesn't receive food as payment. The food is nurturance so she has the energy to serve life. It all boils down to human needs, which is why Nonviolent Communication is so rooted in the consciousness of needs. Everything we do is in the service of needs and the pleasure that is felt when needs are fulfilled, especially spiritual needs. Those are the most fun needs to fulfill.

To me, the bees and the flowers are part of a life-enriching organization. Look at how they both meet each other's needs. They don't do it through any guilt, duty, or obligation, but naturally, in a natural system. The bee gets its nectar from the flower and it pollinates the flower. [3]

IT IS HARD to separate meeting human needs from the needs of the environment: They are one and the same. Meeting the needs of all the phenomena on the planet. Seeing the oneness of it all. Seeing the beauty in that whole scheme, that whole interdependent scheme of life. Life-enriching structures—the kind of structures that I would like to see us creating and participating in—are structures whose vision is to serve

“What I want in my life is compassion, a flow between myself and others based on a mutual giving from the heart.[5]”

life. And how do we know if an organization—whether it's a family, or work team, or government—is a life-serving organization? We find out by asking: Is its mission to meet the needs and enrich the lives of people within—and affected by—the organization? [3]

LIFE-ENRICHING ORGANIZATIONS are characterized by fairness and equity in how resources and privileges are distributed. People in positions of leadership *serve* their constituencies rather than desiring to control them. The nature of laws, rules, and regulations are consensually defined, understood, and willingly followed. [4]

LIFE-ENRICHING ORGANIZATIONS, whether families, schools, businesses, or governments, value the well-being of each person in the community or organization and support life-enriching connections between the members of the group. [4]

IN A LIFE-ENRICHING organization, we get what we want but never at someone else's expense—getting what we want at someone else's expense cannot fulfill all our needs. Our goal in a life-enriching organization is far more beautiful—to express our needs without blaming others and to listen respectfully to others' needs, without anyone giving up or giving in—and thus create a quality of connection through which everyone's needs can be met. [4]

THE SPIRITUALITY OF NVC

NVC IS A combination of thinking and language, as well as a means of using power designed to serve a specific intention. This intention is to

create the quality of connection with other people and oneself that allows compassionate giving to take place. In this sense it is a spiritual practice: All actions are taken for the sole purpose of willingly contributing to the well-being of others and ourselves. [8]

THE SPIRITUALITY EMBODIED in NVC exists not so much to help people connect with the divine as to come from the divine energy we're created out of, our natural life-serving energy. It's a living process to keep us connected to the life within our self and the life that's going on in other people. [8]

THE SPIRITUALITY WE embrace is to make people conscious moment by moment that our purpose in life comes from compassionate giving, compassionate service. There's nothing more wonderful than exercising our power in the service of life. That's a manifestation of the divine energy within us, and that is our greatest joy: to use our efforts in the service of life. [8]

I THINK IT is important that people see that spirituality is at the base of Nonviolent Communication, and that they learn the mechanics of the NVC process with that in mind. It's really a spiritual practice that I am trying to show as a way of life. Even though we don't make a point of mentioning this, people get seduced by the practice. Even if they practice NVC as a mechanical technique, they start to experience things between themselves and other people they weren't able to experience before. So eventually they come to the spirituality of the process. They begin to see that it's more than a communication process and realize it's really an attempt to manifest our spirituality. [6]

I NEED A way to think of God that works for me—other words or ways to look at this beauty, this powerful energy—and so my name for God is "beloved divine energy." For a while it was just "divine energy" but then I was reading some of the Eastern religions, and Eastern poets, and I loved how they had this personal, loving connection with this energy. And I found that it added to my life to call it "beloved divine energy." To me this beloved divine energy is life, connection to life. [6]

I KNOW BELOVED divine energy by connecting with human beings in a certain way. I not only see divine energy, I taste divine energy, I feel divine energy, and I am divine energy. I'm connected with beloved divine energy when I connect with human beings in this way. Then God is very alive for me. [6]

NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION HELPS me stay connected with that beautiful divine energy within myself and to connect with it in others. And certainly when I connect that divine energy within myself with the divine energy in others, what happens is the closest thing to knowing what it is to be connected to God. [6]

WE ARE THIS divine energy. It's not something we have to attain. We just have to realize it, to be present to it. [34]

BEFORE WE TACKLE the gangs [groups that behave in ways we don't like, whether street gangs, corporations, or governments] . . . we have to make sure that we have liberated ourselves from how we have been educated and make sure we are coming from a spirituality of our own choosing. [34]

GET VERY CLEAR about the kind of world we would like and then start living that way. [34]

OUR SURVIVAL AS a species depends on our ability to recognize that our well-being and the well-being of others are in fact one and the same. [34]

THE KIND OF spirituality I value is one in which you get great joy out of contributing to life, not just sitting and meditating, although meditation is certainly valuable. But from the meditation, from the resulting consciousness, I would like to see people in action, creating the world that they want to live in. [6]

UNLESS WE AS social change agents come from a certain spirituality, we're likely to create more harm than good. What I mean by spirituality is that, moment by moment, we're staying connected to our own life and to the lives of others. And we can discover our spirituality by asking: What is the good life? What are we about? This quality of consciousness will help lead us to a life-enriching spirituality that helps us connect with ourselves and others at the heart level. [3]

UNDERSTANDING CHOICE

WHEN YOU'RE REALLY free, you're aware that you can do whatever you choose to do every moment of your life. Nobody can make you do anything. [3]

USE THE WORDS *I feel because I* to remind us that what we feel isn't because of what the other person did, but because of a choice I've made. [34]

“How I choose to look at any situation will greatly affect whether I have the power to change it or make matters worse.[34]”

WHEN WE SPEAK a language that denies choice, we forfeit the life in ourselves for a robot-like mentality that disconnects us from our own core. [5]

SEE, WITH GIRAFFES, it's not a matter of knowing what's right and going with it. To be a giraffe requires choosing what you want. Choosing. It's based more on intuition. It's not thinking. It's more being really in touch with your unmet needs, and then choosing what you want to do about it. [23]

PEOPLE ARE SCARED of having their autonomy taken away. It's so precious to us, to just do things when we choose to do them. . . . And all over the world, you know what? People give it away. They give it away to authorities, have authority tell them what's right. So that's a funny thing about human beings. They want this autonomy so much, but they're giving it away all the time. [23]

THAT'S A VERY important need, to make our own choices. From the time we see we're a different person, at age two, that's a very strong need. [26]

NO HUMAN BEING has ever done anything that they didn't choose to do. Most people have been programmed to believe they have no choice, because that helps to educate you to be a nice dead person. [27]

HOW I CHOOSE to look at any situation will greatly affect whether I have the power to change it or make matters worse. [34]

WE DON'T DO anything that isn't in the service of our needs. We don't say anything or do anything . . . that we don't choose to do. I'm not saying we like it, [that] we like doing it. I'm saying we don't do anything we don't choose to do. [27]

THE PROCESS IS wonderful. That every living phenomenon in every moment is searching for a way of making life wonderful. I'm not saying the choices we make are wonderful. Very often we pick strategies that don't work. Not only do they not make life wonderful, they make life miserable. But every moment, we need to see that our chooser's intent is to make life wonderful. It's doing the best it knows to serve life at every moment. And that's wonderful. [15]