

Transform Enemy Images

When I am in pain around someone – I have disconnected from them – thinking of them as wrong or hurtful – I have created an ‘enemy image’ within my mind.

From an NVC perspective it means one primary thing – parts of me are calling out for empathy. Empathy is the experience of being heard/received in total presence. In NVC we can find it helpful to connect to the universal needs stimulating the ‘enemy image.’

This process is one exercise to help make the mind journey from blame and judgment to dwelling in the fullness of the underlying needs.

- 1) Identify someone you hold an enemy image of: _____
- 2) Write down your judgments/thoughts/opinions of that person.
- 3) Write down any thoughts/judgments/opinions of yourself that come up as you do step #2.
- 4) Take the statements from steps #2 & #3 and re-write them with the following phrase at the beginning: **“I’m telling myself _____”**
- 5) Check inside your body and mind as you go through the “I’m telling myself statements.” What are you noticing?
- 6) As you go through each of the “I’m telling myself” statements notice your feelings and record them.
- 7) For each feeling (or cluster of feelings) identify the need(s) that are stimulating those feelings and record them.

| FEELINGS | NEEDS |
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(Use as many boxes as you have statements for)

- a. Do more thoughts come up? If so add them to step #2
 - b. Is there more tightness in my body? If so listen to the thoughts that are stimulating that constriction and add to step #2
- 8) Is there a relaxing in the body? If so, let yourself rest into that relaxing. Take time to experience what it feels like in your body when needs are seen and held with acceptance. Keep the sensations in your awareness.
 - 9) While being in that sense of relaxation bring the person back to mind.
 - 10) Image what they may be telling themselves about you or the situation. Write those possible thoughts.
 - 11) Re-write them with "They may be telling themselves ____."
 - 12) Record a Feelings and Needs chart from their perspective.
 - 13) Take time to imagine what it is like within them when they believe those needs "are not met" in the situation.
 - 14) Take time to connect to the beauty of those universal needs that you are guessing are active within them – and take time to recognize how those needs live in you.
 - 15) From the place of seeing the needs on your chart and their chart and holding them all as flowing within you both.... Notice what is happening in your body.
 - 16) From that place make at least one positive, do-able request of yourself.
 - a. Now make a second request.... And a third.

Remember: This is not a linear process. At any point you may be drawn to an earlier part of the process.

PLEASE don't rush. This is not an exercise to 'get through'... but a process to experience. It may take 20 minutes or several days to arrive at step #16.

This process is part of my NVC practice. With deep gratitude I want to acknowledge this exercise has come alive for me from the work of the following NVC trainers: Marshall Rosenberg, Miki Kashtan, Robert Gonzales, Gina Cenciose.

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