

YOGA OF RELATING

COMPASSIONATE COMMUNICATION TOOLS

मनोमयकोशः MANO-MAYA KOSHA

HEALING MY EMOTIONAL BODY

Greetings! My name is Pierre Couvillion. My current work is in Ayurveda, the ancient gardening medical system, at my school Santosha in Indianapolis, Indiana. Ayurveda sees emotional health as inseparable from physical health, and undigested emotion as a precursor to physical disease. Techniques for emotional and relationship health are essential to my daily work with clients.

I trained in non-violent communication (NVC) in college in 1994, and then again, more recently, with Marcelline Brogli in Del Mar, California. I introduce people to its tools and encourage them to seek further training through the center for non-violent communication, local classes if available, and online trainers.

If you are touched by this work, I recommend continuing through www.cnvc.org beginning with the book or CDs by Marshall Rosenberg: Nonviolent Communication - A Language of Compassion. Also consider regular weekly meetings, practice sessions or workshops! This is a process, a regular practice to be attended, as many of you attend your physical body through yoga or other exercise classes. Community classes offer a depth of relational experience that cannot be matched on one's own.

Notes from this introductory workshop:

There are many layers to "me"; I could look at them as 5 separate classes I attend regularly.

(1) Physical - अन्नमयकोशः annamaya kośaḥ

- healed through movement and bodywork therapy, right diet, proper climate, lifestyle
- per week, how often do I walk outside, exercise, yoga, swim, receive a body treatment?
- what places do I regularly go to for community around physical health practices?

(2) Energetic/Metabolic - प्राणमयकोशः prāṇamaya kośaḥ

- healed through breathing techniques, subtle bodywork, herbal remedies and the above
- how often do I do breathwork, acupuncture, craniosacral therapy, baths, nature, float, fast, herbs
- how is my sleep in length and quality?
- how is my digestion and elimination?
- what places do I regularly go to for community around energetic health practices?

(3) Mental Emotional/Relational - मनोमयकोशः manomaya kośaḥ

- healed through devotion, mantraḥ chanting, communication classes, relationship classes

- how often do I sing, do communication classes, counseling, 12 step meetings, emotional release work
- what places do I regularly go to for community around emotional health practices?

(4) Mental Discerning - विज्ञानमयकोशः vijñānamaya kośah

- healed through ongoing luminous study, especially of sacred texts and subjects
- how often do I play music, learn a new language (like sanskrit!), try a new activity, study Sacred texts
- what is my life guiding philosophy? what happens when I die? why am I alive?
- what kind of cup (vessel) am I? Truly empty (receptive and able to be filled) or dirty (colored by previous experience), tilted (toward a certain view), leaky (not retaining), upside down (closed)
- what places do I regularly go to for community around life guiding philosophy classes?

(5) Bliss/Spiritual - आनन्दमयकोशः ānandamaya kośah

- healed through meditation, uplifting activities which bring cognitive absorption
- how often do I meditate, chant, pray, dance to God, any luminous activity bringing total absorption
- what places do I regular go to for community around spiritual practice?

- How I feel, regularly, in my current daily relationships shows the quality of health of my emotional and relational body. This emotional layer contains deep patterning from my early childhood around how to get my needs met and how to relate to others. My beliefs and core admonitions are pre-verbal and are like my default computer operating system.
- If my mind is looping in recurrent thoughts about a relationship, then I have healing work to do - this healing work is like reprogramming my default computer operating system.
- There is no power in being a victim. Relationship work is not about what is wrong with that person (that face or name) - if I look back in my past then I can see the pattern of relating to such people. The current person offers me an opportunity to heal a pattern of mine. If I just get rid of the person, I will likely attract a similar one.
- I know that I have a relationship with someone when that person relates to me. This means that the person is interested in how I am feeling and what I might be needing, and is willing to consider my requests.
- I know that I do not have a relationship when a person does not care about my feelings or needs. If I choose to stay, attempting to relate to a person who is not relating to me, I ask myself: "Why?"
- If I am stuck in a "relationship" where there is not mutual relating, I can attempt using the tools of NVC. If these do not work, I can ask for outside help from a neutral third party - such as an NVC trained person, a counselor, a yoga therapist, a mediator, a minister, to mediate for us.
- If the other person in the "stuck" relationship will not agree to outside help, I evaluate "why am I here?"
- I choose to have relationships with people who acknowledge that stuff will necessarily come up in our imperfect human relationships. These people are willing to do the work to find out why stuff is coming up, and celebrate the opportunity to evolve and heal old patterns of suffering. These people encourage me to find a deeper, more confident sense of myself. Around them I often feel a sense of expansion and unhesitating joy.

- It is enough to heal and change me. I can be the changes I wish to see in the world (as Gandhi said)
- WHEN I USE “I” STATEMENTS, I CLAIM MY LIFE. (Don’t use “you” in the general sense)
- If I use “you” as a general term intended to describe “all of us”, or a common experience, I distance myself from my own experience. “You” does not mean “we” or “I”, it means “not me” and is often used instead of owning up to one’s experiences, feelings and needs.

My emotional body needs regular attention and community

NVC & 12 step meetings are like “drop-in yoga” classes for relationships / emotions

- 12 - step: Codependence is the deepest layer and exists beneath behavioral addictions - in these meetings, I discover healthy ways to get my needs for community and love met. coda.org
- Al-anon is more prevalent nationally and often has longer established meetings. Al-anon members often begin because they have a parent or partner who is an addict. Relationship processing is a key component of al-anon work and al-anon meetings welcome those who are seeking better relationships. al-anon.org
- Behavioral addictions (alcohol, narcotics, eating, gambling, sex, etc) are often an external layer that is created as a substitute for not getting our community/love needs met.
- Any kind of 12-step meeting offers an opportunity for using “I” statements and sharing one’s experience, feelings and needs. The anonymous nature of the program provides an opportunity for each individual to have a safe space for self-exploration, especially in how I am relating to others.
- NVC has meetings, workshops and classes that can be attended by individuals or couples.
- Learning the structured practice of NVC is like learning a set yoga flow, or the scales on a musical instrument. You will eventually be able to flow outside of the set structure, AND the repeated practice of the structure offers meaningful stability and deep understanding.

PRACTICE RELATING

Create a neutral environment for Communication practice - ask the person if they would be willing to try an exercise. A useful lead in is: "This discussion feels familiar to me - can we try a different approach?"

Split talking time (set a timer - perhaps 3 minutes) - one person talks first, the other absolutely just listens - no "tennis" or back-talking. Offer to listen first (when in your real life situations relating with someone who is not familiar with this). Roles will change after the first person feels that s/he has been heard.

4 steps of Compassionate Communication

OFNR - make an offer - an OFNR: Observation (1) , Feeling (2) , Need (3) , Request (4)

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| (1) I observed..... | (Make a neutral observation - not an evaluation) |
| (2) I felt..... | (Find a feeling - not an interpretation such as "attacked") |
| (3) Because I have a basic need for..... | (Needs are universal, desires are not) |
| (4) Would you be willing to | (Beginning with "... willing to repeat back to me what you just heard?") |

3 minutes - person A talks. Encourage them to try the 4 steps.

3 minutes - person B (you) repeat back what you have heard - finishing with "did I hear you correctly?".

Listen for the 4 steps even if they are not clearly expressed, and use the 4 steps to frame your words as you repeat back to the person what you heard.

3 minutes - person A has a chance to clarify and expand their sharing

3 minutes - person B (do the same as you did above). When Person A feels "heard", ask if s/he is now ready and willing to hear your experiences. If so, SWITCH ROLES. If not, repeat process as above.

It is not always possible to switch roles in a volatile situation. In those situations, I only play the role of listener, and generally keep a time limit to the conversation, honoring my own needs. After quite challenging situations, soon after, I ask for empathy from someone I trust.

ROLE PLAYING

SEPARATE ROLES INTO **SPEAKER** AND **LISTENER**

SPEAKER - briefly describe a situation in a relationship in your life that is consuming a lot of energy, a place you feel stuck. Briefly describe the situation to your role playing partner. Then imagine you are actually sitting across from the person in your story.

(1) Make an observation. This is neutral, such as “when you returned home last night at 9pm after stating you would be home at 6pm”, rather than “when you came home late”.

I observed:

(2) Find how you felt when this occurred. Go for a pure feeling rather than a word that implies an action by the other person - for example use “afraid” rather than “attacked”.

I felt:

(3) Connect to a basic need that you have that was not being met:

Because I have a **need** for:

(4) Make a **request** (this is not a demand)

Would you be willing to: (your initial request might be “...repeat back to me what you heard?”)

LISTENER - this is your opportunity to practice listening for the 4 categories. For our first attempt do just that - and then share what you have heard using those 4 categories.

“I heard that you (1) Observed....

(2) Felt

(3) Because you need...

(4) And you request...

Finish with “Have I heard you correctly?”

Later attempts at listening you can try different levels of role playing:

either supportive - guess additional feelings and needs you think your partner might be experiencing
or challenging - “act out” how you imagine the person (your “role”) might respond (as uneducated in NVC).

You can do it!

This is a practice: do it regularly and you will become it.

Basic human needs we all share (from Rosenberg: Nonviolent Communication - A Language of Compassion)

AUTONOMY - to choose one's dreams, goals, values; to choose one's plan for fulfilling one's dreams, goals, values

CELEBRATION - to celebrate the creation of life and dreams fulfilled; to celebrate losses: loved ones, dreams, etc

INTEGRITY - authenticity, creativity, meaning, self-worth

INTERDEPENDENCE - acceptance, appreciation, closeness, community, consideration, contribution to the enrichment of life, emotional safety, empathy, honesty (the empowering honesty that enables us to learn from our limitations), love, reassurance, respect, support, trust, understanding, warmth

PLAY - fun, laughter

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION - beauty, harmony, inspiration, order, peace

PHYSICAL NURTURANCE - air, food, movement, exercise, rest, sexual expression, shelter, touch, water; protection (from threatening forms of life: viruses, bacteria, insects, predatory animals/people)

feelings when needs are being met

absorbed	adventurous	affectionate	alert	alive	amazed	amused	
animated	appreciative	ardent	aroused	astonished	blissful	breathless	
buoyant	calm	carefree	cheerful	comfortable	composed	concerned	
confident	cool	curious	dazzled	delighted	eager	ebullient	
ecstatic	effervescent	elated	enchanted	encouraged	energetic	engrossed	
enlivened	enthusiastic	excited	exhilarated	expansive	expectant	exultant	
fascinated	free	friendly	fulfilled	glad	gleeful	glorious	
glowing	good-humored	grateful	gratified	happy	helpful	hopeful	
inquisitive	inspired	intense	interested	intrigued	invigorated	involved	joyous
jubilant	loving	mellow	merry	mirthful	moved	optimistic	
overjoyed	overwhelmed	peaceful	perky	pleasant	pleased	proud	quiet
radiant	rapturous	refreshed	relaxed	relieved	satisfied	secure	sensitive
serene	spellbound	splendid	stimulated	surprised	tender	thankful	thrilled
touched	tranquil	trusting	upbeat	warm	wide-awake	wonderful	zestful

feelings when needs are *not* being met

afraid	aggravated	agitated	alarmed	aloof	angry	anguished	annoyed
anxious	apathetic	apprehensive	aroused	ashamed	annoyed	anxious	
apathetic	apprehensive	aroused	ashamed	beat	bewildered	bitter	blah
blue	bored	brokenhearted	chagrined	cold	concerned	confused	cool
cross	dejected	depressed	despairing	despondent	detached	disenchanted	
discouraged	disappointed	disgruntled	disgusted	disheartened	dismayed	displeased	
distressed	disturbed	downcast	downhearted	dull	edgy	embarrassed	
embittered	exasperated	exhausted	fatigued	fearful	fidgety	forlorn	
frightened	frustrated	furious	gloomy	guilty	harried	heavy	helpless
hesitant	horrified	horrible	hostile	hot	humdrum	hurt	
impatient	indifferent	intense	irate	irked	irritated	jealous	jittery
lazy	leery	lethargic	listless	lonely	mad	mean	
miserable	mopey	morose	mournful	nervous	nettled	numb	overwhelmed
panicky	passive	perplexed	pessimistic	puzzled	rancorous	reluctant	repelled
resentful	restless	sad	scared	sensitive	shaky	shocked	
skeptical	sleepy	sorrowful	sorry	spiritless	started	surprised	
suspicious	tepid	terrified	tired	troubled	uncomfortable	unconcerned	uneasy
unglued	unhappy	unnerved	unsteady	upset	uptight	vexed	weary
wistful	withdrawn	woeful	worried	wretched			