

## Relationship Repair NVC Style

In the course of our intimate relationships there are times when we say or do things that are not in harmony with our needs and the needs of the people we are relating to. When this happens NVC (Nonviolent Communication) can guide us in creating healing and bring us back to heartfelt connection.

Example: Person A says to Person B (me) “You are so selfish!” Person B responds by saying, “You are such a control freak” and walking out of the room. One hour later, Person B wants to initiate relationship repair.

Here are some steps to creating this relationship repair.

### 1. Intention

- a. Our ability to move from our jackal thinking to compassionate connection starts with getting in touch with our deep desire to live in harmony with our needs and values. In this situation it may sound like, **“I really want to change my pattern of reactivity and the amount of suffering that we create together. I care very deeply about our relationship and I want to grow in my capacity to care about myself and the other even when I am triggered.”**

### 2. Self empathy

- a. Enjoy my jackal show. Listen to my own judgments, blaming, etc. (4 D's of disconnection)
- b. Mourn with self
  - i. Translate my jackal statement to Person A into my feelings and needs. **“You are such a control freak” could be translated into “When he said I was selfish I felt hurt and scared because my need for understanding and empathy were so not met.”**
  - ii. Get in touch with my feelings and unmet needs in how I responded to Person A. **“When I think about having said “You are such a control freak” I feel sad and disappointed because that did not meet my need for how I want to treat people with respect and care.”**
- c. Imagine what the other person's feelings and needs might have been that led them to say what they said. **“When he said “You are so selfish” he might have been feeling frustrated and needing support.”**

- d. Imagine what their feelings and unmet needs were related to my reaction. **“When I said ‘You are such a control freak’ he might have been feeling hurt and frustrated because he was needing understanding and empathy.”**
3. Get empathy ~ At this point it might be helpful to seek out empathy from a third person in order to get connected to myself in preparation for talking to Person A.
  4. Mourn with the other person.
    - a. Share your desire to do the mourning process with Person A and see if they are willing.
    - b. Steps to the mourning process.
      - i. **Observation**
        1. What I said or did. **“When I think about having said ‘You are such a control freak’ and walking out of the room...”**
      - ii. **Present Feelings “...I feel sad and disappointed...”**
      - iii. **Unmet Needs of Person A “...because I imagine it didn’t meet your need for respect and care. Is that right?”** Person A responds.
      - iv. **Unmet Needs of My Own “I also feel sad and disappointed because I did not meet my own needs for how I want to relate to you.”**
      - v. **My Chooser’s Needs “I realize now that the needs I was trying to meet when I did that were understanding and empathy.”**
      - vi. **Searching for a Solution for Everyone’s Needs to be Met in the Future “I’d love to have a conversation now about how we could do this differently if a similar situation arises in the future. Are you open to that?”**
  5. Optional PostHearsal. Replay the situation using NVC consciousness and tools. Consult the following handouts to assist in imagining how you could do it more effectively next time.
    - a. A Commitment to Compassionate Consciousness in Relationships and Conflict
    - b. Compassionate Communication Dialogue Checklist
    - c. Repair Basics Connection Gem of the Week