

Identifying Present Requests

Before making any request, check with yourself to see if it is in fact a request or a demand. Is my intention to give the other person(s) an opportunity to contribute to my life, and to do so willingly? To check this intention, think about how you might respond if you hear a "no" to your request.

If you are willing to hear a "no", and to continue the dialogue in NVC spirit, then it is a request. This does not mean there might not be some pain involved in hearing a "no", but rather the willingness to communicate that and continue connecting until everyone's needs are met.

All requests have the following characteristics:

- ❖ Present (vs. future action)
- ❖ Concrete and specific (vs. vague or general)
- ❖ Positive action language (vs. negative – a "do" vs a "don't")
- ❖ Doable (vs. abstract or asking for an attitude or intention)

There are two forms of requests in NVC.

- ❖ Connection requests
- ❖ Action requests (solutions, strategies, agreements, etc.)

Connection requests:

In any NVC dialogue, it is important to establish connection before we ask the other person for the solution that we would like. Connection in this sense means an understanding on the part of all parties of their own feelings and needs as well as the feelings and needs of the other(s) involved.

Until that connection is established, any solution, agreements or strategies are unlikely to be freely given and therefore generally will not hold. So, **connection before solution!**

Therefore, in the first few cycles of an NVC dialogue it is most important to use what we call connecting requests. Examples of some of the most commonly used are:

- a. Would you tell me back what you heard me say? (to check if my message has been understood in the way I intended it.)
- b. Would you tell me how you feel when you hear me say this? (to connect with the feelings and needs of the other(s) in that moment.)
- c. Could you help me understand how this came about?
- d. I would like to hear if this sounds to you like a request or a demand.
- e. Would you tell me what you wished would have happened differently?

Action Requests (also referred to as strategies or solutions)

Would you tell me if you would be willing to _____ (state a specific action?)

Would you like to explore possible solutions?

Requests in groups (could be connecting or action request):

When making **group requests**, ask for a show of hands or some other indication from those who would not be willing to do the thing we are requesting. This makes a more efficient use of group time by identifying those whose needs would not be met by what we are asking. Thus allowing us to dialog with them to create a strategy for everyone's needs to be met.