The 4 Components of Nonviolent Communication
developed by Marshall Rosenberg, Ph. D.

Observation: A description of “what’s actually happening” as reported by our senses (sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell), plus our “inner” senses (e.g. our inner voice, images, thoughts, etc.).

- Direct, Sensory Experience
- A report of “what is”, free of judgment, criticism or other forms of analysis.
- Specific to time and context.
- “Observing without evaluating is the highest form of human intelligence.”
- The trigger of our experience.

Key Distinction: Observation vs. Observation Mixed with Evaluation

Evaluations—“moral” judgments of good~bad, right~wrong, appropriate~inappropriate that tend to be fixed or static.

Feeling: Physical Sensations + Emotions

- All human beings share the same palette of sensations.
- The signals we receive from our body alerting us to the state of our Needs.
- Feelings are composed of physical sensations (e.g. tight jaw, queasy stomach, smile, etc.) and/or emotions (e.g. sad, glad, mad, disappointment, frustration, regret, etc.).

Key Distinction: Feeling vs. Thought

- Thoughts—cognitive or mental, including beliefs, concepts, and opinions.

Need: Resources required to sustain and enrich life. (Why we behave the way we do.)

- All human beings share the same needs.
- Needs transcend cultural mores and conditioning.
- Needs make no reference to any specific person doing any specific thing.
- “Values” are generally equivalent to Needs

Key Distinction: Need vs. Strategy

- Strategy—a specific method to fulfill a Need. (How Needs become satisfied.)

Request: An opportunity to contribute to the well-being of ourself and/or others.

- A concrete offering with the intention of contributing to fulfilling a Need.
- Requests are specific actions stated in the positive (what we DO want).
- Immediately doable in the present moment and measurable.
- Open to outcome.
- There are at least three types of requests:
  A. Action (“Would you be willing to talk about _____ for 10 minutes with me, now?”)
  B. feedBack (“How do you feel hearing that from me?”)
  C. Clarity (“Would you be willing to tell me what you hear is important to me?”)

Key Distinctions: Request vs Demand; Request vs Wish

- Demands—include a threat of punishment or the promise of reward linked to a behavior.
- Wishes—tend to be vague, future oriented, and non-specific.