

NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION

Marshall Rosenberg

“empathy is the respectful understanding of another’s experience, including feelings...this is the work of coaching”

Four Principles of NVC for Expressing Empathy

1. Make observations, not evaluations.
2. Express feelings, not thoughts.
3. Identify needs, not strategies.
4. Make requests, not demands.

(p.59-60)

Feel good—needs are being met.

Feel bad—needs are not being met.

“Faux feelings” are expressions of thought masquerading as feelings. They are not true feelings.

NVC and the role of empathy create a calm, safe, nonjudgemental space for the client to explore, share, question, experience, and be authentic. Empathy is not pity nor sympathy.

Pitying the client places the coach in a superior position, a position above. Pity undermines self-esteem. Instead, coaching is a partnership of equals.

Sympathy identifies with the client’s experience, and coaches may “take on” the emotions. Sympathy diminishes the ability to be mindful, to fully listen attentively and immersively.