



# **Relying on interdependence in times of crisis**

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## **Vulnerability is an attribute of life and an existential human condition**

- Living with given limitations.
- Future unknown and not in our control.
- No choice over our life circumstances.
- Dependent on other people and on external resources to meet our human needs.
- Impacted by other people's choices and events we don't have control over.
- Having a finite body.

While we don't have a choice about the inherent vulnerability of being human, we do have a choice about how we relate to it. We can choose to embrace our vulnerability and find strength within that, or we can fight it and, paradoxically, become weaker because of being afraid of it and what it takes to hide it from ourselves and others.

## SOME FEELINGS WHEN NEEDS ARE MET

## SOME FEELINGS WHEN NEEDS ARE NOT MET

### Affectionate

- Loving
- Friendly, warm
- Tender

### Confident

- Empowered
- Safe, secure

### Fascinated

- Engaged
- Involved
- Amazed

### Inspired

- Awe
- Wonder

### Fascinated

- Engaged
- Involved
- Amazed

### Stimulated

- Animated
- Excited, eager
- Aroused

### Hopeful

- Anticipating
- Optimistic

### Content

- Satisfied
- Fulfilled
- Blissful

### Energetic

- Lively
- Passionate
- Exhilarated

### Elated

- Ecstatic
- Exuberant
- Thrilled

### Curious

- Alert, Absorbed
- Interested

### Refreshed

- Rejuvenated
- Restored

### Centered

- Trusting
- Clear
- Open

### Joy

- Happy, glad
- Jubilant
- Pleased

### Gratitude

- Appreciative
- Moved, touched

### Amused

- Ticked
- Delighted

### Peace

- Calm
- Relaxed

### Love

- Affection
- Compassion
- Consideration
- Intimacy
- Love
- Nurturing
- Warmth
- Companionship
- Touch

### Connection

- Empathy
- Closeness
- Communication
- Presence

### Peace

- Beauty
- Communion
- Ease
- Equality
- Harmony
- Inspiration
- Order

### Community

- Acceptance
- Appreciation
- Belonging
- Inclusion
- Cooperation
- Support
- Participation

### Play

- Joy
- Humour
- Laughter

### To Matter

- Purpose
- Contribution
- Creativity
- Celebration of life

**I FLOURISH WHEN I NOURISH  
THE NEEDS BENEATH MY FEELINGS**

Based on the work of  
Marshall Rosenberg  
(CNVC.org)

### Embarrassed

- Flustered
- Self-conscious

### Agitated

- Distressed
- Disturbed
- Uncomfortable

### Disconnected

- Bored
- Detached
- Apathetic

### Shame

### Shocked

- Unnerved
- Unsettled
- Startled

### Confused

- Lost
- Mystified
- Torn

### Afraid

- Panicky
- Cautious
- Freaked out

### Anger

### Fatigue

- Burnt out
- Tired
- Exhausted

### Vulnerable

- Insecure
- Shaky
- Helpless

### Averse

- Disgusted
- Hate/dislike
- Repulsed

### Guilt

- Regret
- Remorse

### Annoyed

- Frustrated
- Exasperated
- Cheesed off

### Tense

- Stressed
- Overwhelmed
- Frazzled

### Depression

### Sad

- Discouraged
- Hopeless
- Disheartened

### Pain

- Grief
- Misery
- Hurt

### Longing

- Jealousy
- Resentment
- Pining

### Autonomy

- Choice
- Freedom
- Self-expression
- Independence
- Space
- Spontaneity
- Respect/self-respect

### Physical Well-being

- Air, breath
- Food and water
- Movement
- Rest and sleep
- Sexual expression
- Safety
- Comfort, shelter

### Shared Reality

- To know and be known
- To see and be seen
- To understand
- Be understood
- Stability
- Consistency

### Meaning

- Challenge
- Competence
- Clarity
- Efficacy
- Effectiveness
- Understanding
- Stimulation

### Trust

- Security
- Safety

### Growth

- Awareness
- Consciousness
- Discovery
- Learning

### Honesty

- Authenticity
- Integrity



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## **Our vulnerability is more exposed during difficult times.**

- We are unable to rely on our internal resources only.
- Our needs are more pressing.
- High stakes - deeply impacted.

As a result it is harder to hide it.



**Fight**



**Flight**



**Freeze**

## Nervous System Reactions



Resilience is the capacity to  
recover, access, and mobilize  
internal and external resources  
in times of challenge.

~Aya Caspi, CNVC Certified Trainer

# Interdependence - 'life insurance' for our vulnerability

- NVC assumes that we share one heart, same feelings and needs.
- Everyone's needs matter.
- Life is a flow of resources into needs (giving & receiving)
- We are not designed to do life on our own. We need other people's support to meet our needs and other people need our support to meet their needs.
- We are designed to respond positively to vulnerability and to participate in the free flow of giving and receiving, where the giving is a receiving.

# Increase Your Need ~ Rumi

The mouse-soul is nothing but a nibbler. To the mouse is given a mind proportionate to its need, for without need, the All-Powerful doesn't give anything to anyone.

Need, then, is the net for all things that exist: A person has tools in proportion to his need. **So quickly, increase your need, needy one, that the sea of abundance may surge up in loving-kindness.**



# Reclaiming Unconditional Receiving

- Trusting our mattering because we are part of life.
- Opening our hearts to receive support and care from others and life with no shame, guilt, or fear.
- Opening to receiving sustains our capacity to give.
- There are many strategies to meet our needs (transforming scarcity)
- More crucial when things fall apart.

“To receive with grace may be the greatest giving” ~ Marshall Rosenberg

# Reclaiming Unconditional Giving

- Our care for others is an innate need (our well-being and the wellbeing of others is one and the same)
- We were given the power to contribute to life with our choices.
- Free giving = no shame, guilt, fear, obligation, seeking reward.
- Transforming separation and scarcity (judgements, enemy images) so we can fully access our natural care and generosity.
- Cultivating 'human cell' consciousness (caring for the whole)

**“Even after all this time the Sun never says to the Earth, 'You owe me.'**

**Look what happens with a love like that. It lights the whole sky.”**

**~ Hafiz**

# We are conditioned to be ashamed of our needs

- Because of power-over structures and denial of choice ('shoulds' and 'have tos') many of us disconnect from our needs which means we don't know what they are.
- Having needs is seen as a weakness because it is pointing to our vulnerability.
- Not having needs - seen as strength, self-sufficiency.
- Fear of being judged as 'needy', burdening others...
- Social conditioning - be "nice", don't be a burden, care = putting the needs of others first, self sacrifice.
- Especially difficult when there are power differences or when the other person's needs seem more pressing.

# Needs as a fundamental unit of life

Needs don't ever go away. When not attended to they tend to grow louder and bigger inside, which leads to loss of choice and reactivity.

Cost: depression, isolation, despair, resentment, anger.

# Liberation from shame

Distinction between:

- Selfishness - prioritizing my needs over others
- Selflessness - prioritizing other people's needs over my own.
- Selffullness - caring for the whole, self included.

# Asking for what we need

## Internally:

1. **Needs awareness** - take on the practice of noticing and attending to our needs as soon as they arise. - when we know how to care for our needs we are less likely to resort to 'external boundaries' for protection.

This includes the inner work of reclaiming our needs:

- Owning our needs and not denying or repressing them.
- Not judging ourselves for having needs - transforming shame.
- Grounding in the innocence and beauty of our needs. They are an expression of life within us.
- Recognizing that our needs are a gift - they provide an opportunity for others to contribute to us and to life.

2. **Recovering our internal sense of mattering.** The more we matter to ourselves the more we will care for our own needs and not depend on others to care take of us.

## Externally:

- A. **Making requests** - the earliest we put our requests on the table the more likely that our needs will be cared for, and won't run us unconsciously from the inside (showing up in the form of reactivity, demands, threats, etc)
- Positive language
  - Doable
  - Inclusive of all needs
  - Non attachment to an outcome
- B. **Learning to operate within our capacity** - Only do what we can do within capacity when we are not in touch with our capacity and end up overstretching we find ourselves depleted and resentful and resort to protecting ourselves.
- C. **Learning to operate within our willingness** - Only do what we can do within our willingness The more we are in touch with our choice and only agree to do what we are truly willing to do, the less likely that we will feel resentful and protective of our choice. We can learn to say a clear, relaxed, openhearted 'No'.



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# Making Requests

*(How does this increase resilience?)*

It increases your chances to have more support (increases external resources). People with more support are likely to meet more of their needs and recover more quickly from hardship.





# Inviting people to stretch is not the same as coercion

Willingness is bigger than preference.

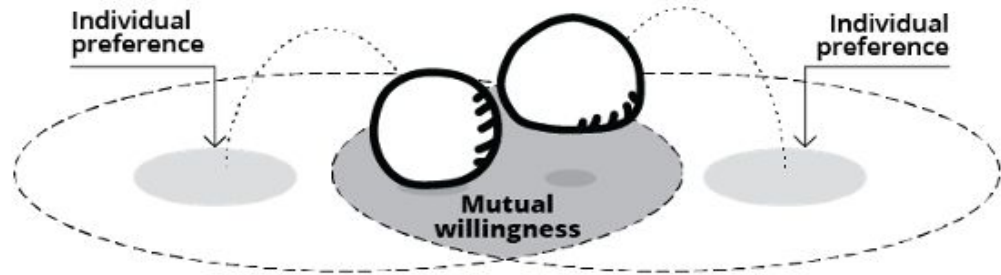
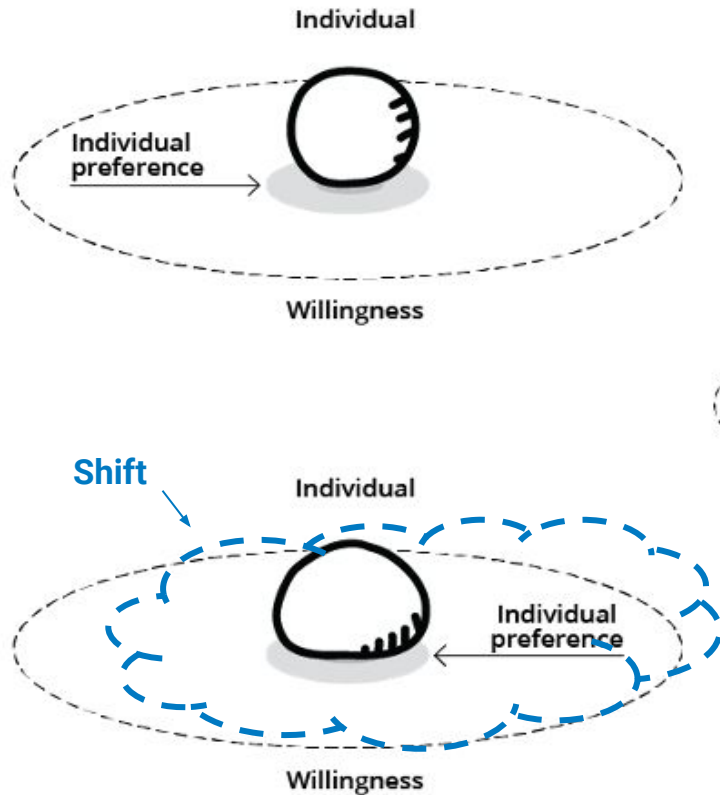
We have the capacity to stretch to meet others, and we can also invite others to stretch towards us.

Principle: invite people to stretch only to willingness and not beyond.

## Levels of willingness:



# People have more overlap in willingness than preferences



*Stretching beyond preference into willingness and not beyond is how we can find convergence instead of compromise*

From "The Highest Common Denominator" by Miki Kashtan



# Increasing willingness

1. **Being heard and understood** - mattering.
2. **Connecting with others' needs** - opening to being moved/touched.
3. **Freedom and choice:** the more people believe they are free to make their own decisions, the more likely they are to find willingness to shift. When people experience demand energy they will have less willingness.

# No stress no stretch

## Criteria

1. Long term consequences.
  2. No time urgency.
  3. Lots of flexibility.
  4. I have more power.
  5. Low trust.
- 
- Would you enjoy it if...?
  - Would you have the slightest discomfort if... ?
  - Would you have even a small concern if....?

# Medium stress - inviting a stretch

- Would it work for you...?
- Would you be willing to...?
- Would you have a significant concern if...?
- Would you feel somewhat uncomfortable if...?

# Big stress - inviting big stretch

## Criteria

1. Short term consequences.
  2. High urgency
  3. Prioritizing outcome.
  4. Lots of trust.
  5. Low energy/fatigue
- Would it affect trust between us if...?
  - Would it be seriously costly to you if...?
  - Would you feel resentful if ... ?

# Over-stretch - not sustainable

When I'm willing to meet my needs on the expense of other people needs, everyone will pay for it.

- Loss of trust
- Loss of goodwill / willingness
- Resentment
- Loss of connection
- Contributing to more oppression in the world.
- Spiritual assault

# Practice: Thresholds

Choose a situation where you'd like to make a request, based on a need of yours.

Role play making the request while inviting others:

1. To no stretch
2. Medium stretch
3. Big stretch.

What level of stretch would you like to choose and why?





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