

Transformative Communication, Kresge 68

2-Unit class, Summer 2018

Instructor: Christine King, M.A.
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Classroom: Social Sciences 1, Room 161
Hours: Five Tuesdays beginning 6/24, 5:00-8:30 PM (note: there will be a 30 minute break at 6:30 PM. You may want to bring your dinner or a snack)

A. OVERVIEW

This course promotes social and emotional intelligence, builds listening skills, cultivates compassion, and teaches the art of empathic listening and speaking. Through collaborative exercises and role plays, students will learn a powerful communication tool that aims to create a safe context for connecting to others in a genuine manner. Rather than judging, blaming or attacking, it is about starting with neutral common ground, connecting empathetically, and sharing authentically at any given moment. The primary theoretical focus for the course draws from a process known as Nonviolent Communication (NVC) developed by clinical psychologist Marshall B. Rosenberg, Ph.D. This model incorporates theory and research from the fields of psychology, neuroscience, communication, religion, sociology, anthropology, and peace studies. It is currently being employed to address conflicts on five continents.

B. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course focuses on intra- and inter-personal communications, supporting students to: develop listening and empathy skills; make clear and specific requests; and express feelings and needs in a way that does not imply judgment, criticism, blame, or punishment.

Learning this process involves working collaboratively through small group practice, pair shares, and teamwork to master the skills. A collaborative education approach is employed throughout the course, reinforcing learning, and providing students with confidence and competence to resolve conflict and handle challenging communication. Students critique one another's work, present feedback and suggestions, and collectively develop aptitude for successful work environments and personal relationships.

During this course, students will learn to:

- Bring clarity to communication -- to express in a way that is readily understood by others
- Develop awareness of intentions when speaking or acting
- Strengthen the capacity to empathize with self and others
- Express honesty, even in difficult situations
- Deepen the capacity to cultivate compassion
- Create fulfilling relationships and to live in harmony others
- Experience greater clarity and more peace of mind

C. PARTICIPATION

This course requires enthusiasm, intrinsic motivation, whole-hearted participation, and a willingness to examine habitual speech patterns and transform communication, especially with oneself. Students are encouraged to get out of their comfort zone in order to drop habitual patterns of speech and learn new ones. The course promises to be inspirational, fun, life altering, and challenging. *To get the most out of this course, students are*

encouraged to practice these skills on a daily basis.

Please no electronic devices used during class.

D. REQUIREMENTS/GRADING

NVC focuses our attention on doing things because it meets a need and not for an extrinsic reward. As a two unit intensive 5-week course, students are expected to dedicate approximately 8-10 hours/week outside of class on assignments and practice. Whether students choose pass/fail or a grade option, the course will be based on the following criteria.

1. Class Participation Plan to attend all classes and take an active part in exercises, role plays, dyad and small group work. 40%

2. Reflection Papers Students are asked to write a minimum two pages weekly typed reflection paper related to classroom learning and assigned readings. Note: the classes ending in .1 have homework due by Friday noon. The classes that end in .2 have homework due by Sunday midnight. Please remember to do both during the week. 30%

3. Practical Application Beginning the 2nd week through the last class, students will have the opportunity to practice these skills outside of class and with classmates, friends, or family members in a structured environment. Students will be given instructions on how and when to practice during the second week. 20%

4. Collaborative Project Beginning with the 3rd class, students will work in small groups to design a collaborative project that will be presented to the entire class the last day. Students will choose between role plays, presentations, and audience participation. 10%

E. INSTRUCTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

A successful learning environment is supported by mutual respect on the part of the students and the instructor. My goal is to facilitate your learning and growth through a variety of modalities including lectures, presentations, interactive exercises, videos, and opportunities to process what you are learning.

Christine King, M.A. Christine has taught personal transformation courses at Stanford University, UCSC, Santa Cruz Blaine Street Women's Jail, San Quentin State Prison, NVC Santa Cruz, and privately.

F. REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS:

Nonviolent Communication: Language of Life by Marshall Rosenberg

GROK card games designed by Christine King & Jean Morrison

G. ASSIGNMENTS

Experiential learning will precede conceptual learning. Each class students will be introduced to new concepts in class followed by reading corresponding chapters in the Rosenberg book. Readings will enhance and reinforce the classroom experience.

After reading the weekly assignments, students will review the reflection questions listed in this syllabus and write about ideas and concepts in the chapter and class. The purpose is two-fold: first and foremost for self-discovery—a place to explore, question, reflect, record insights, and personal growth. Secondly, it is a means to communicate to the instructor awareness and skill in living, understanding, and integrating NVC into daily life. Assignments are due at the beginning of the following class. **Late work will not be accepted.**

H. PRACTICAL APPLICATION – GOING DEEPER WITH NVC

Mastering Nonviolent Communication takes intentionality to change both how you perceive the world and how you communicate with yourself and others. After each weekly assignment listed in this syllabus, you will see notes on NVC'S practical application in your life. *This is not a homework assignment, rather ways for you to apply NVC on a daily basis.*

The instructor reserves the right to amend this syllabus as necessary to meet educational needs of this course.

CLASS 1.1, June 26, 5 PM-6:30 PM

This first class is an introduction to the essence and tools of Nonviolent Communication with an introduction to empathy.

(after class: Read Chapter 1-2 in Rosenberg book)

Reflection Paper. Write one page on one or more of these questions or anything else related to these chapters:

1. What are your personal communication challenges?
2. What is your relationship to conflict?
3. How might you imagine integrating NVC would make a difference in your life?
4. When you think about giving to others, do you live from a place of "natural" or "obligatory" giving? How does it feel and affect you?
5. What happens when people use fear, guilt or shame to motivate you? Share times where you have used these techniques to motivate others.
6. What might be the benefit of living life according to value judgments and not moralistic judgments?

Practical Application for Chapters 1-2 and in-class learning:

- Use reflective listening when talking with someone.
- Notice when you give—is it coming from the heart or from another place? What may have prevented you from giving fully from the heart?
- Express appreciations to those with whom you live and work.
- Notice and/or write down:
 - times you thought/spoke/listened with life-affirming communication (giraffe)
 - times you thought/spoke/listened in life-alienating communication (jackal)
 - giraffe/jackal language heard in others
- Stay self-aware of your own Jackal and Giraffe thinking and speaking.

CLASS 1.2, June 26, 7 PM-8:30 PM

Topic: Observing Without Evaluating. In this class, we will practice differentiating between observations and evaluations.

(after class: Read Chapter 3 in Rosenberg book)

Reflection Paper. Write one page on one or more of these questions or anything else related to this chapter:

1. When you express evaluations, judgments, accusations, criticism, opinions and interpretations, how does this impact you and others?
2. How do you feel when you judge self or others? When you hear others do so?
3. Do you use comparisons in your own life? How does this serve/not serve you?

Practical Application for Chapter 3:

- Notice daily when your thoughts go to evaluations; practice translating them into observations.
- Silently translate the evaluations of others into observations.
- Watch videos/films with a friend, or alone, and translate the character's evaluations into observations.

CLASS 2.1, July 3, 5:00-6:30 PM

Topic: Identifying and Expressing Feelings. During this class, we will discover our personal relationship with a variety of emotions.

(after class: Read Chapter 4 in Rosenberg book)

Reflection Paper. Write one page on one or more of these questions or anything else related to this chapter:

1. What is your relationship to your own feelings? Do you express your feelings? Do you find yourself using non-feeling words?
2. What do you see as the advantage/disadvantage of expressing feelings?
3. What might be the benefit of fully accepting your feelings?
4. Times when you have refrained from expressing feelings; what was the cost?
5. Times when you have chosen to express feelings; results?

Practical Application for Chapter 4:

- Ask yourself at least once a day “what am I feeling right now?”
- Watch videos with a friend, or alone, and guess the characters feelings.
- Silently guess to yourself what others might be feeling.

CLASS 2.2, July 3, 7 PM-8:30 PM

Topic: Needs, Values, Hopes, Wishes, Dreams, Vital Life Energy. This class gets to the heart of NVC – what motivates us to speak and act.

(after class: Read Chapter 5 in Rosenberg book)

Reflection Paper. Write one page on one or more of these questions or anything else related to this chapter:

1. Write down five needs you experienced this week and why
2. Reflect on the three states mentioned in book: slavery, obnoxious, and liberation. What “stage” are you most operating in your life? How does this impact your relationships?
3. Discuss “stimulus” vs. “cause”. What does this mean to you?

Practical Application for Chapter 5:

- Identify your own “shoulds” of yourself and others.
- Identify a personal “enemy image”; translate that image into your observations, needs/values and feelings.
- Take time each day to check in with yourself and notice what you might be feeling and needing.

CLASS 3.1, July 10, 5-6:30 PM

Topic: Requesting That Which Enriches Life. In this class, we will learn the difference between requests and demands and discover how we can best communicate our needs.

(after class: Read Chapter 6 in Rosenberg book)

Reflection Paper. Write one page on one or more of these questions or anything else related to this chapter:

1. Some people make demands, others hint at what they want, some express wishes or hopes. How do you generally communicate to others when you are wanting something?
2. How do you feel when others make demands of you? What might another person feel when they hear you make demands on them?

3. Is it difficult for you to hear/say 'no'? Why or why not?

Practical Application for Chapter 6:

- Notice daily any habits of making demands of yourself or others.
- Before making a request, ask yourself “would I be OK with a ‘no’”? Can you guess the ‘yes’ behind another person’s ‘no’?
- Practice making requests of others. Be mindful if they might be doing something other than out of the joy of natural giving.
- Watch videos with a friend, or alone, and translate the character’s demands into requests.

CLASS 3.2, July 10, 7-8:30 PM

Topics: Receiving Empathically; The Power of Empathy. In this class, we will explore the effects and benefits of giving and receiving empathy. We will discuss the collaborative projects due the last day of class.

(after class: Read Chapters 7-8 in Rosenberg book)

Reflection Paper. Write one page on one or more of these questions or anything else related to these chapters:

1. How do you feel when you are present with another person’s vulnerability?
2. Share situations where you may find (or have found) it difficult be vulnerable. Why?
3. What do you see as the advantages or disadvantages of listening to someone’s needs as opposed to listening to what they are thinking?
4. Listen for how people verbally respond to the discomfort of others—what “non-empathic” responses are you hearing and how does it affect the quality of communication?

Practical Application for Chapters 7-8:

- Listen and respond to others by reflecting/guessing their feelings and needs
 - Watch videos with a friend, or alone, and practice “guessing the feelings and needs” of the character.
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CLASS 4.1, July 17

Topic: The Power of Self-Empathy: Connecting Compassionately With Ourselves. In the class, we will focus on turning empathy inward. How do we love and forgive ourselves, even when we are unhappy with our actions?

(after class: Read Chapter 9 in Rosenberg book)

Reflection Paper. Write one page on one or more of these questions or anything else related to this chapter:

1. How do you treat yourself when you do something you consider a mistake or unskillful?
2. Can you imagine treating yourself differently? How might you do that?
3. What do you see as the value of mourning? Are there past experiences in your life you would like to mourn? Is there value for you in healing from those experiences?
4. What is joyful for me and do I make time for those things? If not, why not?

Practical Application for Chapter 9:

- Notice when you have self-judgments and see if you can translate them into feelings/needs.
- Notice times you feel fear, guilt, shame, duty, or obligation and notice what you are telling yourself. What are you true feelings/needs?

CLASS 4.2, July 17

Topics: Expressing Anger Fully; The Protective Use of Force. When, where, and why does anger arise? What is your relationship to anger? How can we transform the paradigm from punitive to protective?

(before next class: Read Chapters 10-13 in Rosenberg book)

Reflection Paper. Elaborate on one or more of these questions or anything else related to these chapters:

1. How did your family of origin express anger?
2. How have you habitually expressed anger? What would people see or hear?
3. How do others receive your expression of anger?
4. How do you receive the expression of other's anger?
5. Write about the first time you remember feeling angry. What were you telling yourself about the other person? (What they should or shouldn't be doing, having, saying). Then re-write your own script of how you would express yourself fully, using OFNR.
6. How did you experience punishment growing up? How did it effect you?
7. Under what circumstances have you resorted to punitive means? Explain.
8. What are some of your old programming messages that have become self judgments?
9. Are you currently operating your life with "have to's" and "shoulds"? What are they? Can you translate them into "choose to" or "want to"?
10. What actions have others in your past done, for which you feel appreciation? What actions do others in your life do currently for which you feel appreciation?
11. Who have you withheld appreciations from, and what would you like to share with them?
12. Where in your life are you "hungry for appreciation"? Under what circumstances, with which individuals? Were there earlier times in your life you would have wanted appreciation?

Practical Application for Chapters 10-13:

- If you find yourself getting upset, stop and reflect "what is the story I'm telling myself?"
 - Watch videos with a friend, or alone, and identify the situations where protective use of force could be present instead of punishment.
 - Notice in daily life any tendency to punitive thoughts, translate these into NVC.
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CLASS 5.1, July 24, 5-6:30 PM

Topic: Liberating Ourselves and Counseling Others; Expressing appreciation and gratitude using NVC.

CLASS 5.2, July 24, 7-8:30 PM

Topic: Students will have an opportunity to present their collaborative projects to the entire class. Where are you now in comparison to your communication skills ten weeks ago? Is NVC making a difference in your life? What might be the benefit of living your life through the lens of NVC?