

# Summary Notes from 5 Day workshop with Robert Gonzales

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## Deepening Into Living Compassion

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Nonviolent Communication is a process founded on a language and communication which guides our attention to that which is most human about us. What emerges when this process is lived, is authentic honesty and deep, empathic listening. We then give and receive compassionately.

Premises underlying the consciousness of Nonviolent Communication:

- All human beings have the same needs/longings/yearnings. Needs are universal.
- Everything we do is in service of a need or needs.
- All violence, criticism, judgments are tragic expressions of needs.
- When we truly see the above, we can only see the humanness in every person at each moment. This is the foundation of Compassion.
- Every person is always doing the best they can, given their access to internal resources/self connection to meet their needs.

## The Essential Living Energy of Needs

There is only one life energy, one life force. Everything in existence has the same life energy flowing through us. Needs are qualitative, an expression of our life energy. All needs are forms of life itself.

See the person's longing, their need, whenever you are interacting with another person. We can learn to have compassion for ourselves – we invite and listen to the pain. At the heart of the pain is that part of us which wants to be seen and heard and invited. Compassionately accept whatever arises in yourself. So you can compassionately accept whatever arises in the other person.

Needs are an aspect or an expression of the energy of life. *We experience the beauty of a need when we are in contact with the quality of its energy.*

Developing the ability to focus our attention on and intention to connect to the life energy within needs is one of the most important abilities we develop within NVC. This practice is the embodied spirituality of NVC: in touch with our essence, we follow the longing, the yearning to experience this quality of the ecstatic flow of life. When we do this, we are in touch with the need in an embodied way, we experience its qualities, its essence, how it feels when that need is met and how we experience this “met-ness” in our body, emotions, and in our very being.

## NEEDS/LONGINGS/VALUING/YEARNINGS that ALL HUMANS HAVE

### PHYSICAL WELL BEING

- Air
- Food
- Water
- Shelter

- Safety
- Touch
- Sexual expression
- Movement/exercise
- Rest/sleep
- Life/survival

#### PEACE

- Beauty
- Ease
- Equality
- Harmony
- Inspiration
- Order
- Tranquility/Serenity

#### AUTONOMY

- Choice
- Creativity
- Freedom
- Independence
- Self Expression
- Solitude
- Space
- Spontaneity

#### MEANING/PURPOSE

- Aliveness
- Awareness
- Celebration of life: celebrate the creation of life, celebrate the loss of life

(mourning)

- Challenge
- Clarity
- Competence
- Consciousness
- Contribution
- Creativity
- Effectiveness
- Growth
- Hope
- Influence
- Inspiration
- Learning & Sharing
- Meaning
- Mourning
- Participation
- Purpose
- Stimulation
- Understanding
- Wholeness

## HONESTY

- Authenticity
- Integrity

## PLAY

- Joy
- Humour

## CONNECTION/INTERDEPENDENCE

- Acceptance
- Acknowledgment
- Appreciation
- Belonging
- Co-Creation
- Cooperation
- Communication
- Community
- Compassion
- Connection
- Connection with life
- Consideration
- Consistency
- Contribution to the Well Being of another
- Empathy
- Harmony
- Mattering; to matter
- Mutuality
- Peaceful connection
- Preservation of Life
- Respect; Or better: Holding each other with regard
- Safety
- Security
- Support
- To see and be seen
- To understand
- To be understood
- Trust
- Warmth

## INTIMACY

- Affection
- Bonding
- Caring
- Closeness
- Companionship
- Friendship
- Inclusion
- Intimacy
- Love
- Nurturing
- Shared values

## **Transforming Pain, Transforming our Core Beliefs, and Choosing Life.**

We feel longing in our bodies. It is not simply a thought we have.

Feeling the beauty of the need is the experience of feeling support, feeling upheld, warmth in the fulfillment of the need. The embodied fulfillment of the need. So much of it feels like love.

Ask yourself: what are you wanting, what are you longing for?

We all long for the same things. We long to know that we matter. When people are angry, often they want to know that they matter.

We're only angry because something is important. Look past the anger. When furious, get curious. What is it that is so important to you, or to the other person? What is the strong need behind the anger? And if it is fear behind the anger, what is the need behind the fear? The immense longing for something important that is not being met?

Let yourself receive the anger – What is it that you are wanting that didn't happen here? Be present within yourself, even when the other person is very angry.

If it is not a choice we are making, it is a reaction.

Don't argue or evaluate the messenger. See them as a gift. A gift to help you both connect deeply to your needs.

Longing helps connect with the heart.

When you are not able to be as present to yourself and others as you would like to be, at the very first opportunity, connect with yourself. Then later, review what was going on in you, find out what needs weren't being met. (and perhaps behind those, what core beliefs were operating about those needs not being met).

Seeking is from the mind. Longing, yearning, is in the heart. There is no sense of urgency or demand in this longing, this yearning. The essence of what we long for already exists in us. It reaches for its fulfillment in life itself.

Hold your needs passionately, but the outcome lightly.

Express the fullness rather than the lack, when you discuss needs. The fullness of the longing, the fullness of the yearning.

THAT I WOULD BE GOOD, by Alanis Morissette

Link to her YouTube video of this song:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=44TRkB9dxvE>

That I would be good even if I did nothing  
That I would be good even if I got the thumbs down  
That I would be good if I got and stayed sick  
That I would be good even if I gained ten pounds

That I would be fine even if I went bankrupt

That I would be good if I lost my hair and my youth  
That I would be great if I was no longer queen  
That I would be grand if I was not all knowing

That I would be loved even when I numb myself  
That I would be good even when I am overwhelmed  
That I would be loved even when I was fuming  
That I would be good even if I was clingy

That I would be good even if I lost sanity  
That I would be good  
Whether with or without you

How easily pain can be stimulated when we focus on the largeness of it. It is easy to feel overwhelmed, fearful. We lose the power of ourselves.

Be with yourself. What does that do with the life in you? Be with yourself in the present moment. From there you can access the power to act. Individual acting, moment by moment.

## **Transforming Core Beliefs and Compassionately Embracing Life**

### **Core Beliefs**

A child's innocence is met by a "No!" This is true for all of us to some degree. When that happens, it is a traumatic event. A shocking bewilderment to the child. Over time, that child's innocence is met by "No!" after "No!". Decisions for protection are made. For some children, they decide "I'm not going to do that any more." A decision is made not to be vulnerable, because it is too painful to receive that "No!". Conclusions are made about being flawed, less than, not good, and don't have. "I must protect myself. My very survival is at stake." The force of the defense is very strong.

We develop core beliefs about life. Beliefs like: "There isn't enough room for me." "My life doesn't matter." "My needs don't count." "I am unloved, or unlovable". "I mustn't ask for anything." "I must do as others tell me." "If I say 'no' to any request from you, you will not love me, and the relationship will end." For a child, sometimes these protective mechanisms have meant actual survival.

If you look deeply into the triggers and your fears and your longings, these core beliefs will surface, will become clear.

Be present to yourself, hold your own pain with compassion so you can help liberate the life that's held in the wounding.

Welcome all of it. Getting away from it is pushing life away. Every expression of life – meet it with welcoming and acceptance.

**The shift we need to make is from pushing away to listening.**

Pushing away yourself, or pushing away others.

The life in you, too, wants to be held in acceptance. Vulnerability allows the flow of life itself.

### **Exercise to Transform Core Beliefs and Compassionately Embrace Life**

1. Identify the stimulus (observation) for what you are experiencing (pain, unresolved issue, etc.) What was said or done just before you reacted?
2. Identify the negative thinking stimulated by whatever happened.
3. Notice any sense of contraction or constriction in your body.
4. Describe the physical sensations associated with the stimulus as you are experiencing them now.
5. Acknowledge, express, and empathize with any life-alienating thinking that arises in you.
6. Focus on where the energy associated with this life-alienated thinking or 'story' lives in your body. Notice that there is room for all of the sensations, thoughts, and emotions, that it is okay to "be with" whatever is present, right here and right now.
7. Notice any relaxation, any letting go of your resistance to this contracted and painful experience. Open to life as it flows through you.
8. Look for a sense of innocence in this open, uncensored flow. This young energy in you may react to difficult situations by trying to protect itself. Assure this innocent part that there is nothing wrong with feeling whatever it feels: "There is nothing you have to get over or get through."
9. From this compassionate place, sense in the tender, vulnerable energy a longing for or wanting of something deeply comforting, something precious. Allow yourself to experience any mourning that arises and let yourself rest in the innocent, pure beauty of your yearning.
10. If you notice a core belief arise in your awareness, allow it to arise without trying to figure out what the belief is.
11. Allow yourself to sink more deeply into the living energy of what it is you long for. Feel it in your emotions and your body as if that need is being fully met. To get in touch with the beauty of the need, remember a time when it was fulfilled... notice how your emotions and body feel as you remember.
12. Continue to follow the flow of yearning energy into the beauty of what you long for. Dwell in its beauty, feel its energetic qualities slowly extending into every cell of your body. Use each breath to expand this experience of dwelling in the living energy of this need.
13. With your consciousness and energy in the beauty of the need, bring back into your mind the original stimulus and meet it with the energy of the fullness of the need. Notice any shift in your original reaction.
14. And now, with our attention on the beauty and energy of the need, bring the core belief into your awareness. Notice your experience as you stay in the energy of the need while you think about the core belief.

When you are resting in the beauty, the core belief has no power. When you're living in the fullness of the beauty of the need, the original trigger does not cause you to react.

Only when you save myself can you save the world. Come to the world with energy and joy and love. When our attention is on what we don't want we reinforce it. Radiate the world as we want it.

Our essence is innocence. It is felt as the yearning of the heart. In the littlest, most minute moments. When you greet someone, where is that energy? Is there a holding? Is there a relaxation? In the smallest of moments. The biggest unfolding takes place in the smallest. Feel the bodily energy. Feel the emotional energy. Be a compassionate witness.

Express your longing, and listening to the other's longing.

Be conscious of the longing in even the smallest interaction.

Live and dwell in one's authenticity, our vulnerabilities.

We are moving from the Language of the Heart to being in the heart.

Listen for people's expression of their life awareness, their longings.

Welcome it. No matter what it is, welcome it. We're not trying to get anywhere, I am just tracking the life in you. Unconditional life acceptance. If you judge other people – you keep yourself tight.

This communion with the other person could be described as non-personal intimacy. Acceptance of what is.

We live in the world of authenticity, passion. It is a non-personal world. Generosity of the human spirit, giving to one another.

To really engage in deepening into compassion requires us to live a pace of life slower than what we typically engage in. To come to our aliveness requires slowing down.

## **CONFLICT**

Definition of Conflict: When what serves the life force in me which is seeking well-being, does not match what serves the life force in you which seeks well-being.

How we handle this results in greater intimacy and connection or greater disconnection.

Thoughts often result in greater separation.

There is only one life force moving in me and you, it seeks well-being in many forms.

Suffering or separation is an obstruction. If you can identify the obstruction, you can help to clear it. Compassion recognizes the life force. The balm is to allow the unmetness in the message.

Follow life, follow life. Find ways to attune and deeply honor and respect this life force. Compassion is an incredible spacious awareness, that says – you are welcome here in whatever form your life energy takes – there is a wisdom in the life force.

The beauty can be felt, expressed, heard.

Hold the names and all these ways very lightly.

Retreat and re-engagement cycles. Sometimes you need to retreat, to engage in communication. To connect with that life in us, before you can once again re-engage with the life in others. Compassionate mutuality.

In dialogue, equally value the life in each of us – a mutuality. Inviting both needs is equally caring. Dwelling in the other person's needs will often result in a shift. The life in me wants to support the life in you. Now I joyfully want to give because I want to contribute to the beauty of your need.

### **THE ILLUSION OF CONFLICTING NEEDS:**

#### Decision-Making From the Heart

A process for living the awareness that needs never conflict, only strategies conflict. Then choosing what is alive in a manner that is open-hearted, awake and present.

1. Find a specific situation in your life in which there are two vital and apparently conflicting needs, sets of needs or choices.
2. Separate the needs from the strategies. (You may find the mind habitually/immediately going to strategies seeking ways to meet one or both needs: look carefully to find the needs/longings/yearnings.)
3. Get in touch with the needs/longings/yearnings themselves.
4. Hold both needs at once. (Like two individual flowers in one vase)
  - A. Bring one need into consciousness. Hold the living energy, the beauty of the need in your awareness; feel the fullness of this need being met.
  - B. Transform the negative thinking: If negative blaming thinking gets triggered or you hear the chatter of habitual thinking, empathize with it.
  - C. Bring your attention back to the dimension of beauty and aliveness of the need you're holding.
  - D. Bring the other need into consciousness. Hold the living energy, the aliveness and fullness of this need being met.
  - E. Bring both needs into consciousness at once, the living energies of both in the fullness of being met.
5. Stay with the needs themselves without any thoughts or conclusions about where that might take you.
  - A. You may shift from one need to the other or you may hold them both simultaneously.
  - B. Trust, surrender into the full aliveness of the needs. It may help to imagine a situation in which the need was met, touching into the beauty of the need getting met.
  - C. Allow the needs to speak to you, rest in the beauty of their divine energy. It is like two different flowers in the vase. You can hold them both in your mind, though you can only actually **do** one of them. If attention wanders to thought or strategies, bring it back to the quality of the need as it lives in you. Listen for the need that speaks louder.
  - D. Celebrate the life and beauty of the need which speaks louder to you.
  - E. Mourn the letting go of the other need in this moment. Open up to the possibility



of sadness and pain; Open heartedly notice all the possibilities of this moment. You have freedom in this; you choose intentionally. If you really connect to the beauty of the need in yourself, the attachment often goes away to one choice or the other.

6. Does anything occur to you in terms of a request of yourself? Three things that could commonly happen to the need which you're not choosing:
  - A. Consciously mourn that need.
  - B. The two needs blend, intertwine or intersperse so that both still get met, usually with a strategy previously hidden to you.
  - C. The other need disappears and is no longer relevant in the moment.

This process helps get to the purity of the beauty of the needs; the beauty informs me; I surrender to that.

Summary:

Slow down, look, get in touch with the two needs, bring it all in open heartedly; hold it. Surrender to the life energy that flows through us and let the life of the needs choose; trust this process  
It's about living in surrender and trust.

This process internalized can support the process of connection in dialog via empathy. It becomes natural to resonate with the beauty of the other person's need and to hold their need and your own as equally precious.

When negative, blaming thinking arises, we meet it with empathy and tune into the longing.

There is a really profound strategy in just staying, dwelling in the longing. Go back to it.

## **MOURNING**

Suffering is life calling to meet it with compassion.

Suffering is the door to go back home. It needs to be embraced. It is when we meet our suffering with compassion; with allowing, then it becomes the doorway.

We go towards the suffering, not away from it.

### **Mourning versus Suffering.**

Mourning is life-serving, fully acknowledge the pain of something that is not fulfilled. The essential feeling is sadness. Mourning encompasses the awareness of the need. We only feel sad because something precious in our heart is not fulfilled.

Be with the sadness – For example, you so much want to be in a world that cares – you feel sadness for earth. Sadness, heaviness in the stomach, bitter, I'm sad because...

Re-frame from sadness at hurting earth to feeling gratitude and love for earth. Then the deep beauty of the need shines through.

End up living in the beauty of the need, without denying the other aspect of the experience.

Rest supported in the deep valuing.

When we get stuck or disconnected, it collapses our energy for what we deeply value, and this exercise helps us focus again on what we deeply value.

When there is anger, figure out the need we haven't met – ours or theirs.

The openness to mourn: Be with and sit with it, not try to fix it.

What disconnects is the assumptions, the conclusions. Give up what you know, so you can go into the mystery. Give up what you think you know. Differentiate what you are thinking from what you are feeling.

Natural Pain versus Suffering: In natural pain, you are in a flow.

In Suffering: there is always thought, or the story. It keeps the experience in a state of perpetual suffering.

When something occurs in life that shouldn't happen, it gives rise to suffering. E.g. I am a victim. Why did this happen? I shall avoid this! Why him? It's terrible. Why does this happen to me? This pain is too much. I can't handle this.

Mourning is essential to meet life fully, open-heartedly. The heart of mourning is sadness, or a feeling that has no words. Sadness in the face of a life event. We feel pain because something is valuable to us which was lost. It always contains the preciousness and the longing for what is held precious. Tears are about the presence of something that is very beautiful which is not present.

In mourning, there is a full accepting of what is. Deep, deep sadness, and deep deep preciousness. Mourning occurs every day – for meeting life every day where needs are not always met. One can harvest the aliveness in the sadness. Celebrating the joy of life and mourning. Once we can get to a place where there is no preference for pain over joy, we do not constrict the life force. We can have a true open-hearted love affair with this world – we sense the beauty of that which was not met. “I stand before the presence of your absence.” Sadness is a gift, because it shows us what is beautiful.

There are raw places which have not yet been soothed and healed. They are so painful that you do not want to go there. That part of you needs compassion and unconditional acceptance. You don't need to transcend pain, you need to be compassionate towards it.

### **The Space and Energy of Mutuality: Authentic Dialogue**

The energy of mutuality. You see me reaching out to life. Hold my violence with clarity and compassion. The gift that we are to others when we can do this.

“Remember to assume good intent” – remind yourself at the beginning of every meeting/discussion. This is what the neighbours do at Earthsong in the Waitakeres.

“What lives in me is different that what I hear. What lives in me is different from what I hear you express. I come to it from a different place.” To enter the space of mutuality, we go to the place of not knowing. We approach it fresh.



**The space of mutuality:**

-not knowing  
-freshness  
-curiosity  
Mutual seeing, feeling,  
hearing. No attention on  
the outcome.

Come with an intention of curiosity. So we can enter into a relationship. I wonder what it is you are saying? What is it you are wanting? That open space of the unknown is the space. If they say something that triggers our core belief system, we aren't relating to them, we are struggling with our own core beliefs, reacting to our inner reaction to the trigger. The inner work supports this. We do our inner work and engage in communication.

Individuals usually don't prepare for dialogue, and it makes a huge difference if they do.

### **Preparation for Authentic Dialogue**

Connect to the Energy of the Beauty of the Need

1. Identify the observation/stimulus that you want to communicate about.
2. Follow the stimulus to identifying the need, to resting in the beauty of the need. What is the longing? So you can express the beauty of the unmet need to them. (Too often we express what we don't want).
  - A. Self-empathize with any thinking, judgments, feelings or other needs as they arise in relation to entering in the beauty of the need.
  - B. Enter in to the living energy of this need, feel it alive within you.
3. Say aloud, the beauty of the need expressing your sense and value of it in terms of your emotions and the felt sense of your body.
4. Sense and guess what need might have been alive in the other person. Recognize they were trying to meet a need in what you observed. Feel the beauty in their need. Put your attention to their longing. To their heart. To the 'as if' premise, that everyone speaks and acts out of their own longing. When the attention goes into that territory, we are at least partially in the space of mutuality. Draw them out and hold and empathize with their longing.
5. Say aloud the beauty of the need you are guessing alive in them and what it feels like in your emotions and the felt sense of your body.
6. Intend to connect with each other's authenticity without any other outcome in mind (for change or to fix anything). Intend to enter the dialogue only for mutual connection. You might say "I want to reveal (share/express) the fullness of my feelings and needs so the other person receives it in their heart and I want to hear, feel and receive theirs in my heart so we can mutually enjoy each others feelings and needs. Place no attention on outcome. Because the focus on outcome is urgency, desperation, fear. Practice letting go of outcome. The outcome emerges from the mutuality.
7. Set a clear intention to connect. Say aloud your intention to connect and what this intention feels like in your body and emotions.

Naming and out loud speaking enables shifting to take place. It helps to clarify what it is that you want to talk to the other person about.

Enter into the space of this longing and cultivate it. Feel it deeply.

Can you hear what I am longing for? Flow of honesty, responsibility. I'm scared right now. In that I'm so much wanting trust. That I'll be welcomed. If we share the fear, it becomes more vulnerable fear. It becomes softer. How do I show up with my authenticity in a way that they can receive it? I have a concern in me right now. I would like to have the confidence that you will be able to hear me out.

The more I believe that there is something to protect, the more closed I will be. I'm scared. I long to be accepted.

Tune into the energy of the needing, the longing.

Long to be accepted. Long to be safe. Long to be heard.

Even if you can't say it outwardly, you can say it inwardly, and give yourself self-empathy.

Be alert and caring for yourself. Whatever comes up, it is a thread of the longing. Bring all of you with care and tenderness. The wariness is the surface presentation of the longing. What is it like in your body? What longing is underneath that? Hold it lightly. Whatever comes, trust that you can be with yourself.

Place no attention on outcome. Because the focus on outcome is urgency, desperation, fear. Practice letting go of outcome. The outcome emerges from the mutuality.

Focus on the other's longing opens the possibility of you receiving it. Guessing at their longing opens up the possibility of you receiving it.

"I don't know what's going on with you. I'd like to find out."

### **THE BEAUTY OF NEEDS MEDITATION: 40 minutes**

Requires two people; the meditator and the listener. The meditator does their own process, on authenticity, for example. And lets the listener know what need/yearning/longing they have chosen to meditate on. The listener says either:

1. Tell me what authenticity is or:
2. Tell me how the longing for authenticity lives in you.

These are the only words that the listener says. The rest of the time the listener only uses his or her eyes to show that the meditator is being listened to. The Listener does not take part in the meditator's conversation. This is difficult for the listener. The listener simply allows. He or she is not responding. This exercise asks for simply witnessing, beholding.

1. Pause, sense, deepen into the longing
2. Share what comes up when you enter in the longing
3. At the end of each 5 minute periods, the other person does it for their own chosen need/longing/yearning
4. You can go back and forth, on the same or different topics. After the 1<sup>st</sup> 5 minutes, as the speaker becomes the listener, other ideas and thoughts will arise, which will come out during the next 5 minute opportunity to express. You go deeper and deeper. Do this for 40 minutes.