

Teachers Take Up New Tools To Battle Burnout

PuddleDancer Press For Reprint Purposes¹

The day-to-day challenges of K-12 classrooms aren't for the faint of heart. Teachers spend their salaries on classroom materials, and their leisure time on lesson plans and curriculum mapping. Pile on deep budget cuts, closer scrutiny of performance and the under funded guidelines of No Child Left Behind, and even the toughest teachers struggle - or look for another job.

Given the load today's teachers carry, the thought of adding a soft-skills curriculum may sound as appealing as the cafeteria's tuna surprise - but educators are celebrating.

"Teachers who practice the Compassionate or Nonviolent Communication (NVC) process discover surprising wellsprings of power," says Sura Hart, co-author of *The Compassionate Classroom* with Victoria Kindle Hodson. "They spend no more time on lessons than before, and they ride on higher levels of energy and optimism."

The key - bring relationships front and center, including the important relationship a teacher has with him or herself. With little to no personal time in their day, an educator's stress level can build quickly, especially when their needs for support or cooperation are not met. Jumping to strategies like punishment, blame, or anger are a far cry from relief.

By using self-empathy, a central component to the NVC process, teachers have permission to give attention to their own feelings and needs without wallowing in destructive patterns of self-pity, judgment, blame or criticism.

"Our feelings are important messengers, telling us when our needs are fulfilled and when they are not," say Hart and Hodson in *The Compassionate Classroom*. According to Hart and Hodson, the problem is when people focus only on their feelings, which can leave them disempowered or disconnected, particularly when they begin to label others as the "cause" of their distress.

The NVC process guides educators through self-empathy using three key stages:

Observations — objectively describe the action or strategy that triggered your feelings, absent of judgment or criticism ("When I hear Travis talking to Lydia while I'm trying to lead a lesson, and I know I've asked him to quiet down three times so far . . .");

¹ This article is intended for reprint purposes and may be adapted to suit your needs or reprinted as is. For an electronic version of this feature, or for additional feature options, please contact Publicist Tiffany Meyer at tiffany.meyer@comcast.net or 503-880-5308. Word Count: 560



Feelings — link your observations to your own feelings, absent of evaluation or blame (“ . . . I feel frustrated . . .”);

Needs — link your feeling(s) to the need of yours that is met or not met by the action you’ve observed (“ . . . because my needs for cooperation, support, and learning are not met . . .”).

The empowerment comes in the absence of judgment, evaluation, or blame, which serve only to deplete energy and manifest tension, and more importantly moving beyond the expression of feelings to needs.

“Identifying our own needs empowers us to take action on our own behalf,” say Hart and Hodson. Once in touch with needs through self empathy, expressing doable requests to meet a need is an equally crucial component of the NVC process.

The Compassionate Classroom offers teachers interactive lessons and activities to expand their vocabulary of feelings and needs, utilize self-empathy, provide empathy to others, and understand how to make doable requests to get their needs met.

“One of the unique features of (NVC) is that it only takes one person who knows it to increase understanding and connection in communication,” said founder of the NVC process, Marshall Rosenberg. Self-empathy, even when practiced internally, improves a teacher’s relationship to his/her own needs, resulting in improved connection at any given moment between the teacher and all that takes place in their classroom.



About Nonviolent Communication

From the bedroom to the boardroom, from the classroom to the war zone, the Nonviolent Communication (NVC) process is changing lives every day. NVC provides an easy to grasp, effective method to get to the root of conflict, violence and pain peacefully. By examining the unmet needs behind what we do or say, the NVC process helps reduce hostility, heal pain, and strengthen professional or personal relationships.

The NVC process is now being taught in corporations, classrooms, prisons and mediation centers around the globe. And it is affecting cultural shifts as institutions, corporations and governments integrate NVC consciousness into their organizational structures and their approach to leadership.

International peacemaker, mediator, author and founder of the Center for Nonviolent Communication, Dr. Marshall Rosenberg spends more than **250** days each year teaching the NVC process, including some of the most impoverished, war-torn areas of the world. More than **180** certified trainers and hundreds more teach this life-enriching process in **35** countries to approximately **250,000** people each year.

About the Center for Nonviolent Communication

The Center for Nonviolent Communication (CNVC) is an international nonprofit peacemaking organization whose vision is a world where everyone's needs are met peacefully. CNVC is devoted to supporting the spread of Nonviolent Communication training and consciousness around the world.

Access local, national and international training opportunities, download trainer certification information, connect to local NVC communities and purchase a variety of other NVC learning materials at:

www.CNVC.org

About PuddleDancer Press

The premier publisher of Nonviolent Communication related works. Find these resources and more at:

www.NonviolentCommunication.com

- **Shop NVC**—Continue your learning—purchase our NVC titles online safely and conveniently. Find multiple-copy and package discounts, learn more about our authors and read dozens of book endorsements from renowned leaders, educators, relationship experts and more.
- **NVC Quick Connect e-Newsletter** —To stay apprised of new titles and the impact the NVC process is having around the globe, visit our website and register for the quarterly NVC Quick Connect e-Newsletter. Archived newsletters are also available.
- **Help Share NVC**—Access hundreds of valuable tools, resources and adaptable documents to help you share this valuable process, form a local NVC practice community, coordinate NVC workshops and trainings, and promote the life-enriching benefits of NVC training to organizations and communities in your area. Sign up for our NVC Promotion e-Bulletin to get all the latest promotion tips and tools.
- **For the Press**—Journalists and producers can access author bios and photos, recently published articles in the media, video clips and other valuable information.
- **Help Share NVC Community Forum**—Scheduled for launch in mid-2005, the Help Share NVC Community Forum provides an online space to support the continued spread of the NVC consciousness worldwide. Join our forum today at www.ShareNVC.com