

# The 4 Components of Nonviolent Communication

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**Observation:** A description of “what’s actually happening” as reported by our senses (sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell), plus our “inner” senses (e.g. our inner voice, images, thoughts, etc.).

- Direct, Sensory Experience
- A report of “what is”, free of judgment, criticism or other forms of analysis.
- Specific to time and context.
- “Observing without evaluating is the highest form of human intelligence.”
- The trigger of our experience.

*Key Distinction: Observation vs. Observation Mixed with Evaluation*

**Evaluations-**“moral” judgments of good~bad, right~wrong, appropriate~inappropriate that tend to be fixed or static.

**Feeling:** Physical Sensations + Emotions

- All human beings share the same palette of sensations.
- The signals we receive from our body alerting us to the state of our Needs.
- Feelings are composed of physical sensations (e.g. tight jaw, queasy stomach, smile, etc.) and/or emotions (e.g. sad, glad, mad, disappointment, frustration, regret, etc.).

*Key Distinction: Feeling vs. Thought*

- **Thoughts**-cognitive or mental, including beliefs, concepts, and opinions.

**Need:** Resources required to sustain and enrich life. (**Why** we behave the way we do.)

- All human beings share the same needs.
- Needs transcend cultural mores and conditioning.
- Needs make no reference to any specific person doing any specific thing.
- “Values” are generally equivalent to Needs

*Key Distinction: Need vs. Strategy*

- **Strategy**-a specific method to fulfill a Need. (**How** Needs become satisfied.)

**Request:** An opportunity to contribute to the well-being of ourself and/or others.

- A concrete offering with the *intention of contributing to fulfilling a Need*.
- Requests are *specific actions stated in the positive* (what we DO want).
- Immediately doable *in the present moment* and measurable.
- *Open to outcome*.
- There are at least three types of requests:
  - A. Action (“Would you be willing to talk about \_\_\_\_\_ for 10 minutes with me, now?”)
  - B. feedback (“How do you feel hearing that from me?”)
  - C. Clarity (“Would you be willing to tell me what you hear is important to me?”)

*Key Distinctions: Request vs Demand; Request vs Wish*

- **Demands**-include a threat of punishment or the promise of reward linked to a behavior.
- **Wishes**-tend to be vague, future oriented, and non-specific.