

# Wanting Fully without Attachment: Summary

1. **Accepting our humanity:** all our actions and reactions are based on needs. To the extent that we are conscious of and accepting of our needs, we have more freedom. Even when we do something "for" another person, we are still acting on our own needs (e.g. for meaning or contribution)
2. **Our shame interferes with freedom:** Any need that we "fight" inside us will assert itself in other ways, and we will have less choice in the matter.
3. **Redefining needs:** from need as lack to need as life.
4. **Secret hierarchy of needs:** opening up to ALL of our needs.
5. **Levels of attachment:** we can be attached to a particular strategy, or to having the need met. True freedom calls on us to be willing to live in peace with unmet needs.
6. **Overcoming "rejection" when we hear a "No":** distinguishing between hearing "No" to my strategies and hearing "No" to ME as human being.
7. **Wanting without Attachment:** How can we stay fully connected to what we want without giving up on it and without insisting on having it?
8. **The role of stories:** to the extent that we can stay with the fact of unmet needs as separate from the meaning we assign to not having our needs met, we have more freedom.
9. **Connection with needs changes our feelings:** to the extent that we can be with unmet needs as such, we reduce the prevalence of anger, depression, shame, and guilt from our lives.
10. **Practice:** cultivating a practice of connecting with needs supports us in making choices, integrating the experiences of life, increasing self-connection.

# Discovering Needs behind Actions and Choices

1. Pick an action or choice that you are very happy you took or made. Describe the action or choice.
  
2. Use the following questions to find the needs that led to this action or choice:
  - a. What were hoping for when taking this action or making this choice?
  - b. What was important to you that led you to this action or choice?
  - c. What is the meaning of this action or choice?
  
3. Shift focus back and forth between the action or choice and the needs that led to it. Does anything change in your inner experience as you do this?
  
4. Repeat questions 1-3 with an action or choice that you feel neutral about.
  
5. Repeat questions 1-3 with an action or choice that you feel unhappy about, even one that you have a judgment of yourself for taking or making.
  
6. Did you have a different experience finding needs for the action or choice you are not happy with? Any insights you are getting from this overall activity?

# From Strategy to Needs

1. Pick a strategy you have some charge about having it be a particular way. (e.g. you have a strong reaction when your partner leaves the toothpaste cap off).
2. Identify the unmet needs behind the strategy you picked.
3. Choose one unmet need, and think of at least one other strategy that could meet that need. Think only of this one need, even if the new strategy would not meet other needs (e.g. if a need that you came up with was order you could get a toothpaste dispenser that has no cap).
4. Repeat question 3 for one need at a time until you have found at least one other strategy for each of the needs you identified in question 2.
5. Return your focus to the original strategy. Do you notice any shift in your relationship with the strategy?
6. Pick one of the needs you identified that you particularly want to have met, and proceed to the next worksheet.

# Shifting Focus When Connecting with Needs

This guided reflection is intended to support you in experiencing a variety of ways to connect with your needs, which you can use at any time in your daily life. People resonate differently with these different ways. You may want to explore each of these to see which support you in gaining more self-connection and inner freedom. You can use these reflections as a series or separately from each other.

1. Focus your attention on a need that is not met to your satisfaction in your life. Put your focus specifically on the unmet quality of this need. You can say to yourself: "My need for \_\_\_\_ is not met," and repeat this phrase until you are fully connected with the experience of the unmet need. (You might want to close your eyes and focus inwardly while you do this.) What sensations do you notice in your body? What feelings arise?
2. Now shift your attention to the need itself. Not to the idea of having the need met, but to the need itself; to the fact of having a need. You can say to yourself: "I have a need for \_\_\_\_\_," and repeat this phrase until you are fully connected with the experience of having the need. (You might want to close your eyes and focus inwardly while you do this.) What sensations do you notice in your body? What feelings arise?
3. Now shift your attention to the met quality of the need. What is it like for you when this need is met? You can imagine this need met, and say to yourself: "My need for \_\_\_\_\_ is met," and repeat this phrase until you are fully connected with the experience of having this need met. (You might want to close your eyes and focus inwardly while you do this.) What sensations do you notice in your body? What feelings arise?
4. Lastly, shift your attention to the need as a presence you want to encounter (another meaning of "meet"). This is similar to focusing on the need without it being met or unmet, but may be experienced differently. Focus on what it is like to meet this need in the sense of encountering it fully. You might say to yourself: "Hello \_\_\_\_\_. Welcome," and repeat this phrase until you are fully connected with the experience of having encountering this need. (You might want to close your eyes and focus inwardly while you do this.) What sensations do you notice in your body? What feelings arise?



# Working with "No" to Deepen Self-Connection

## KEYS:

- a. Understanding the difference between needs and strategies is key to our ability to stay in dialogue and face a "no" while connecting with our own and others' needs.
- b. While we want to move toward meeting our needs, we may want to simultaneously work on our attachment to having our needs met and on releasing the idea that our needs "have to" be met.
- c. One of the gifts of NVC can be learning to live in peace when our needs are not met.

Think of a charged situation in which you don't have a lot of confidence that you will get your needs met, and you are having a hard time hearing a "no" to your request. Write down the situation and request, then explore your response to the "no" by responding to the following questions.

1. The situation: My feelings, needs and request:
2. How am I feeling about hearing "no" and what is my need in relation to the "no"?
3. What is my understanding of the other person's feelings and needs? What needs might they be saying "yes" to that are leading them to say "no" to my request?
4. Can I imagine other strategies for meeting my needs other than this person agreeing to my request?
5. What needs of mine might be met if I shift and completely let go of my request? (This is not a recommendation of what you might want to do, but rather only a suggestion for reflection that might increase self-understanding.)
6. If I imagine that the person would not shift, how do I feel and what needs of mine come to life?
7. If I imagine not getting my original needs met in this situation, how do I feel and what are my needs?
8. What is alive in me right now (my feelings and needs)? Have I gained any insights from reflecting on these questions?