

## Feelings

In our culture it's uncommon for us to say how we feel. We often speak, rather, of what we think. If we want to communicate compassionately, it's helpful to say how we're feeling so we can connect at that level. You can begin to learn the vocabulary for feeling words on the next page. Pay attention to your body and notice sensations – they are helpful indicators of what's happening in our emotions.

What's important to know about feelings:

- Helpful messengers pointing to our needs
- Expressed most simply and clearly using three words, for example: “I feel worried.”
- What others do or say may be the stimulus, but never the cause of our feelings. Our feelings are never caused by other people – “you make me happy,” or “she makes me angry,” are not used in NVC language because they deny responsibility.
- Distinguish between thought and feeling
  - “I feel that you're inconsiderate.” → “When I think that you're inconsiderate, I feel angry.”
  - “I feel like I don't matter.” → translate
  - “I feel it's not right.” → translate
- Watch for these – what comes after will express thoughts, judgments or evaluations:
  - I feel like...
  - I feel that...
  - I feel it...
  - I feel as if...
  - I feel you/he/she/they
- Thoughts posing as feelings lead to anger {see evaluations masquerading as feelings}
  - I feel manipulated
  - I feel insulted
  - These are not feelings; thoughts about what you think others are doing to you.

## Feelings Inventory

Use this list to become familiar with your emotions. Notice which sensations in your body are associated with the feelings because this will help you have more ease and access to your emotions by knowing when and how they show up in your body.

*When Needs are Being Fulfilled*

**We are likely to feel...**

GLAD, happy, excited, hopeful, joyful, satisfied, delighted, encouraged, grateful, confident, inspired, relieved, touched, proud, elated, exuberant, optimistic

PEACEFUL, tranquil, calm, content, engrossed, absorbed, expansive, serene, loving, blissful, satisfied, relaxed, composed, blissful, clear

LOVING, warm, affectionate, tender, friendly, sensitive, grateful, compassionate, nurtured, amorous, trusting

PLAYFUL, energetic, effervescent, invigorated, zestful, refreshed, stimulated, alive, eager, exuberant, giddy, adventurous, enthusiastic

RESTED, relaxed, alert, refreshed, alive, energized, rejuvenated, strong, invigorated,

THANKFUL, grateful, appreciative

*When Needs are Not Being Fulfilled*

**We are likely to feel...**

SAD, lonely, heavy, helpless, gloomy, grief, overwhelmed, distant, despondent, dismayed, discouraged, distressed, disheartened

SCARED, afraid, fearful, terrified, startled, nervous, panicky, jittery, horrified, anxious, anguished, lonely, skeptical, suspicious

MAD, angry, aggravated, exasperated, agitated, furious, enraged, infuriated, hostile, bitter, pessimistic, resentful, disgusted, annoyed, disappointed

CONFUSED, frustrated, perplexed, hesitant, troubled, torn, embarrassed, uneasy, worried, bewildered, concerned

TIRED, exhausted, fatigued, lethargic, indifferent, listless, weary, overwhelmed, fidgety, helpless, heavy, sleepy, withdrawn, apathetic

UNCOMFORTABLE, pained, uneasy, hurt, miserable, embarrassed

## Evaluations Masquerading as Feelings

The following expressions are generally not considered feelings in Nonviolent Communication, but instead evaluations that say more about what we interpret or judge another person as doing. Use the chart below to help you access the deeper feelings and needs. *Note:* This list is not designed to be complete or authoritative.

<i>When you say this evaluation</i>	<i>You might be feeling:</i>	<i>You might be needing:</i>
Abandoned	lonely, terrified, hurt, sad, frightened	connection, belonging, support, caring, nurturing
Abused	angry, frustrated, frightened	caring, nurturing, support, consideration, physical wellbeing, respect
Attacked	scared, angry	safety
Belittled	angry, frustrated, tense, distressed	respect, autonomy, to be seen, acknowledgement, appreciation
Betrayed	angry, hurt, disappointed, enraged	trust, dependability, honesty, honor, commitment, clarity
Blamed	angry, scared, confused, antagonistic, hostile, bewildered, hurt	accountability, causality, fairness, justice
Cheated	resentful, hurt, angry	honesty, fairness, justice, trust, reliability
Coerced	angry, frustrated, frightened, scared	choice, autonomy, freedom
Criticized	scared, anxious, frustrated, angry, embarrassed	understanding, acknowledgement, recognition, accountability, acceptance
Disrespected	embarrassed, frightened, frustrated, hurt, irritated, pissed off	respect, appreciation, acknowledgment, consideration, to be seen and valued
Ignored	lonely, scared, hurt, sad, embarrassed	connection, belonging, inclusion, community, participation
Incompetent	frustrated, disappointed, worried	proficiency, success, competence, effectiveness, development
Insulted	angry, embarrassed	respect, consideration, acknowledgment, recognition
Interrupted	angry, frustrated, resentful, hurt	respect, to be heard, consideration
Intimidated	scared, anxious	safety, equality, empowerment
Manipulated	angry, scared, powerless, frustrated	autonomy, empowerment, trust, equality, freedom, connection, genuineness
Misunderstood	upset, angry, frustrated, discouraged	to be heard, understanding, clarity
Pressured	anxious, resentful, overwhelmed	relaxation, clarity, space, consideration, ease
Put down	angry, sad, embarrassed	respect, acknowledgement, understanding
Rejected	hurt, scared, angry	belonging, inclusion, closeness, to be seen, acknowledgement, connection
Threatened	scared, frightened, alarmed, agitated	safety, autonomy

*Sources: Ike Lasater, San Francisco, CA; Jorge Rubio & Susan Skye and 2000 Wisconsin IIT participants*

## Needs Inventory

*It can be said that all human beings share 9 primary universal needs:*

physical survival	honesty	recreation
safety/security	love	freedom
understanding	community	meaning

*Here are variations of these needs, as well as others:*

<b>Physical Survival</b>	<b>Freedom</b>	vision/dreams
air	autonomy	honesty
water	independence	discrimination
food	choice	
shelter	individuality	<b>Celebration</b>
rest	self-empowerment	play
safety	solitude	humor
		aliveness
<b>Mental</b>	<b>Self-Expression</b>	stimulation
information	contribution	excitement
clarity	creativity	passion
thinking/reflecting	effectiveness	pleasure/delight
comprehend	growth	mourning
awareness	meaning	
stimulation	teaching	<b>Spiritual Energy</b>
discrimination	development	harmony
	healing	peace
<b>Nurturance</b>	mastery	ease
touch		beauty
physical affection	<b>Integrity</b>	order, grace
comfort	self-worth	inspiration
warmth/caring	self-respect	communion
tenderness	authenticity	being
bonding	purpose	ritualize the sacred

### **Social and Emotional (Interdependence)**

empathy/understanding/being heard  
mutuality/reciprocity  
consideration/respect/fairness  
giving/serving/contribution/participation  
love/affection/acceptance/being seen  
trust/empathy

sharing/intimacy/friendship/companionship  
closeness/connection/communication  
support/cooperation  
acknowledgement/recognition/validation  
equality/tolerance/justice  
relaxation/emotional freedom/emotional  
safety  
appreciation/being valued  
predictability/security/reliability/stability