

COMMUNAL DISCERNMENT & IGNATIAN DECISION MAKING



Workshop on Ignatian School Leadership
April 17 - 21, 2017
Good Shepherd Spirituality Center
Antipolo, Rizal, Philippines

BIG IDEAS

Reflecting on Our
WHERE and **WHY**

**“Working hard for
something we don’t care
about is called stress.
Working hard for
something we love is
called passion.”**

Simon Sinek



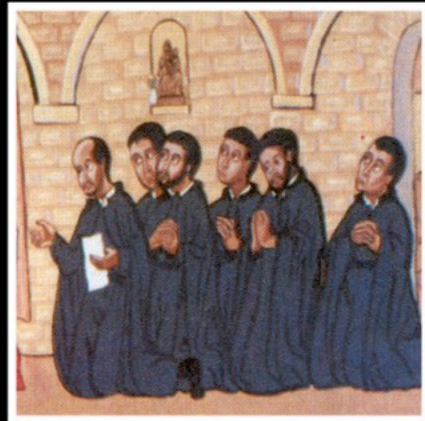
BIG IDEAS

If discernment is making a decision that “deepens God’s life in us,” two things would be helpful:

- * a **familiarity with God** bred through a relationship with Him, especially through **prayer**
- * **self-awareness especially of our central human needs** that may prevent us from discerning in **spiritual freedom**.

conditions for
communal discernment

PRAYERFULNESS
SPIRITUAL FREEDOM
MUTUAL ACCEPTANCE
AND TRUST



COMMUNAL CONSOLATION
vs. COMMUNAL DESOLATION

LISTENING
WITH
ATTENTIVENESS
+ EMPATHY



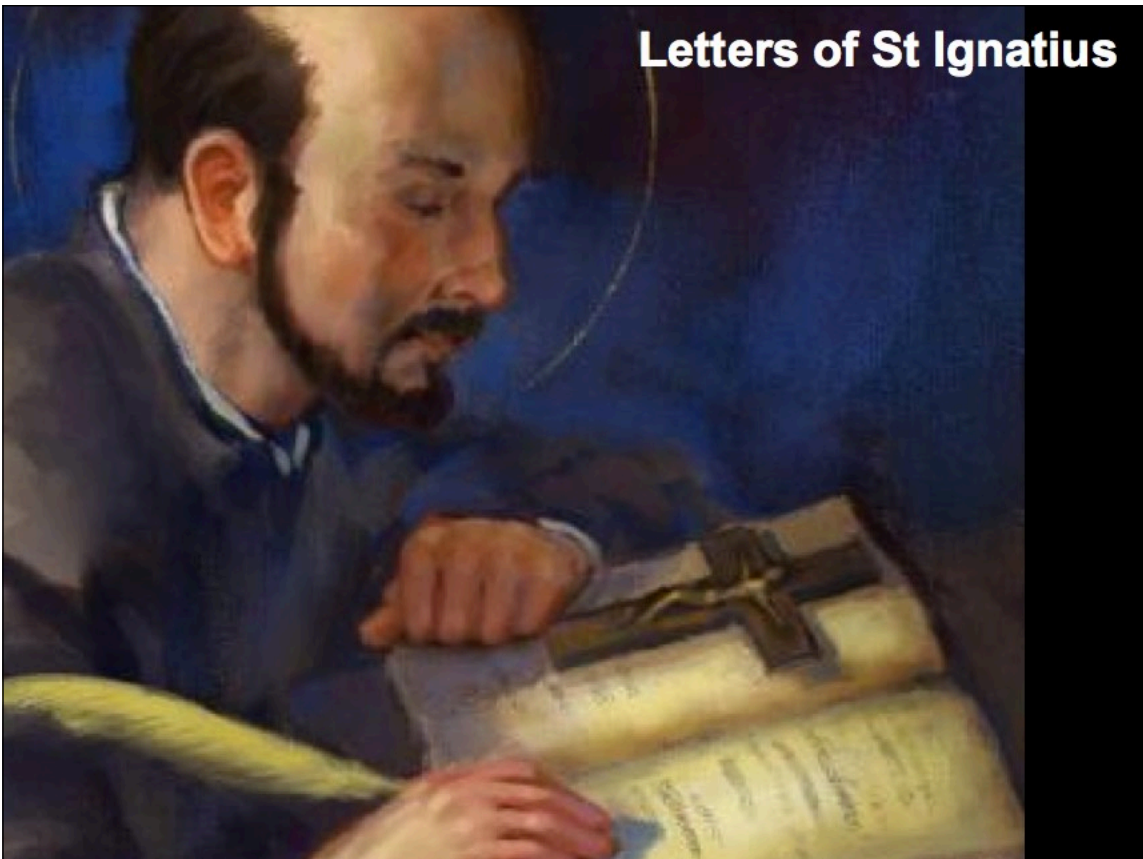
LISTENING TO GOD
IN ONE ANOTHER



“The smartest person in the room is...
the ROOM.”



Organizations are made of
CONVERSATIONS.



Letters of St Ignatius

How many letters did Ignatius write in his lifetime?



approx. 7,000

Ignatius wrote his own letters until 1547-- later with Fr. Polanco-- always insisting that Jesuits in the field write back.

How **ROUND** is your table?

How **FLUID** is your environment?



3 L's OF LEADERSHIP

LORDSHIP LEADERSHIP LAIDBACKSHIP

Leadership by Command and Control	Leadership by Conversations	Leadership by Leaving Alone
Power and Authority	Consultation and Consensus Building	Sink or swim
Culture of CONTROL	Culture of COSMOS	Culture of CHAOS
INHIBITIVE	FACILITATIVE + CONSULTATIVE	INHIBITIVE

CATEGORIES OF LEADERSHIP BASED ON CONVERSATION MANAGEMENT

	ANSWERS		QUESTIONS
SUPPLIES	LORDSHIP ANSWER-CENTERED "WHAT"		CONSULTATIVE LEADERSHIP INQUIRY-CENTERED
SEEKS	CONSULTATIVE LEADERSHIP INQUIRY-CENTERED		FACILITATIVE LEADERSHIP CONVERSATION-CENTERED

Conversations involve generation of ideas, proposal of scenarios, and making forecasts.



Disagreements are likely, so **feedback** is essential.

FEEDBACK
FREQUENTLY
FLOPS




**Feedback in organization
is “immensely productive
or annoying vexed.”**



cura personalis

the value of **PERSONAL CARE**

**Personal relationship
with every individual student
and with every colleague**

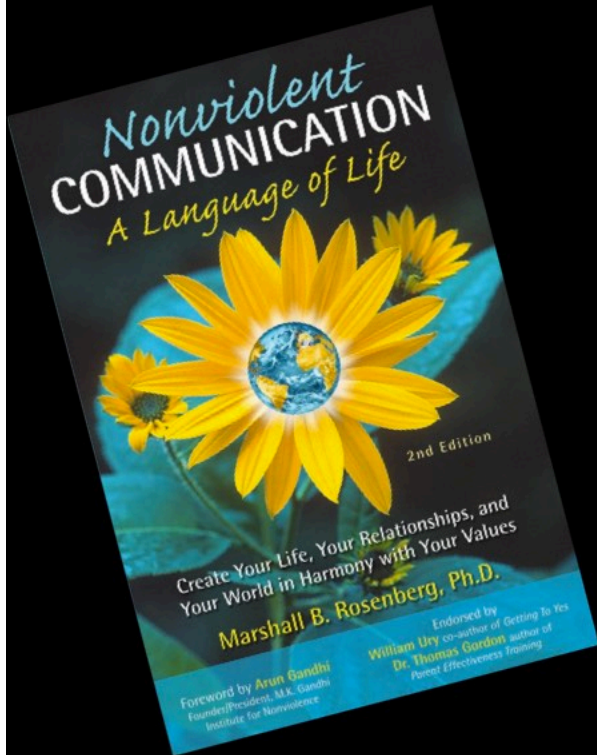


HOW DO WE TALK?

Or is our
language
littered with
**blame &
criticism?**

Can we talk
and listen
with
**empathy &
compassion?**

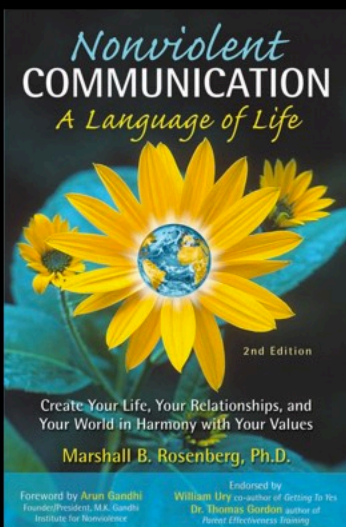




a way of communicating in which we strive without **criticism** or **judgment** and to **promote empathy and compassion**

used primarily for **feedback giving**

4 elements



observation

feelings

needs

request

State the observations that are leading you to feel the need to say something.

Purely factual observation
non-judgmental, non-evaluative

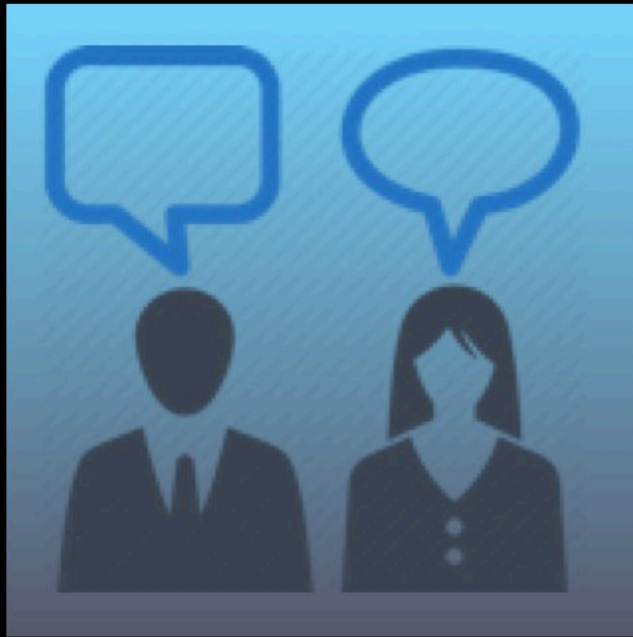
observ- ation

Observations, unlike evaluations, are common ground for communication.



feedback giving

“It’s way too late in the night to be making such a noise!”



“It’s 2 am, and I can hear your stereo playing.”

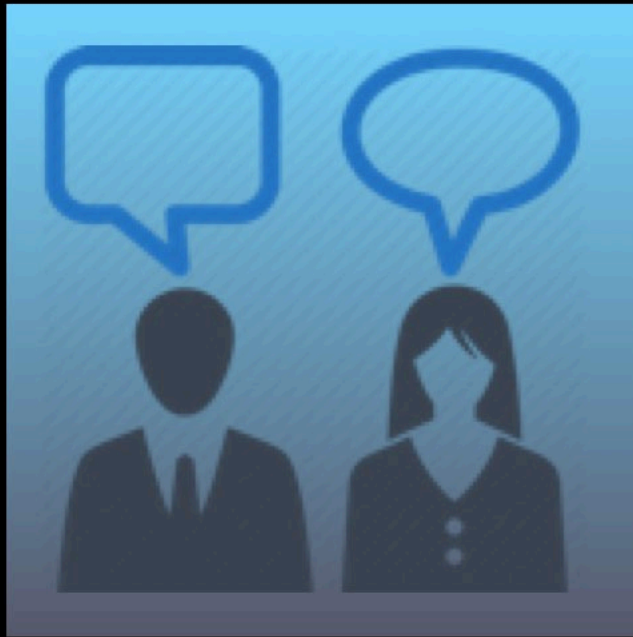
State the feeling that the observation is triggering in you.

Naming your feelings allows you to connect in a spirit of **mutual respect and cooperation.**

feelings

The goal is to identify your feelings and to own them, and not to blame them on the other person.

**“You’re driving me crazy
with your constant
complaints!”**



**“I feel annoyed
whenever
you complain.”**

**State the need that is the
cause of your feeling.**

**Met needs produce
pleasant feelings, while
unmet needs yield
unpleasant feelings. There
is an underlying need in
every feeling.**

needs

**“All you do is mumble
and I can’t hear a word you say!”**



**“I see you looking
away while I’m
talking, and you’ve
been speaking so
softly I can’t hear
you. I’m feeling
uncomfortable
because I need to
somehow feel
connected with
you.”**

**“Why are you picking your
nose? You’re so rude!”**



**“Whenever you
pick your nose in
public,
I feel offended
because I don’t
think I’m getting
the respect I
deserve.”**

Make a concrete request for action to meet the need just identified.

Don't just hint. Ask explicitly.

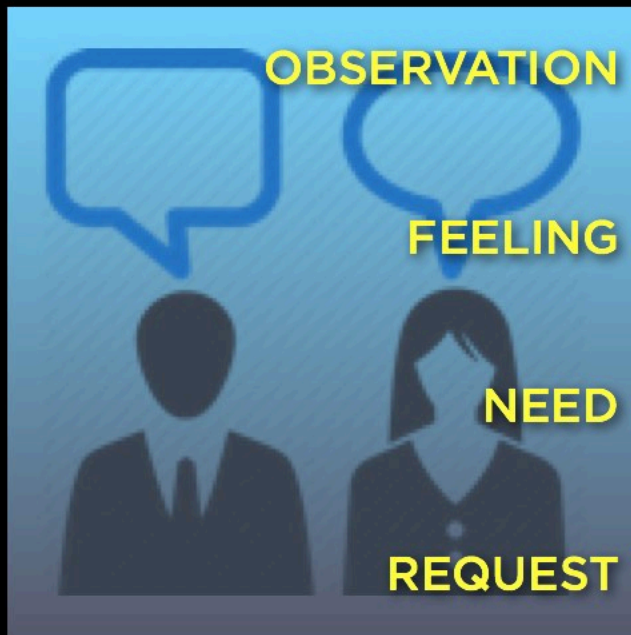
request The request should not be a demand. The other person should be free to turn it down or propose an alternative.

“I think it’s irresponsible that you’re letting your dog run around like some wild animal?”



“I notice your dog running around without a leash. I can’t help but feel scared because it might bite. I need to feel safe around here. Would it be okay if you put a leash on it?”

“Can’t you be more considerate and wash the coffee mugs you use?”



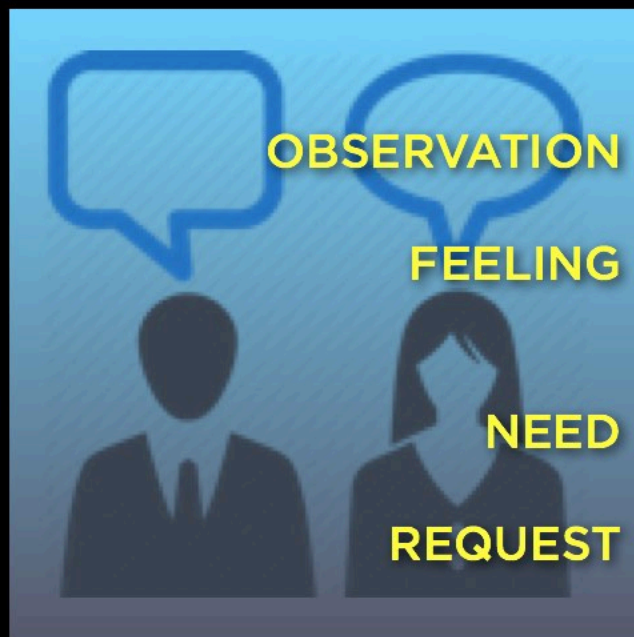
“I notice you sometimes forget to wash your mug. I feel it’s unfair because I try to do my share in keeping the pantry clean. I need to be assured that everyone is willing to do the same. Would it be possible for you to remember to wash your cups?”

“Why are you being rude? You never look at me when I’m talking to you, and I can hardly hear you because all you do is mumble!”



“I see you looking away while I’m talking, and you speak so quietly I can hardly hear you. I’m feeling a little uncomfortable. I would really need to understand you. Could you try to make eye contact and speak up?”

“Why have you been ignoring me for the last ten minutes?”



“I notice that you haven’t spoken in the last ten minutes. Are you feeling bored?”

Hey, would you like to go for a walk?”

HELPFUL SENTENCE TEMPLATES FOR FEEDBACK GIVING

OBSERVATION

“I see....

FEELING

I am feeling...

NEED

because I am needing...

REQUEST

Would you be willing to...?”

role play



Your colleague has not been doing his part in your committee work.

The NVC framework can also be used for



active listening.

4 elements

observation

feelings

needs

request

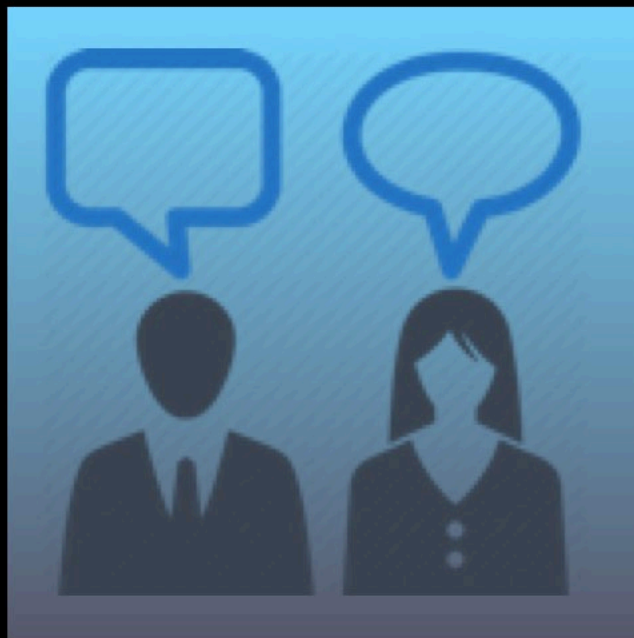
Instead of talking about your own feelings and needs, you mirror or ask about **the feelings and needs of the person you're listening to.**

Paraphrase what the other person says or does (including his/her non-verbal cues).

Refrain from jumping to conclusions about the person's motivation, and try your best to be as non-evaluative as possible.

**observ-
ation**

“You sound like you’re pretty obsessed with what happened that first day!”

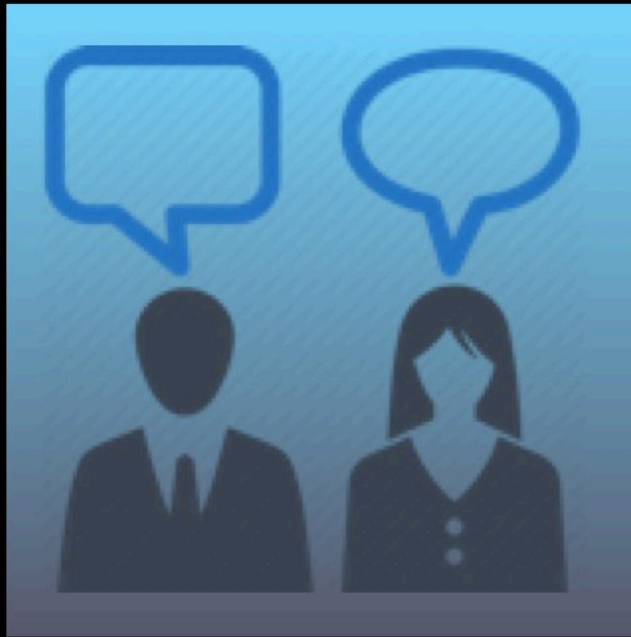


“You know, listening to you talk about this matter, I couldn’t help but notice that you keep going back to what happened that very first day.”

feelings

Be careful not to unwittingly shame the person for his/her feeling or discourage that person from feeling as s/he does. Your goal is to help the person acknowledge one’s feeling especially if s/he is not aware of it.

“Will you please stop pacing like some nervous wreck?!”



“There’s half an hour to go before your talk starts, and I see that you’ve been pacing a lot. Are you feeling a little nervous?”

Since we can never be certain about people’s needs, the purpose is to solicit feedback whether or not you understand where the person is coming from--i.e., that person’s need or concern that is not being responded to.

What matters is we try to be mindful of the person’s needs. NO need to verbalize all the time.

needs

“OMG you must feel miserable because they didn’t thank you in the program!”



“I notice you looked sad when you mentioned that the program forgot your name. Are you feeling a little resentful because you’re not getting the appreciation you need? How can I help?”

“Why are you sulking there like some needy person?”



“You’ve been quiet, and you seem hurt--

Is there anything I can do to help? Do you want to talk about it?”

HELPFUL SENTENCE TEMPLATES FOR ACTIVE LISTENING

OBSERVATION

“I see...” “I notice...” “I’m hearing...”

FEELINGS & NEEDS

“Are you feeling... because you are needing...?”

“Are you angry because you are thinking...?”

“I am wondering if you are feeling...”

REQUEST

“Would you be willing to...?”

“Is it okay if I ask...?”

“Do you think it’s possible if you...”

“Would you like it if I...?”

The NVC framework is also valuable for



self-observation.

Nonviolent COMMUNICATION

FEEDBACK GIVING

Own your **FEELINGS** and **NEEDS** before making your **REQUEST**.

ACTIVE LISTENING

Be sensitive to the **FEELINGS** and **NEEDS** of the person you're listening to. If appropriate, mirror them to the other person for verification or ask about them.

SELF-OBSERVATION

The purpose here is **SELF-MONITORING**, exerting every effort to be aware of **YOUR OWN FEELINGS** and **NEEDS** so that you can make the appropriate response (either in word or action).

4 elements

event

feelings

needs

response

Monitor **your feelings and needs** to determine whether your action urge is just an unfree reaction based on your feelings and (especially central) needs.

event

As you are about to end a meeting, a teacher speaks up: "A number of us feel that your intentions are good and your plan certainly looks good on paper, but I think the majority of us actually feel that it might be more realistic if you go with my proposal."

feelings

annoyed or angry or impatient

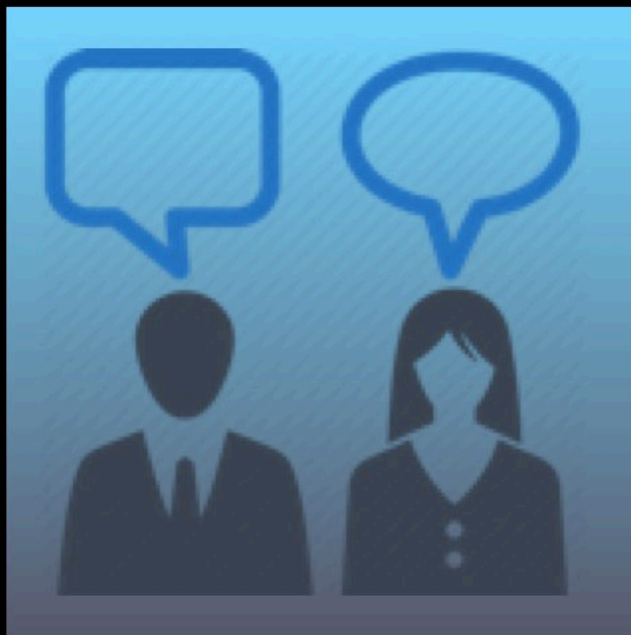
needs

need for dominance

response

???

"I'm sorry, but I've already made a decision. And it's final."



"Thank you for sharing that observation. Can you tell me more about the alternative so I can think about it?"

event

A former student in your advisory class last year approaches you and asks for advice about his current class adviser, with whom he is having a problem. "She's not like you at all," the student confides in you. "She doesn't really care about us."

feelings

flattered

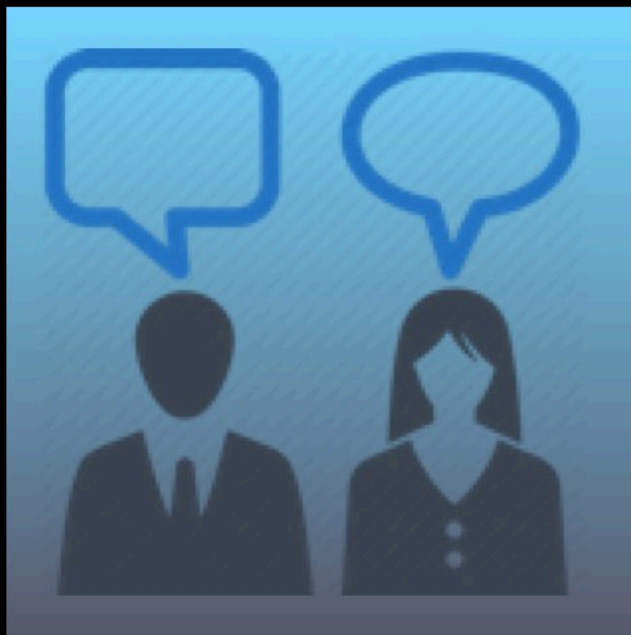
needs

need for nurturance

response

???

"I'm so sad to hear about your situation. Tell me more about her so I can help you!"



???

Active
Listening
and Self-
Observation
("Think
Aloud")



role play

A notorious and emotional "parent from hell" is complaining to you that the investigation into her son's disciplinary case has been unfair.

SMALL GROUP SHARING


1. Recall an actual personal experience of (a) feedback giving, (b) active listening, or (c) self-observation **gone wrong**.
2. Given what you have learned about NVC, how could that situation have been prevented or remedied?
3. Choose one from among the experiences shared and prepare a role play modeling the NVC framework.

- * Most situations - very upset parents. Attack. Because of concerns -- unmet needs & expectations.**
- * Expect the worst. Be prepared by being grounded (expect an unpleasant situation). So that you can remain calm.**
- * Rethink meeting parents as a group. You become vulnerable unnecessarily. One on one is easier.**
- * Be aware of our feelings as you're being attacked. (Find some outlet?). Need to practice to become aware of your feelings. Don't be in denial. Less accepting of the situation. Awareness doesn't mean acting out of the feeling. Avoid knee-jerk reaction to the situation. (Bracket your feelings)**
- * In response, you paraphrase what the person says (Content + Feeling) before you give a response. You don't react; step on the brake. Two benefits of paraphrasing: you don't become reactive. The person feels heard. "I HEAR YOU..." not "I AGREE..." The other person's defenses are lowered.**

- * Only after paraphrasing, do we give our side of the story. Our context, our point of view, etc. This makes us less defensive as well. If you need to apologize, do so.**
- * Assurances - The most assuring is a specific action plan.**
- * Let the other party rant/vent. Don't interrupt.**
- * Ask them to repeat. "How did you understand from what I said? Is the explanation sufficient?"**

THREE USES OF NON-VIOLENT COMMUNICATION

	FEEDBACK-GIVING	ACTIVE LISTENING	SELF-OBSERVATION
OBSERVATION	THEIR WORDS OR BEHAVIOR	THEIR WORDS OR BEHAVIOR	THEIR WORDS OR BEHAVIOR
FEELINGS	MINE	THEIRS	MINE
NEEDS	MINE	THEIRS	MINE
REQUEST/RESPONSE	What is my request?	What is my response?	What is my response?



Build a **fluid conversation-centered environment**

where all questions are welcome,
where no concern is dismissed,
where, when helpful, the “elephants
in the room” are named,
and where people are given permission
to think out loud and make mistakes.



We communicate **what we value.**

More than our words--
through our tone and our actions--
we send messages
about our organization, ourselves,
and what kind of conversations
that people will try to decipher.

**Be deliberate
in our communication--
even in our silences.**

**Be mindful
of the messages we send.**

LISTENING TO GOD
TOGETHER
IN COMMUNITY
communal discernment

LISTENING TO GOD
IN ONE ANOTHER
active listening

LISTENING TO GOD
IN MYSELF
individual discernment

**A group's capacity
for communal
discernment is built on
every member's
capacity for individual
Ignatian discernment
and communal
listening.**





COMMUNAL DISCERNMENT

**A process for making major decisions
about a common work or mission,
in which the group believes
that they are being led collectively
to reach a consensus guided by the Holy Spirit**

COMMUNAL DISCERNMENT

WHAT IT IS **NOT**

NOT group dynamics

NOT the sum total of everyone's personal choices.

NOT the least common denominator among everyone's preferences.

NOT just the win-win decision or solution

NOT just the group's unanimous consensus

COMMUNAL DISCERNMENT CONDITIONS

- * The group is experiencing COMMUNAL CONSOLATION.
- * The members have the proper DISPOSITIONS FOR DISCERNMENT.
- * The members are clear about the LEADERSHIP STYLE & DECISION-MAKING PROCESS that will be involved.

7 DISPOSITIONS FOR DISCERNMENT

LISTENING TO GOD
+ IN MYSELF

+

LISTENING TO GOD
IN ONE ANOTHER

= LISTENING TO GOD
TOGETHER
IN COMMUNITY

LISTENING TO GOD IN MYSELF

[] **PRAYERFULNESS**

Am I seeking what God wants for our community, not simply what I myself want? Am I open to this call from God, whatever it is? Do I have an attitude of prayer, asking the Lord for light and purification—especially for interior freedom? Am I willing to discern with my community in an atmosphere of prayer, persevering in prayer before, during, and after the discernment process?

[] **TRUST AND HOPE IN THE LORD**

Do I believe that God has dreams for our community and wants us to make a difference? Am I willing to put my trust in the Lord, or am I more afraid, with my fears manifested in an unhealthy dwelling on our limitations?

LISTENING TO GOD IN MYSELF

[] **PASSION FOR THE COMMON MISSION**

Do I care for the mission, with my passion manifested naturally in having strong opinions and preferences? Or am I feeling listless, discouraged, and pessimistic about our mission—a general lack of energy and interest in it? (“What’s the use?”)

[] **DESIRE FOR INTERIOR FREEDOM**

Am I aware of my biases with regard to the options? What are my attachments and disordered affections with regard to the question or decision at hand? How pliable am I—i.e., open to alternative options?

LISTENING TO GOD IN ONE ANOTHER

[] LOVE FOR THE COMMUNITY

Do we care for our community, its members, as well as its corporate identity and mission? Do we all desire to contribute to our unity? Do we acknowledge our differences and accept one another? Or is there a reluctance to relate to some members and a lack of trust among us? Does there remain a tendency towards one-upmanship? Or do we tend to be passive in the face of a dominant member?

LISTENING TO GOD IN ONE ANOTHER

[] HONESTY AND TRUST IN THE COMMUNITY

Do I believe that the Spirit may speak to me and the group in unexpected ways and even through the unlikeliest person? Are able to look at real issues and to “grasp the nettle”? Or are we unable to be honestly critical of one another—because of a basic lack of openness, an aversion to conflict, or an unhealthy desire to preserve peace at all costs?

[] HUMBLE LISTENING TO ONE ANOTHER

Do I believe that no one has exclusive access to the Spirit? Am I willing to listen attentively and compassionately to others—even those I may not—for whatever reason—respect or like?