

Nonviolent Communication

Feelings



Feelings

These are sensations and emotions that are experienced in the body. Feelings function as signals that my needs are met or unmet. For example I might feel lonely and long for companionship, or feel relieved because my needs for reassurance and safety are met. Feelings arise as a result of my needs being met or unmet and not because of the situation. The situation is the stimulus for my feelings and the needs are the cause. When I take responsibility for my feelings, then I focus my awareness on the needs behind the feeling rather than focusing my attention on the action that stimulated the feeling.



False feelings (Thoughts disguised as feelings)

Feelings can be confused with words that sound like feelings but are in truth interpretations of a situation or thoughts about how I feel. i.e. I feel misunderstood, I feel rejected, or I feel abandoned. Although the word 'feel' precedes them, they describe a belief or interpretation of a situation. When I have the thought that you are rejecting me, I might be feeling hurt, angry, scared and perhaps long for reassurance, connection and reciprocity.

Similarly in our habitual language we sometimes use the words "I feel..." followed by:

- "that", like, as if. (I feel that you should be more considerate. I feel like he doesn't really care about us.)
- I, you, she, he, they (I feel she is constantly judging me)
- "I feel..." followed by nouns or names referring to other people (I feel my partner is a narcissist)
- "I feel..." followed by descriptions of what we think (I feel clumsy)

We can reconnect to our true feelings when we catch ourselves using one of these false feeling words or phrases. When you notice yourself or another expressing a false feeling (thought disguised as a feeling) try to identify what feelings/emotions are hidden behind these thoughts and which beautiful need is calling for attention.