

GOING FORWARD

What I want in my life is compassion, a flow between myself and others based on a mutual giving from the heart.

Marshall Rosenberg, Nonviolent Communication

We use the four phenomena of communication—*observations, feelings, needs and requests*—in order to be understood, in order to understand others as they want to be understood, and to create the quality of connection that enables everyone to get their needs met through natural giving.

At first, the step-wise structure of Compassionate Communication might seem a bit awkward. I would like to suggest a couple of ways to think of the model in the beginning. If it seems formulaic, think of it as a scaffolding that you'll use to build the temple; once the structure is secure, you can take it down, and move inside. We speak of it as the transition from 'classic giraffe' to 'street giraffe'. Each of us who seeks to learn this language longs for the day when we can begin to speak it with some fluency. When it sounds stiff and clunky, you can remind yourself you're learning a new language which at first, of course, you'll speak with a very thick accent. Think of it as empowering you to first visit and then reside in this new, compassionate land. I assure you that as you master these elements, you will naturally foster greater compassion in your life.

You saw in the parent-teacher examples given earlier that there are two reciprocal activities involved in a conversation—expressing what lives in us and seeking to read what lives in the other. At any moment we can choose to listen for feelings and needs. Every conversation becomes a weaving back and forth. We move from a self-connected inner emptiness to giving our presence unto the other, seeking to connect our becoming to their becoming, and participating together in the unfolding moment. As we weave this dance of presence, those core needs we have for understanding, connection and meaning come to be met with greater simplicity and ease. And for that, we celebrate. I hope this booklet has opened a door as you go forward in your life.

To keep that door open and develop a fluency in Compassionate Communication, I recommend taking a moment, three or four times a day, to practice self-empathy. I encourage you to attend workshops with a variety of trainers, find a local practice group, watch Marshall Rosenberg's videos, or study on your own. If you want to create your own practice group, many find Lucy Leu's book, Nonviolent Communication Companion Workbook, a useful resource.

May empathy awaken in our hearts—not I, but the other in me.