

Colloquial Giraffe Options

with Miki Kashtan

KEYS:

- a. Fluency in our use of NVC rests on the foundation of connecting with compassion for self and other, and with a deep authenticity within us, and allowing the words we choose to arise from this connection. This means prioritizing the consciousness over the form.
- b. Our goal in switching to colloquial giraffe is the same goal we have whenever we use NVC: to support the flow of connection.
- c. The main question to explore in choosing our words: what is likely to be connecting for this person to hear, especially if they are not trained in NVC?
- d. As much as we want to support a natural flow, our second intention is to ensure that we maintain focus on NVC consciousness instead of slipping into speech that is so “natural” sounding that it reinforces the assumptions and stories we are working to transform.

OPTIONS:

1. Eliminating the words “feeling” and “need” from our speech even while maintaining a close focus on feelings and needs. This shift, for many people, results in being able to hear what we say without thinking that we are being “touchy-feely.”

E.g. instead of saying: “Are you feeling frustrated because you need respect?” we might say: “Are you frustrated because you want respect?”

2. Shifting from the “one-word” needs to the “full-phrase” needs. This shift supports a greater sense of flow and provides a more specific context to what we are saying while still maintaining the distinction between need and strategy.

E.g. in the previous example, we might expand the “one-word” need respect into the “full-phrase” need as follows: “Are you frustrated because you want to be respected for your point of view even when there is disagreement?”

3. Eliminating the explicit link between feelings and needs through the use of the word “because” in the classical template construction. In this case it’s a conceptual barrier, not simply a linguistic one. The understanding that feelings arise from needs is not widespread, and the use of this language often renders the speech awkward and confusing to others. A solution could either be dividing the expression into two sentences, or dropping the focus on feelings altogether and focusing only on the needs.

E.g. in the previous example, we might drop the word “because” as follows: “[Are you frustrated?] Do you want to be respected for your point of view even when there is disagreement?”

4. Narrowing the list of needs, and especially feelings, to suit the cultural norms of the environment in which we are operating. Certain feelings words may invite others to a level of vulnerability, or presence with our own vulnerability, which is beyond what they are willing to experience in that context even if they would be open to it in another context.

E.g. in many work settings it would work better and likely contribute to more trust to say: "Are you concerned about John leaving the office?" instead of saying: "Are you scared about John leaving the office?"

5. Increasing flow with requests language by having additional phrases aside from "would you be willing to..."

E.g. "Would you mind ...?" or "Are you comfortable with ...?" or "Would it work for you... " or others depending on context and ease.

6. Increasing flexibility with regards to connection requests by expanding the range of connection requests beyond habitual ones and by providing the reason for the request, especially in contexts where connection is not an obvious priority.

E.g. "I would like to make sure I really got what you are saying. Would it work for you if I reflected what you just said?"

7. CLARIFY AND MODEL THE VULNERABILITY OF THIS. Creating more ease and flow by making empathic *expressions* rather than empathic *reflections/guesses*. This increases our own vulnerability and is a more familiar form of speech for those not versed in NVC.

E.g. "I have a very clear sense of just how much this means to you [or anything else that's relevant to the moment]."