

My Top Ten Recommended Areas of Change for the NVC Network

The NVC (which is short for Nonviolent Communication) world seems to be in an interesting position right now. The founder/creator Marshall Rosenberg recently passed away and the international organization that owns the trademark and coordinates many things related to it, the CNVC (short for Center for Nonviolent Communication), is currently in the midst of a lot of different re-evaluation and restructuring. The time is ripe for changes in the NVC world.

I, for one, am really happy and excited to see this window of opportunity open. For quite a number of years I have strongly desired great changes to take place in the NVC world, in hopes of having NVC grow, reach out, and be more effective with different people around the world. In the last few years my despair about these changes happening has led to me pretty much pulling away from actively engaging with the NVC world and instead just observing it from a distance. Perhaps now is an opportunity for some of the changes that I would like to see to come about, and if so, I would like to do what I can to assist this in happening.

To clarify about what specifically I would like to see changed in the NVC world, here are ten areas that I would like to see worked on:

1) Abolish NVC Certification. It appears to me that for quite a while now a whole lot of time and effort has been put into the CNVC “certified trainers” program. This, in my eyes, is a lot of time, energy and resources that could be better spent in other places. The intention behind the official CNVC certification process is to protect and preserve the integrity of NVC. I do not believe that this succeeds in fulfilling this purpose. For one, I have met and seen a lot of people who are officially NVC certified trainers who have not expressed NVC in ways that I view as being in integrity with the NVC process. At the same time, I have also met quite a number of different NVC enthusiasts and trainers who I consider to have a great deal of skill and integrity with expressing NVC, and these people do not have and never have had any interest in becoming an NVC certified trainer. I have also seen people “get the wrong impression about NVC” by the words and/or actions of countless different people, some of whom are and others who are not official CNVC certified trainers. If the general integrity of NVC is lost then it will go not because of the actions of certified trainers, but because of the general behavior of NVC enthusiasts everywhere. Therefore the “certified trainer” label is arbitrary and unnecessary. With that being the case, the focus then needs to be shifted to that of more effectively supporting with integrity **everyone** within the NVC network. (Also, if you’re interested, I recommend that you read [this piece](#) by Carl Rogers which expresses a lot of my own views on

certification and licensing.)

2) Focus more on ways and means for NVC people to more easily connect and collaborate with each-other directly. I would like to see the NVC network be oriented more towards peer-to-peer support and connection, and less on looking towards any one particular person or group of people for direction. Towards this end, I would like to see either the CNVC web-site be designed to support NVC enthusiasts in being better able to find each other based on any number of different criteria, be it geographical location, common interests or desired project to work on. Likewise, I would like to see the site designed to make it easier for people to meet and form ad hoc groups to work on whatever common projects they would like to initiate. I acknowledge that in recent years the CNVC website has been greatly improved towards this direction, however much more can still be done in these regards. Similarly, I also see the groups of NVC people on Facebook as having been developing a lot more towards these ends as well, as far NVC people finding and supporting each-other in different ways. So the specific means for NVC people to find each other, be it the CNVC website, different Facebook groups, or something else is not important as long as more effort goes towards developing this further towards being more effective and useful.

3) Focus more on publishing/producing new and different NVC voices. For many people the NVC message is synonymous with the name “Marshall Rosenberg”, and vice versa. Very few other authors have been published in the NVC world, or if they have, not that many NVC enthusiasts know of their work. I would like to see more of a variety of work from different NVC authors made available. This applies to audio and video, as well as written works. I would also like to see the authors be more people from outside the standard demographics found in the NVC subculture. More people of color, people who are not middle-aged and people who are not from North America, Western Europe and Australia should be sought out to have their work published/produced.

4) Create and proliferate more NVC gatherings/events that are outside of the traditional workshop/training model. Personally, I am not interested in going to another NVC workshop, nor do I want to go to some structured NVC event where some leader/organizer has activities planned for me to do. At the same time, I am interested in learning more NVC and connecting more with people in NVC environments. I am guessing also that there are a whole lot of other people out there in the world who **could** be interested in learning NVC, but who would never want to go to a workshop or a retreat. This leads me to think that there has to be other different ways for people to intentionally be together in-person without replicating the workshop or retreat models. Experimentation and creativity is needed here! For example, how about we experiment with having free and open NVC gatherings and events in public places, such as parks and parking lots? The intentional space for practicing NVC can be created by the organizers of the event, and the

borders of the space can be left wide open for new people from the outside to wander in and experience what we have to offer. This can be one new way that we can introduce and promote NVC to the wider world, by offering people a direct lived experience of it.

5) Digitize and offer free of charge more NVC materials online, audio, video or text. Increasingly, more people are learning about NVC through the internet. For example, lots of people are becoming NVC enthusiasts by watching NVC videos on Youtube, or reading articles online about NVC. With this being the case, we can assist this process by adding more of the NVC materials that exist, be it audio, video or text material, onto the internet free of charge. I emphasize the “free of charge” aspect, because charging for things is indeed a barrier. Often if people see a charge associated with something, their attention just moves on to something else, something that is free of charge.

6) Develop more of a grounding in the world of empirical research and academia. The lineage that NVC comes from can be traced to the work of the psychologist Carl Rogers and his Person-Centered Therapy. However, ever since Marshall Rosenberg left the world of professional clinical psychology and went off on his own to create “Nonviolent Communication”, NVC has pretty much been cut off from the worlds of research and scholarship and stranded in the world of self-help. This can be rectified. NVC enthusiasts who have ties to academic institutions can work towards bringing greater awareness of NVC, as well as promote research and studies of NVC. For example, the questions of “When does NVC help people?”, “How does NVC help people?” and “What exactly do people do with NVC that is helpful?” can be studied with a lot more rigor and depth if NVC was applied to the standards of empirical research.

7) Develop an NVC approach to economics that is needs-based and willingness-based. Questions of economics comes up a lot in the NVC subculture, whether it be matters of how to fund NVC events and organizations, how to maintain the livelihoods of NVC trainers or how to enable the participation of interested people who are unable to afford to attend NVC trainings. Some effort has already been made towards elaborating on what an NVC-based gift economy could entail, but I think that this is an area where a great deal more potential exists. One area of investigation that more can be gained from for this endeavor is the work of Manfred Max-Neef. Max-Neef is a Chilean economist whose work Marshall Rosenberg got the concept for “fundamental human needs”, that was later incorporated into NVC. Max-Neef originally used that concept for his work in economics, and given that NVC enthusiasts are already familiar with the concept of fundamental human needs, I believe that there are already good grounds here for expanding upon a new vision for NVC-based economics. The key here is an economics that focuses on meeting as many different needs for as many different people as possible, as much of the time as possible, with all actions being carried out willingly.

8) Reach out to and strengthen the NVC ties with the world of activism and

political organizing. This is an area where a great deal of work has already been done, including by myself. However, the work that has been done here has mainly been for those who hold some particular kinds of political orientations, namely, liberals, progressives and leftists. Other kinds of political perspectives exist whose adherents have never been introduced to NVC. What about the conservatives? The Tea Party people? The Christian right? Additionally, the work that already has been done with activists and political minded-people has mainly been of the one-shot introduction variety or offering people empathy at protests. Much room exists for more in-depth and substantial work to be carried out with integrating NVC and activism.

9) Establishing guidelines or protocols for emotional processing sessions One of the ways that NVC can be used is for deep emotional healing. It can be really powerful and helpful in this regard, and undoubtedly a lot of different people have received benefit from this. At the same time, a lot of the big emotional processing sessions that take place at NVC events can also go in very negative and unhealthy directions as well. This can range from sessions that go on too long and are emotionally draining for those involved, to at worst, situations where important boundaries are crossed and that could be categorized as being a form of “abuse”. With this being the case, I think that if some clarified standards and procedures regarding emotional processing sessions were written up and distributed throughout the NVC world that this could go a long way towards having these activities being more healing and less damaging for those involved.

10) Focus on translating NVC learning materials into the various languages most spoken by the human race. Some of the top ten most spoken languages in the world have very few NVC materials available in that language. For example, Mandarin, Hindi, Arabic, Bengali and Punjabi are all languages used by a substantial part of the world population, yet very few if any NVC materials are available in these languages. This in my eyes is a great barrier to NVC spreading around the world to places other than North America, Western Europe, or Australia. The translation of NVC materials could take place in an organized and systemic way, and one of the benefits of having a global organization is that efforts like this could more easily be coordinated through it.

I will wrap up what I have to say here with this. I invite dialogue and conversation about what I said here, either on this blog itself or in NVC forums and venues elsewhere. These are all areas where I would like to see more discussion on, as well as tangible action!