



Assumptions Underlying Compassionate Communication:

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1. **Universality of Human Needs**- We all have the same needs. Where we differ is in our strategies to meet needs. Conflicts occur at the level of strategies, not needs.
2. **Feelings Result from Needs being met or unmet** - Our feelings are directly related to our needs. When our needs are met, we feel happy, satisfied, excited, etc. When our needs are not met, we feel sad, scared, angry, etc.
3. **All Actions are Attempts to Meet Needs** - Our actions are motivated by a desire to meet needs. We would prefer to meet needs in ways that don't harm others if we recognize a path of action that will also meet our own needs. Even when we resort to violence we are still attempting to meet needs, however tragically.
4. **Natural Giving** - Human beings inherently enjoy contributing to others, and will often choose to give what we are asked provided that we trust it is our choice to do so.
5. **Sufficiency** - Though in individual situations it appears that there isn't enough to meet everyone's needs, there is no inherent scarcity for meeting everyone's basic needs. Dialogue and connection greatly contribute to our ability to meet more people's needs more peacefully.

Key Principles

1. **Responsibility for our feelings** - move away from blaming self or others by connecting feelings to needs. This empowers us to take action to meet our needs instead of waiting for others to change.
2. **Responsibility for our Actions** - recognize choice in each moment and base action on consciously meeting needs. Aim to move away from taking action based on fear, guilt, shame, desire for reward, or any ideas that we "should" or that we "have to".
3. **Prioritizing Connection** - We aim to focus on connection instead of immediate solutions. Trust that connecting with our needs and others' needs is more likely to lead to strategies that meet everyone's needs.
4. **Equal Care for Everyone's Needs** - Requests not demands. Work toward meeting everyone's needs not just our own or just another's.
5. **Self-expression** - Aiming to speak from the heart, expressing our feelings and needs, and making specific, do-able requests.
6. **Empathic hearing** - listening for feelings and needs of others even when they express judgments or demands
7. **Protective Use of Force** - Use of force only to protect, not to punish or get our way. Use for safety only. Resume dialogue as soon as safety is established.