

NVC Learning Journal

Sample

The following is a sample of an NVC Journal. I am providing it as a sample format that you can use in writing your journal. I want to be clear that this is offered only as a suggested format. If you choose to use a different format, for instance, one using all narrative instead of the tables, I still would like to see all of the elements included: 1) Situation, 2) Internal process, 3) Jackal, feelings, needs, empathy statements; 4) Liked to have done differently; 5) Insight or what I learned and 6) Written descriptions of actual dialogue. For example, what you said, what they said. This last part (#6) is not in the sample. When possible I find it illuminates or demonstrates

For your review, the following statement, in italics, is from the Certification Preparation Packet.

Personal Journal entries: We would like you to keep a regular (1-3 times a week) record of your NVC learning, growth and insights. Use journaling as a means to explore (question, reflect, and learn) rather than to simply record the internal and external events in your life. The purpose of this journal is to communicate to the assessor your awareness and skills in living, knowing, and teaching the NVC process in a way that is consistent with the integrity and spirit of NVC. Please type your journals if possible, and have the intent to be concise, rather than tell long stories. Keep a journal for a minimum of six months; one year will better demonstrate your growth and development over time.

Journal content:

How I am using NVC in my everyday life: in relationships; at work; stuck places; inner jackal dialogues; celebrations; cleaning up “messes” (all demonstrating NVC skills by conveying observations, feelings, needs, and requests). For example, replay in writing using NVC: (1) interactions in which you did not communicate or respond the way you wanted. (2) what you did to process the interaction internally, and (3) how would you have wanted to do it differently

Praising Joyce

Situation: George and I had stopped to visit my coaching friend Joyce and her partner Al in San Diego on our way home from the IIT. In the car afterwards I was commenting on Joyce's good points. George made one or two comments agreeing with me. After a while I noticed that I was feeling a bit sad and anxious. I considered asking George to reassure me that he still valued me. And I recognized that that sense of looking for reassurance outside myself was "not NVC". So I began trying to decipher what was going on.

Internal Process:

I believe I started in an awareness of how much joy I get from talking to Joyce. (For example, I appreciate that she listened attentively while I/we were sharing our learning from the IIT. The responses she made indicated that she was really absorbing and understanding the material. This met my needs for self-expression, respect, understanding, warmth and contributing to life. I also appreciated the way she told stories about her work; she didn't use a lot of words and yet I really felt I was understanding what was going on. The way she talked about situations, sharing her insights into what was important in the situation and what needed to be done, met my needs for learning, respect, connection, understanding and trust.)

But I expressed was I experienced in terms of labels - "she is so intelligent, insightful, warm, humorous, attentive, a good listener..." I compared her to some measuring stick of qualities and evaluated that she scored high on various measures. This led to my measuring myself against the same yardsticks, and I evaluated myself as scoring lower on these qualities than she did (therefore I was stupid, unobservant, a stick-in-the-mud, self-absorbed, a terrible listener...). This in turn led me to consider that I was less valuable and worthy than she was. To counteract this, I wanted someone else (John) to tell me that he labeled me with some positive attributes, so I could evaluate myself as valuable and worthy too.

3) Judgments or other jackal Feelings Needs Empathy Statements Joyce is more intelligent than I am. Joyce has a bigger, more powerful, more important job than I do. Therefore she is better than me.

Sad

Hurt

Despairing

Anxious

Helpless

Hopeless Self-worth

Self-respect

Contribute to life

Are you feeling sad because you would like to contribute to life through understanding and insights into human and organizational situations?

Judgments Feelings Needs Empathy Statements Joyce is a warmer, nicer person than I am.

Joyce is a better listener than I am.

Sad

Hurt

Despairing

Anxious

Helpless

Hopeless Contribute to life by providing to others:

Consideration

Support

Empathy

Understanding

Warmth

Are you feeling sad because you want to contribute to others by providing consideration, support, empathy, understanding and warmth? Joyce is a better coach than I am. Therefore I shouldn't be a coach / I don't deserve to be a coach. Nobody will ever hire me. I will never be able to support myself through interpersonal contributions to others. I should just go back to doing admin work.

Sad

Despairing

Anxious

HopelessSafety

Independence

Contribute to lifeAre you feeling anxious because you are needing safety and independence?I will never be as good as she is.Sad

Despairing

HopelessSelf-worth

Self-Respect

Are you feeling fragile and vulnerable because you have a need for self-compassion, self-worth and self-respect?

She doesn't / won't want me as a friend any more because I'm not as smart and nice as she is.Sad

AnxiousConnection

Inclusion

Intimacy

Warmth

RespectAre you feeling sad because you need connection, warmth, intimacy, and inclusion?

Are you feeling anxious because you have a need for respect? In the above table, please indicate which feelings go with which needs.

Like to Have Done Differently:

Have followed the model by describing what needs of mine were met through interacting with Joyce that afternoon. I believe if I had done this I would have felt gratitude for her friendship, rather than feeling (judging myself as) inferior and not worthy of being her friend.

Insight:

I really understand now how even using positive labels about other people can have negative consequences. In this circumstance, I experienced the negative consequences of being the one assigning the labels, which was an aspect of this labeling process that I hadn't been aware of before. (I had only thought about how receiving a positive label could have negative emotional consequences.)

Therefore, I appreciate even more the value of following the NVC model in expressing gratitude.

Interactions

In this section what did you say to the person? Did you re-engage with them, and if so, how did the communication go? Write a summary of the essential elements.

George - Hugging / Going to a Party

Situation: George's son, William, was up from Chicago for the weekend. We had been invited to a party at the home of some friends of his. We had been watching a video and had just turned it off to get ready to go. We started a hug, which got rather sexy. In the middle of it, George pulled away and said "I want to go."

Internal Process:

3) Judgments: George doesn't find me sexy any more. He doesn't like to spend time with me any more. Hurt
Feelings: Physical Affection
Needs: Love
George's so rude and insensitive. I shouldn't have to put up with this shit!
Anger
Consideration
Emotional Safety
Empathy: Todd never did things like this. Actually, yes he did. No one will ever love me and treat me nicely. I don't deserve to have people treat me nicely.
Hurt
Sadness
Self-worth
Self-respect: George should know better from having studied NVC - this is wrong!
Anger
Learning / Growth
Emotional Safety: Having studied NVC - I should be handling this better. I shouldn't let it bother me. I should trust that he loves and cares for me and likes to be with me physically. I should be able to give him empathy.
Guilt
Shame
Learning / Growth
Support
Understanding
Compassion
Empathy
Trust
Contribution to life: It's hopeless. I'll never learn to do this right. I should just give up trying. I'll never be able to teach it. No one will ever be able to see the value in it through me.
Hopeless
Learning / Growth
Contribution to life
Like to Have Done Differently:
I would have liked to have said right away, "I'm feeling kind of hurt to hear you say that. I know that we both want to go to William's party now, and I would like to believe that you are also enjoying being physical with me. Is that true?" Then I would listen for George's feelings and needs, which might not be immediately obvious to him either.
Insight: When I'm interpreting an event as a rejection by another person, I can ask them if what I want to be true for them actually is (e.g., they are also wanting to be with me, as well as be somewhere else.)

4) **Dialogues:** Descriptions of the actual dialogues you had. What did you say. What did they say.

I hope you find this sample helpful and supportive of you in your journaling process.
Robert Gonzales