



# DO-IT-YOURSELF DISPUTE RESOLUTION

RESOLVING DISPUTES ON YOUR OWN

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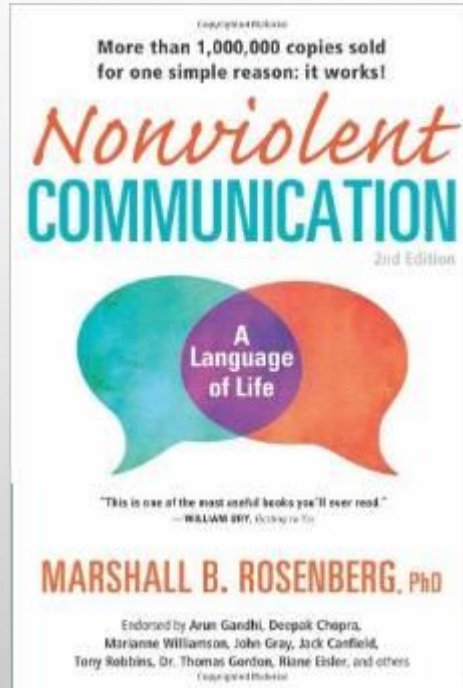
THE PEACE TALKS, PLC

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# DIY DISPUTE RESOLUTION ~ ABOUT THIS TOOL ~

In our courts, judges decide winners and losers of disputes; arbitrators do so in private hearings. But in mediation, mediators help parties resolve their disputes on their own terms by listening and asking questions to discover their needs and interests and ways to meet them for both sides. However, many disputes can be resolved without the intervention of a neutral third party, if the disputing parties can simply listen to one another using the skills of a mediator. This free tool is designed to assist people to do so.

# DIY DISPUTE RESOLUTION ~ ABOUT THIS TOOL ~



Generally, this tool follows a model developed by Marshall Rosenberg called “Nonviolent (or Compassionate) Communication” or NVC. The four components of NVC are: Neutral Observation; Feelings; Needs; and Requests. It provides brief descriptions of the steps based on our experience with them.

For more information on the components of NVC, Marshall Rosenberg’s seminal book, *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life*, is a must read. In addition, there are many online resources available and The Peace Talks presents dispute resolution seminars for employers and other interested groups.

# FOUR COMPONENTS OF DIY DISPUTE RESOLUTION

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1. NEUTRAL OBSERVATION – state what happened in neutral terms
2. STATE YOUR FEELINGS – not thoughts, but feelings: mad, sad, glad
3. STATE YOUR (GUESS THEIR) NEEDS – what fundamental human need was not met?
4. MAKE REQUESTS – not demands

# NEUTRAL OBSERVATION

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- Observe and state what was said or done without any judgment or evaluation; just state the facts (e.g., “You called me a liar last night.” vs. “You were insensitive when you called me a liar last night.” )
- Think of a video camera, simply replaying what it recorded.
- Now, listen to the other person, using the following guidelines.



# NEUTRAL OBSERVATION

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- Pay attention to all four aspects of communication when the other person speaks.

1. WORDS

2. TONE/INFLECTION

3. FACIAL EXPRESSION

4. BODY LANGUAGE

# STEPS IN ACTIVE LISTENING

1. Summarize content concisely & objectively, neutralizing any loaded terms (*"I called you a liar last night."*)
2. Reflect back the feelings they expressed, using "**feelings words**." (See next slide)
3. Ask them to confirm you got it all. If not, try again and keep trying until they stop adding or say you got it all.
4. When you get it all, try to guess what needs were not being met. (See pages 10 & 11)

# “FEELINGS” WORDS

Guess how they feel: “*Sounds like you feel ...*”

***mad***

- upset
- frustrated
- hurt
- offended

***sad***

- concerned
- disappointed
- unhappy
- anxious

***glad***

- pleased
- content
- relieved
- excited
- satisfied



# FEELINGS

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- Feelings are emotions & physical sensations
- Feelings are not thoughts; when someone says:
  - “I feel that/like...” what follows is a thought, not a feeling
  - “I feel sad” states a feeling
- Can you hear & feel the difference?

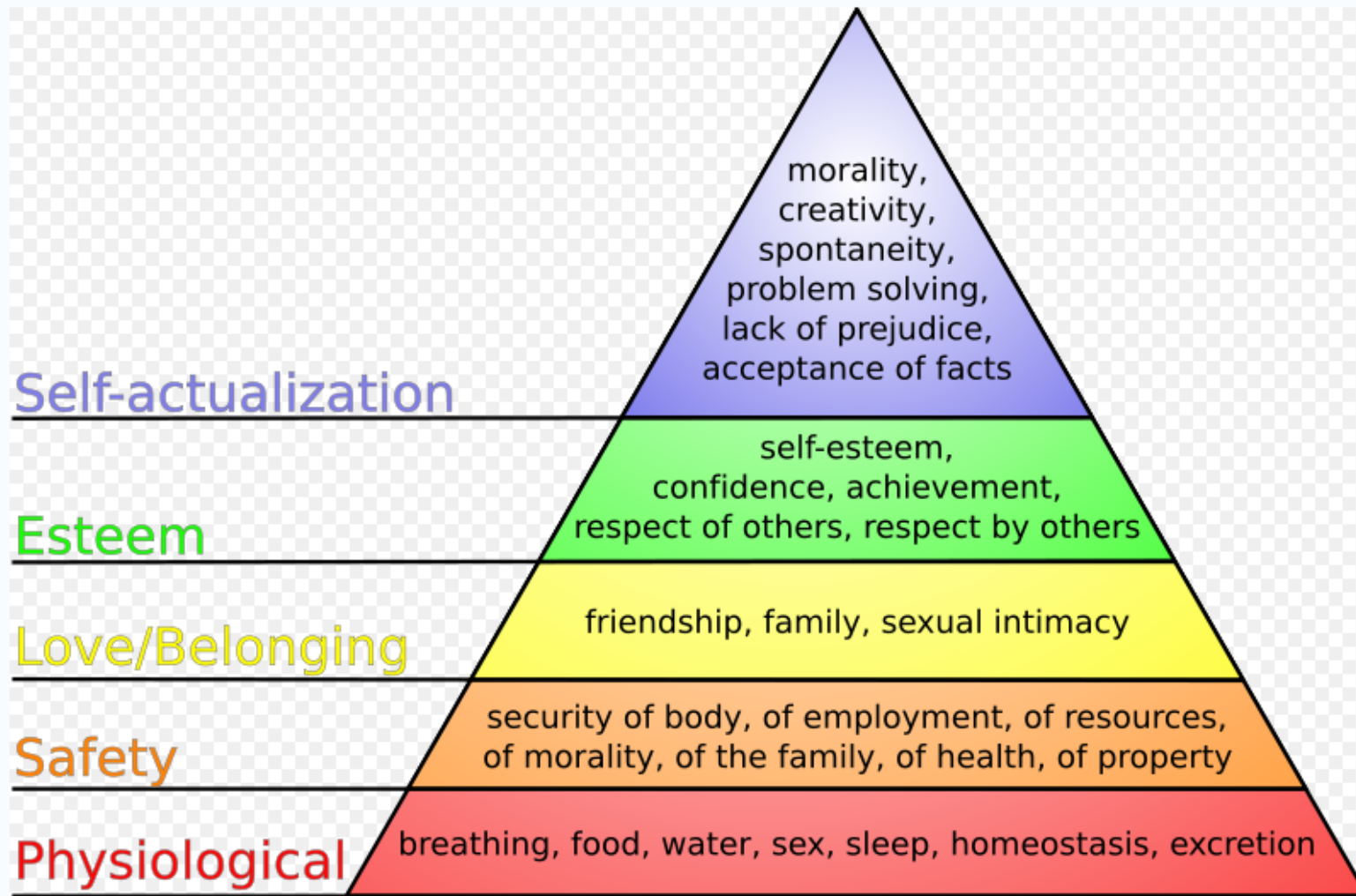
# NEEDS

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- Sustain and enrich our lives
- Universal; we all have them (see next page)
- When **needs** are met ➡ comfortable feelings (**glad, happy, peaceful**, etc.)
- Unmet **needs** ➡ uncomfortable feelings (**mad, sad, frustrated**, etc.)

# NEEDS

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, from *A Theory of Human Motivation*, 1943



# ACTION REQUESTS

- After the situation is objectively described, feelings and needs identified, last step is to request some action toward meeting the needs of all concerned
- Clear, present, positive action; not a demand
- Concrete action, deliverable NOW
- E.g., “*Will you please empty the trash today?*” vs “*Will you please help out around the house?*”

# ACTION REQUESTS

- Cooperation & creativity – if they can't give you what you request, brainstorm to find alternatives to meet both of your needs
- E.g., *“I don't have time to take the trash out today. May I do it before the garbage truck comes tomorrow?”*



# PRACTICING DIY DISPUTE RESOLUTION

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When you listen:

1. Use your eyes & ears, then objectively restate & summarize the situation as *they* see it
2. Reflect their feelings using feelings words
3. Identify their needs (guessing is okay)
4. Ask them to request a positive action step toward resolution

# PRACTICING DIY DISPUTE RESOLUTION

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When you speak:

1. State situation objectively (no mind-reading)
2. State your feelings (use feelings words)
3. State your needs
4. Request a clear, present, positive action step (not a demand)

# DIY DISPUTE RESOLUTION

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Follow this format when stating YOUR OWN observations, feelings, needs and requests

*“When I (see/hear)/you (do, say) \_\_\_\_\_*

*I feel (I am) \_\_\_\_\_*

*because my need for \_\_\_\_\_ is/is not met.*

*Would you be willing to \_\_\_\_\_?”*

# PRACTICING DIY DISPUTE RESOLUTION

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When you listen:

1. Restate & summarize situation objectively
2. State their feelings
3. Guess their needs
4. Ask them for a positive action step for you to take

# DIY DISPUTE RESOLUTION

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Follow this format when stating THEIR observations, feelings, needs and requests

*“When I (did/said) \_\_\_\_\_ (summarize situation objectively),  
you felt \_\_\_\_\_ (don’t say, “It **made** you feel”)  
because your need for \_\_\_\_\_ was not met.  
What would you like me to do?”*



# DIY DISPUTE RESOLUTION

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If you can't resolve your dispute on your own, just call or email us. We can provide a neutral third party to assist you to find a mutually agreeable resolution.

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