

1 Check:

Is my observation free of evaluation or “spin”?

Can my observation be recorded by a video camera or tape recorder?

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2 Cues:

“When I see...,”

“When I hear...,”

“When I recall seeing/hearing...”

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3 Check:

Does my observation contain words such as: always/never/whenever/constantly, etc.?

If so, am I using these words factually or as an evaluation?

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1 Cue:

"I feel ..."

Check:

In my statement of feeling, am I able to replace the words *"I think..."* for the words *"I feel..."*? If so, chances are I am expressing a thought or an image rather than a feeling.

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2 Check:

Am I expressing a feeling rather than a judgment of myself?

Examples:

Judgment: *"I feel incompetent."*

Feeling: *"I feel embarrassed." "I feel discouraged."*

Judgment: *"I feel unimportant."*

Feeling: *"I feel insecure." "I feel nervous."*

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3 Check:

Am I expressing a feeling rather than what I think someone is doing to (or around) me?

Examples:

Thought: *"I feel unappreciated." (I think they are not appreciating me.)*

Feeling: *"I feel lonely." "I am hurting."*

Thought: *"I feel badgered." (I think they are badgering me.)*

Feeling: *"I feel annoyed." "I feel tense."*

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1 Check:

Did I distinguish my need from a request?

Needs are universal – they are not specific to person, time, place or action. (Requests, on the other hand, are specific and concrete strategies to fulfill a need.)

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2 Check:

Am I taking responsibility for my own feelings by acknowledging my need behind the feeling?

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3 Some Universal Needs

acceptance	community	harmony	play
appreciation	competence	honesty	purpose
authenticity	connection	inclusion	respect
autonomy	consideration	integrity	rest
beauty	contribution	intimacy	safety
belonging	cooperation	meaning	self-expression
caring	dependability	mutuality	support
celebration	ease	nurturance	trust
challenge	empathy	order	understanding
clarity			wellbeing

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1 Cue: “Would you be willing to ...?”

Check: Is my request concrete?

Example: “Would you be willing to put your books down and give me a hug?” instead of “Would you be willing to pay me some attention?”

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2 Check: Is my request positive?

Example:

“Would you be willing to put the scissors in the drawer?” instead of “Would you quit playing with the scissors?”

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3 Check: Is my request immediately do-able?

Example:

“Would you agree to take the garbage out next week?” instead of “Would you take the garbage out next week?”

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4 Check: Is it a request or is it a demand?

We won’t know until we see what happens if the person replies “no” to me. If I judge, condemn, shame, threaten, guilt-trip, or punish them for saying “no,” then it was a demand.

If my intention is to respectfully understand the need that prevented them from saying “yes” to me, it was a request. NOTE: Receiving someone’s “no” with respect does not imply giving up or giving in. We might continue to engage the other party in an “NVC dance” around our request.

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STOP! Am I heart-connected to the other party?

If not, I can consider replacing a request for action with a connecting request.

- Request for empathy: “Would you be willing to tell me what you heard me say?”
- Request for honesty: “Would you be willing to tell me how you feel when you hear me say this?”

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