



NEUROSCIENCE OF COMPASSIONATE COMMUNICATION

The mechanical formula of this communication tool prohibits the shaming, blaming, and name-calling that might otherwise activate the threat response in either person and preempts the consequent reaction – either a counterattack or withdrawal-stonewalling.

When we're not feeling threatened, the prefrontal cortex is not hijacked by a threat response nor by the defenses to that perceived threat. The prefrontal cortex stays active, using the resonance circuit so we can listen to and empathize with the other person to resolve. Learning to stay open and respond to requests for changes in behavior strengthens confidence in our ability to resolve complaints and conflicts.

The essence of communicating compassionately is about cultivating empathy, understanding, and love. It's a practice devoted to mindful pausing; noticing the breath; identifying and expressing feelings needs and expectations with care and respect, and listening for the same in others.

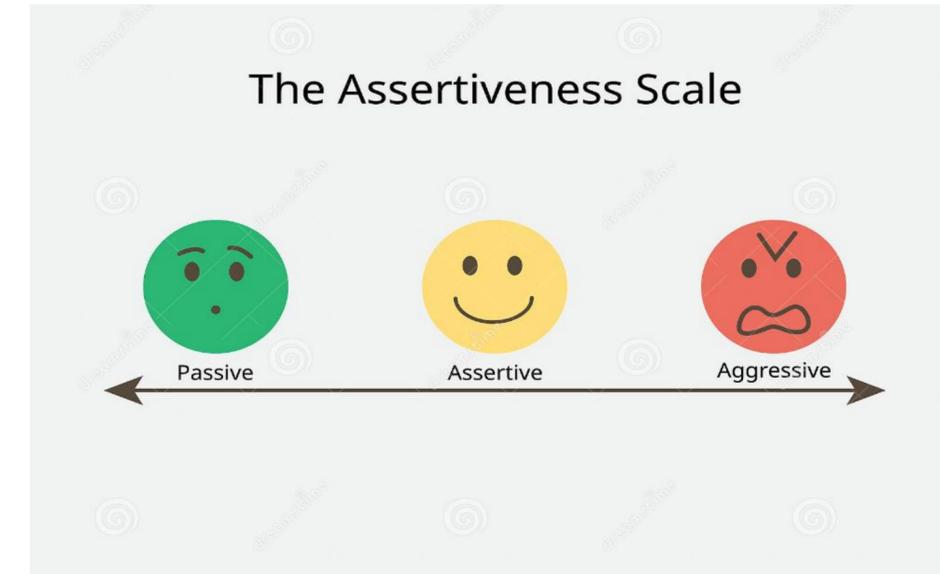
Mindfulness, with its inherent focus on being present and non-judgmental, seems particularly suitable for promoting the quality of communication and **dealing with conflict**.

To engage in a healthy conflict, one needs to be assertive. **Assertiveness is the ability to speak up for ourselves in a way that is honest and respectful.** Assertive communication is a communication style in which a person stands up for their own needs and wants, while also taking into consideration the needs and wants of others, without behaving passively or aggressively.

Healthy conflict directly and constructively addresses the issue at hand without ignoring the needs of either party. The strategies that follow will get you there.

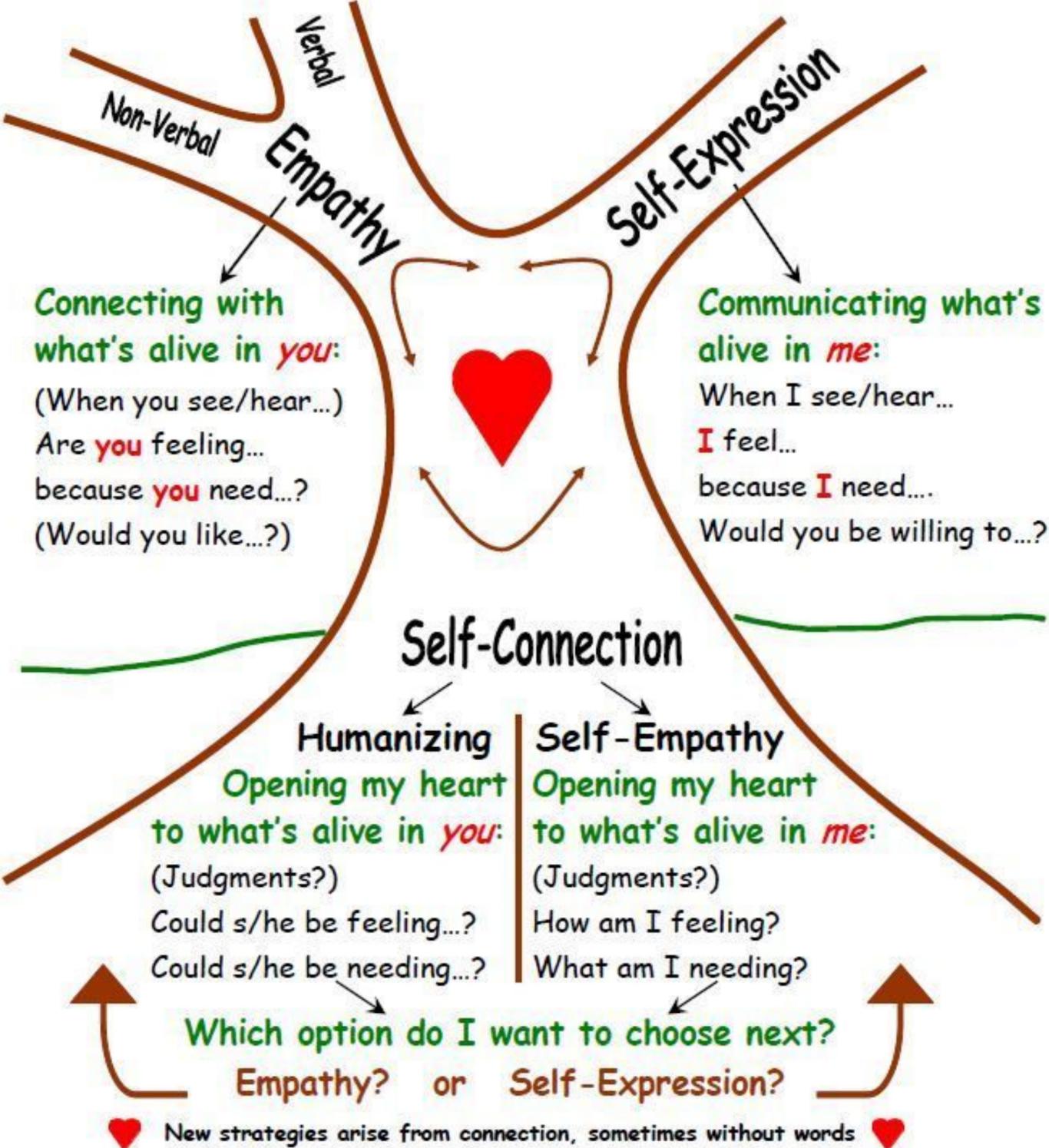
Compassionate communication (also known as NVC- non-violent communication) helps us remain empathetic with each other, even in situations fraught with anger or frustration. It teaches us to speak to others without blaming and to hear personal criticisms without withering.

Effective communication with those who we disagree with is extraordinarily difficult. If you are like most people, you have a fall-back strategy to deal with conflict that was learned early in life, one that is habitual and embedded in interactions with others.



The NVC Tree of Life

Three Focus Options for Connection



The three most common strategies are:

- Accommodate (“be nice”)
- Demand (“me first”)
- Withdraw (“I don’t care”)

The fourth way involves investigating both your world and the other person’s world, which can sometimes yield a surprising and creative solution that honors both parties. In the martial art, Aikido, this would be called **blending**, a **move that harms neither party and turns conflict into more of a dance than a fight.**