



COMPASSIONATE COMMUNICATION FRAMEWORK

A Map for Skillfully Navigating
Important Conversations



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This document was prepared by the Anusara School of Hatha Yoga's Community Resiliency Team members Kim Friedman, Tiffany Wood and Debbi J. Payne based on training from John Kinyon.

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Thank you.

ASHY'S VISION STATEMENT

To foster a unified community that inspires and supports all practitioners of Anusara yoga from local to global

ASHY'S MISSION STATEMENT

To provide the structure that promotes and sustains the growth of Anusara yoga's philosophy and methodology

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SECTION I

Compassion-Based Communication and the Tantric Path

Living yoga *off* the mat is its own practice.

Is there a compassionate way to share with a student that their behavior is disrupting other students' learning? Can you skillfully communicate your needs when a co-teacher isn't following through? Do you sometimes find yourself getting frustrated because you disagree with a colleague? For many of us, the answer is: Yes.

*"Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing there is a field. I'll meet you there."
Rumi*

The Anusara School of Hatha Yoga's (ASHY) foundational philosophy of Non-Dual Tantric yoga is captured in this Rumi quote.

All behavior is an expression of a need. Our capacity to align with the Divine is enhanced when we recognize the behavior of others not as right or wrong but as an expression of a need that is met or unmet. Implementation of these ideals is often a challenge.

This framework or map is another tool in the ASHY "toolbox" for realizing our full potential. It grew out of a desire expressed by Anusara practitioners to have additional resources to navigate difficult conversations with co-workers, fellow teachers, etc. Developing and honing our communication skills are signs of our own growth and a deeper Tantric practice.

Together, ASHY's Board of Directors, ASHY staff members, ASHY volunteers, ASHY teachers globally and students of Anusara yoga can ensure that the ASHY community – local to global – has the support and skills needed to effectively communicate our needs and help each other meet those needs in a way that uplifts us all.



SECTION II

A Compassion-Based Approach to Skillful Communication

OVERVIEW OF NON-VIOLENT COMMUNICATION

Skillful communication with others is essential to our journey of remembering our full potential as individuals and as an organization.

Non-Violent Communication (NVC) offers us a way of connecting to the Divine, similar to Anusara's Universal Principles of Alignment (UPAs). A compassion-based approach to communication helps us recognize the sacred in all beings. It also helps us connect more deeply to one another.¹

NVC focuses on four components of communication:

- Observations
- Feelings
- Needs
- Requests

NVC trainer John Kinyon calls these four components the "DNA" of Nonviolent Communication.



¹ NVC was developed by Marshall Rosenberg, Ph.D., and is based on work by Dr. Carl Rogers. NVC is also referred to as a Language of Life, Compassionate Communication, and Courageous Communication. ASHY's Community Resiliency Team is working with John Kinyon who studied NVC with Dr. Rosenberg for almost 20 years. John co-founded [Mediate Your Life](#) with Ike Lasater and has successfully trained thousands of NVC users.

In helping people skillfully communicate, NVC uses two lists to help identify feelings and needs. This is an abbreviated list of feelings and needs:

Some Basic Feelings and Needs

Feelings are felt in the body as signs our needs are being met or not

INTERESTED

Involved
Eager
Helpful
Alert
Surprised

LOVING

Compassionate
Appreciative
Trusting
Passionate
Nurtured

HAPPY

Excited
Encouraged
Hopeful
Optimistic
Grateful

PLAYFUL

Energetic
Curious
Adventurous
Invigorated
Confident

PEACEFUL

Calm
Satisfied
Relieved
Connected
Comfortable

MAD

Frustrated
Annoyed
Pessimistic
Angry
Impatient
Aggravated

SAD

Troubled
Helpless
Unhappy
Miserable
Discouraged
Disappointed

SCARED

Fearful
Anxious
Insecure
Shocked
Dread
Vulnerable

TIRED

Exhausted
Bored
Fatigued
Indifferent
Hopeless
Stressed out

CONFUSED

Hesitant
Overwhelmed
Uncomfortable
Suspicious
Disconnected
Regretful

Universal Human Needs/Values

SAFETY

Peace
Confidence
Consistency
Trust
Stability

CARE

Acceptance
Appreciation
Fairness
Kindness
warmth

FREEDOM

Autonomy
Courage
Dependability
Creativity
Happiness

HEALTH

Abundance
Balance
Simplicity
Sustainability
Prosperity

EMPATHY

Awareness
Communication
Consideration
Recognition
Receptivity

HONESTY

Authenticity
Integrity
Openness
Respect
Honoring

PLAY

Ease
Harmony
Rejuvenation
Humor
Flow

COMMUNITY

Belonging
Collaboration
Synergy
Support
Reciprocity

MEANING

Achievement
Efficacy
Inspiration
Structure
Clarity

EMPATHY: THE HEART OF NVC

The primary skill applied in NVC is empathy—the process of keeping a heartfelt presence. Empathetic presence is illustrated in the following chart:

Clearly expressing How I AM Without blaming Or criticizing	Empathically receiving How YOU ARE Without hearing Blame or criticism
OBSERVATIONS	
1. What I observe—Free from evaluation or judgment. Seeing things like a video Camera. “When I (see/hear)…”	1. What they observe—Free from Evaluation or judgment. Empathically re-stating “When YOU (see/hear)…”
FEELINGS	
2. How I feel in relation to what I observe: Body-felt emotion or sensation vs. thinking “I feel sad/mad/tense/happy etc…”	What they feel in relation to their observation: Body-felt emotion or sensation vs. thinking “YOU feel sad/mad/tense/happy…”
NEEDS	
3. What I need or value vs. a preference or specific action from the other person. No person, place or thing is attached. “I need safety/clarity/closure…”	2. What they need or value vs. a preference or specific action that has caused the feelings. “YOU need safety/clarity/closure…”
Clearly requesting that which will enrich my life vs. demanding. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doable • Present Tense • Expressed in Action Language 	Empathically receive that which will enrich THEIR life without hearing demands. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doable • Present Tense • Expressed in Action Language
REQUESTS	
4. The concrete actions I request be taken: “Would you be willing to let me know when you are running late?”	4. Concrete actions THEY request be taken: . “YOU Would like me to let you know when I am running late?”
<p>Created from two sources: Marshall B. Rosenberg, The Center for Nonviolent Communication www.CNVC.org And John Kinyon and Ike Lasater Mediate Your life www.mediateyourlife.com</p>	

The Community Resiliency Team invites you to join us as we integrate NVC as a way to enhance our ability to connect from the heart. Like the UPA's in our asana practice, NVC is another way to express ourselves from the inside out.

COMMUNITY RESILIENCY - HANDLING CONFLICT WITH GRACE

“Conflict is simply the gap between what we want and what we are experiencing at any point in time. This gap generates energy because humans are highly motivated to close the gap because it isn't comfortable. This emotional discomfort can motivate people to expend lots of energy.”²

In other words, conflict often arises when feelings and needs are not addressed and requests are taken as demands. By learning how to identify FEELINGS, NEEDS, and REQUESTS, we have a map of how to open to grace in the face of conflict. Both maps—NVC and the UPAs—move us closer to our optimal blueprint.

Community resiliency is the ability to recover quickly when a conflict arises. A conflict resilient community is “...one where conflict is managed well, and not allowed to escalate because of a commitment to change, review current practice, identify areas for improvement, present options for change and evaluate success.”³

The possibility of conflict—and conflict itself—are part of the human experience and thus part of being skillful yoga practitioners united within a global organization.

The Community Resiliency Team supports ASHY as an organization, individual members and teams to create a more skillful community and workplace in relation to strengthening communication and collaboration. This framework offers us a map that allows us to recover quickly when conflict does arise.

² Interview with Nate Regier, co-founding owner and chief executive officer of [Next Element](http://leadchange.com/using-conflict-for-good-a-conversation-with-nate-regier/) <<http://leadchange.com/using-conflict-for-good-a-conversation-with-nate-regier/>> 27 October 2016.

³ State Services Authority, Victoria, Australia, *Developing Conflict Resilient Workplaces: A how to guide for creating more positive workplaces in the Victorian not-for-profit sector*, 2011, p. 4.

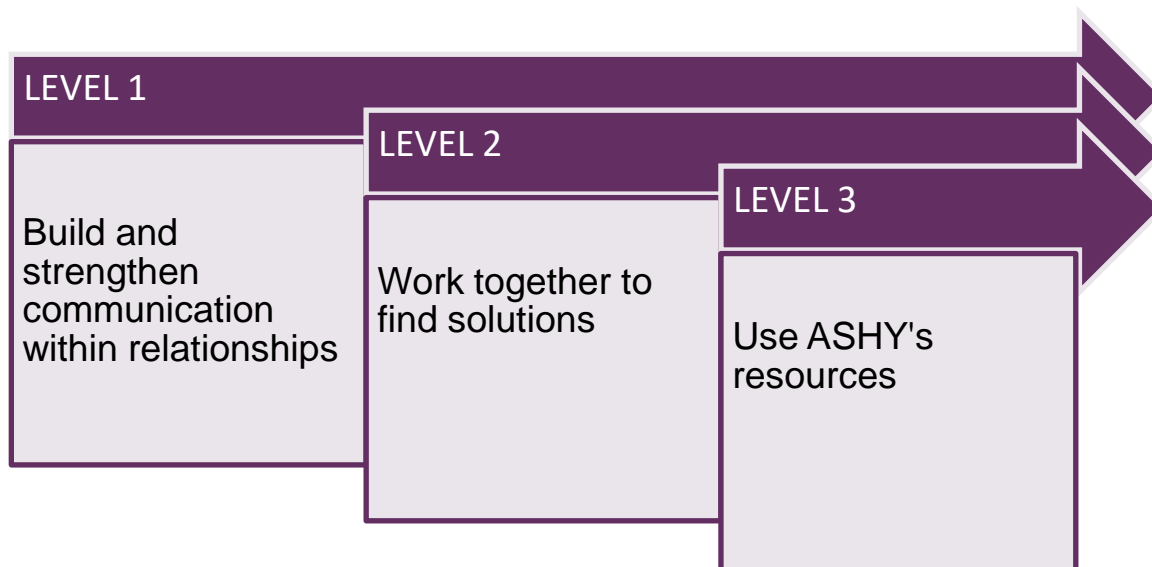
SECTION III

Skillful Communication in Practice

Overview

What does this look like in practice?

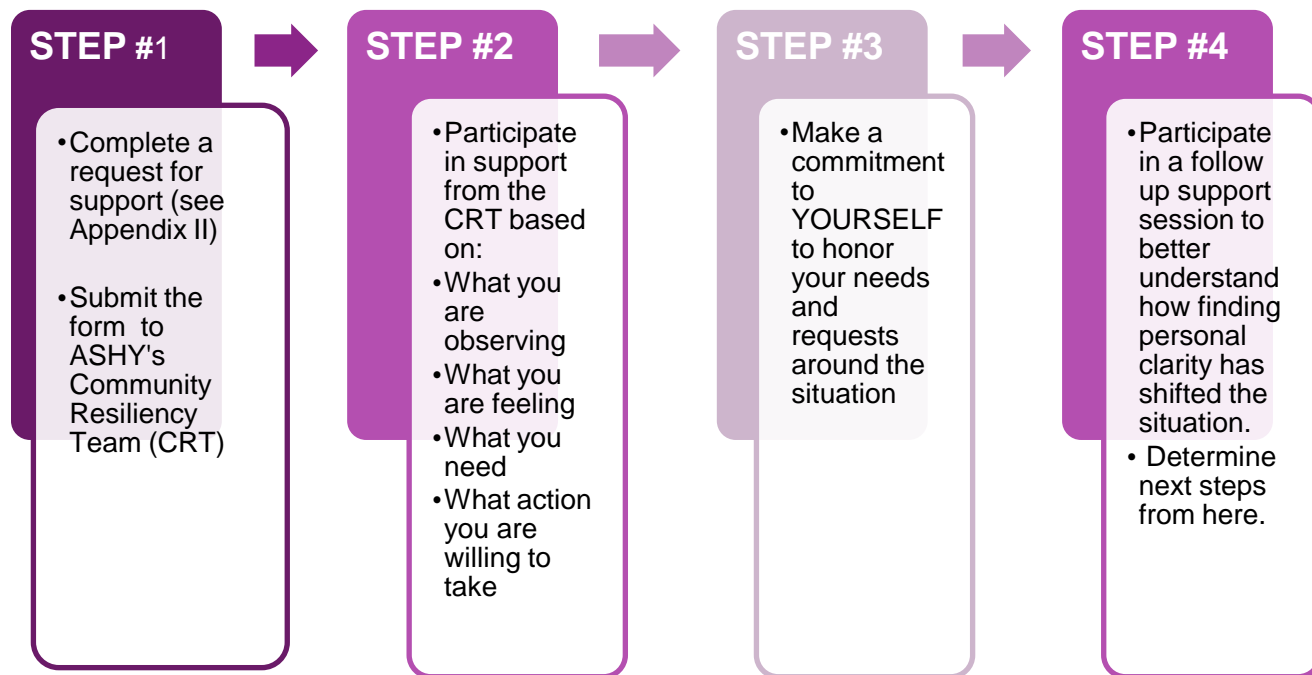
- Level 1: Members of the Anusara community are encouraged to make a personal investment in building and strengthening communication skills. Constructive communication using the NVC skills can be an effective way to navigate difficult conversations and prevent conflict.
- Level 2: Individuals are encouraged to work together to find mutually respectful solutions and channel their energy into building trust and strengthening relationships. This starts with understanding your own personal FEELINGS< NEEDS< and REQUESTS of Self. Svadhyaya –Self Inquiry is paramount to constructive communication.
- Level 3: When the ability to connect seems difficult: having a third person, who is not involved in the situation, can be *helpful to understand YOUR PERSONAL next steps*. Follow the protocol on the following page to receive support and utilize ASHY's resources.



See Appendix II for more information on each level and how they relate to Anusara's Universal Principles of Alignment.

THE PROTOCOL

For help understanding your personal next steps in skillful communication, follow these steps:



ASHY's **Community Resiliency Team** (CRT) leaders will review the information and assign a CRT member to coach the individuals involved.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

ASHY's **Community Resiliency Team** (CRT) leaders will review the information and assign a CRT member to coach the individuals involved.

For more information or support in understanding and/or implementing this framework, contact Team Leader Tiffany Wood at tiffany@anusarayoga.com.

CRT members have been trained in the Non Violent Communication Three-Chair method developed by the founders of a program called [Mediate Your Life](#). CRT members continue to deepen their training. In-person and online training in ASHY's five global regions to provide a

consistent approach for communication within ASHY will be available in the coming year.

The Team’s goal is to support communication based on connection. People who have a self-empathy practice find it easier to communicate when challenges arise and find ways to meet the needs of both parties involved in difficult situation.

CRT members co-lead trainings and assist with sessions for those times when the ability to connect seems difficult or when having a third person, who is not involved in the situation, would be helpful to finding resolution.

THE CRT is here to support ASHY members in more skillfully communicating within the Anusara Kula to maintain mutual respect and responsibility while growing and building communities locally and globally. The CRT is not here to police ASHY members and we do not make policy decisions.

The request for support includes:

1. Guided Self- Inquiry thru the DNA of Non-Violent Communication – Observation-Feelings-Needs-Requests. This inquiry is about YOU and what actionable steps or agreements you need to make for yourself as it relates to this situation.
 - Build understanding on you feel, what you need, and identify specific requests that can be skillfully expressed to help you meet your desired outcome.
2. Participate in a follow up support session to better understand how finding more personal clarity has shifted the situation. Determine next steps from here.

APPENDIX I

The UPAs and Skillful Communication

LEVEL 1 Open to Grace	
ATTRIBUTE	DEMONSTRATED BY
ASHY’s core values are the guiding principles. Constructive communications are promoted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People listen and seek to understand before they seek to be understood.• Constructive feedback is welcomed.• ASHY’s Board, staff and teachers are skilled in communications and conflict resolution.• Separate the issue at hand from the person• Seek early resolution of conflict

<p>ASHY's organizational culture emphasizes the importance of collaborative solutions.</p> <p>Different styles are accepted and embraced.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decisions are made by the people directly involved • Leadership positions source answers or solutions through consultation with others who will be affected • Relationships across the organization are supportive and cooperative
<p>Organizational culture supports the airing of concerns.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • . Concerns can be safely raised; privacy is respected. • Kula members are encouraged to voice concerns early, using the Gradients of Agreement when possible. • People feel confident that they will be heard and respected.
<p>Organizational mission, vision and values are consistent with compassionate communication.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASHY has taken steps to ensure its systems and structures will minimize conflict. • Use the energy generated by conflict to build a stronger school

LEVEL 2 Muscular Energy	
ATTRIBUTE	DEMONSTRATED BY
<p>ASHY' Board of Directors, staff, volunteers and Kula (community) members address conflict before it escalates.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kula members quickly and skillfully respond to complaints and issues. • Anyone experiencing conflict speaks with the person(s) involved in a way that upholds ASHY's core values and seeks to find agreements that meet the needs of all involved.
<p>An effective process identifies the best way to resolve difficult situations or conflicts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals are encouraged to try to resolve the conflict using compassionate communication skills. • Individuals can ask for support from ASHY's Community Resiliency Team.
LEVEL 3 Organic Energy	
ATTRIBUTE	DEMONSTRATED BY

<p>There is a defined and documented process for responding to conflicts when they arise.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an informal process to resolve conflict at a local level whenever possible. This process emphasizes listening and understanding. • Formal processes are generally not accessed until informal processes have been used. • There is a process to manage complaints and disputes.
<p>Kula members know how to use the process and are kept informed and updated during the process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kula members know how and where to communicate their concerns and seek support. • The outcomes and reasons for the decisions are made clear to those involved.
<p>Clear roles and responsibilities are allocated and communicated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASHY's Community Resiliency Team leader keeps ASHY's Operations Team Coordinator and the Board President informed. • ASHY's Community Resiliency Team is in collaboration with the Operations Team. • ASHY's Board has primary responsibility for ensuring the resources are available to promote community resiliency throughout ASHY and the Kula.

