

DEVELOPING NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION:
AN INTEGRAL APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

This project explores aspects of a communication model called Nonviolent Communication (NVC) used in conflict resolution, counselling and education. The basis of this model is empathic connection and the development and skilled use of four key concepts: observations, feelings, needs and requests. A challenge of using this model is to integrate the process into a consciousness rather using it as a technique. This project investigates questions that arose from considering the teaching, knowledge, process and development of this ‘consciousness’.

The project includes a description of NVC. Integral Theory, a framework from Ken Wilber is used to both focus the probe and broadens the way NVC is considered. It reviews literature related to NVC in terms of Integral Theory’s four quadrants and lines of development. Other literature such as Spiral Dynamics, Chaos Theory, Neurobiology, Self Development and some postmodern theories are referred to in the analysis. Four experienced NVC trainers were interviewed on the subject and their data guided the investigation into how theories from other worldviews can inform NVC practice.

The scope of this project was a general probe into many aspects of the question rather than a comprehensive academic investigation but presents enough information that is useful, as it is, to NVC practitioners.

This project contributes to the learning, teaching and practice of NVC by offering new perspectives and possible research directions to NVC practitioners. This project also makes contributions to the more general fields of counselling and conflict resolution by discussing subjects they might have in common and by introducing them to the premises, skills and consciousness of NVC.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

“The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes,
but in having new eyes” Marcel Proust

(Purton, 2004, p. 165)

1.1 Seeking Empathic Connection

Spiritual leaders, psychologists and philosophers have often advised humans to relate to each other without judgment as a way to realize values of love, relationship, healing and as a way of knowing the divine. In my professional life, although I have sought such knowledge and practices through my training in humanistic and postmodern approaches to counselling and consultation, I have been dissatisfied with the level of psycho-pathologizing that I saw in youth mental health, and frustrated by my own inconsistency in remaining present and non judgmental. After being involved in the counselling field for over 25 years in many areas, from basic communication and group skills through family systems training, post modern narrative work and Milton Erickson’s work, I have come to value in new ways the simplicity and yet profound importance of the human encounter as described by Martin Buber and Carl Rogers and that is now synthesised by Marshall Rosenberg in his work in Nonviolent Communication or NVC.

Several years ago I was introduced to a model of communication, Nonviolent Communication (NVC), as conceptualized and taught by Marshall Rosenberg. Nonviolent Communication is a process that facilitates the flow of communication

necessary to exchange information and resolve differences constructively and compassionately. It is based on identifying universally shared standards and needs. Nonviolent Communication teaches people how to avoid language that creates resentment or lowers self-esteem. It emphasizes compassion as the motivation for actions, rather than fear, guilt, blame, or shame. It also emphasizes personal responsibility for our choices. Nonviolent Communication can be used effectively even without the other person's or group's knowledge of the process. While it is taught through the use of a concrete model, and is referred to as "a process of communication" or a "language of compassion," Nonviolent Communication is more than a process or a language. As our cultural conditioning often leads our attention in directions unlikely to get us what we want, NVC serves as an ongoing reminder to focus our attention on places that have the potential to yield what we are seeking—a flow between ourselves and others based on a mutual desire to connect (CNVC n.d.).

Rosenberg's introductory workshop got my attention as he went straight to the heart of my own concerns about moving out of a paradigm of judgment and evaluation to one of compassion and needs. From what I was able to understand, trainers and practitioners have found that NVC training brings our attention to processes and language that make it more likely we will be heard, hear others, clearly express our needs with confidence, and work through conflict with compassion. I took training over several months, culminating in a nine-day intensive residential training with Marshal Rosenberg. I thought I had found a process that brought together my quest for personal growth, harmony with others and to contribute to the well being of others.

1.2 Challenges of Practice

In watching my own use of NVC and watching others who were learning the process, I noticed, however, that the retention of NVC skills was at best uneven. With some, skills tend to wane over time and would often vanish when triggered by some event or person. In some, the NVC process seemed so wooden and odd sounding that it would even interfere with communication and connection. In others the learning seemed to stick and their approach to the NVC language skills seemed to be natural and they offered a sense of presence, strength and compassion. My ongoing commitment to deepen my own understanding of NVC as well as those of others necessitates the examination of such challenges in the practice of NVC.

Trainers often describe NVC as both a set of skills and a kind of consciousness that is often referred to as Giraffe Consciousness. The Giraffe metaphor is used in NVC teaching because the Giraffe is the land animal with the largest heart, and it is able to see great distances because of its long neck. Thus, giraffe consciousness symbolizes both heart and vision. I became curious about several aspects about this consciousness. What are the qualities of this consciousness? How is it developed in people? Why is there variation in how quickly it develops in people? Why do some people, when exposed to NVC, become so immediately enthusiastic with it? What do they see and experience? How do trainers recognize this quality? What do they do to help learners enhance it? A key factor in the success of NVC seems to lie in how well the learner or practitioner “gets it”, and further, how well this “getting it” serves them through the challenges of practice.

I thought if I could understand what these factors were and how they play a part in NVC and in similar processes, that I could perhaps enhance how NVC is taught, learned and conceptualized. Furthermore, I was inspired by a personal conversation with Marshall Rosenberg (September 18, 2004) in which he expressed his desire for trainers to put more emphasis on the consciousness of the model rather than the techniques of the model.

As my overall purpose is to contribute to the learning, teaching and practice of NVC, I have an intention of bringing new perspectives and possibilities to NVC practitioners that will be both immediately useful and be an inspiration to further personal and academic investigation. A more specific goal is to promote a greater awareness and understanding of the knowledge, process and development about the NVC ‘Giraffe’ consciousness to NVC trainers, learners and to the general public. I wish to discover if there are methods used by NVC trainers that target these shifts in consciousness, and if so whether this facilitates a transformation in learners’ awareness of NVC and this consciousness. In addition I wish to contribute to this knowledge by reviewing literature that would enhance an understanding about this consciousness and its development. The particular methods, experiences and literature are those that deepen a sense of empathy, connection and sense of witnessing and are less likely to produce acts of judgment, coercion or domination. As there is little by way of literature and research within the NVC community, I hope this project will make a contribution to this field. Further, I hope that this model of communication will be attractive to counsellors as a tool for deepening human connection between themselves and their clients. The scope of this project will be more of a general probe into these questions rather than a comprehensive investigation. I hope others may pick up one or more of these threads and develop them further.

1.3 How this Project is Organized

As part of this probe, I interviewed four senior NVC trainers about how they understood this development in consciousness, how they encourage it and what they would like to see differently. As this is a probe rather than a complete qualitative investigation, I will not be using their data in a methodological way, but rather to illustrate and support questions for further research.

I will first describe the basic principles and practices of NVC in Chapter 2. After a thorough search on NVC, I discovered that although there is a body of literature describing NVC 's application in, for example, conflict resolution, education, counselling and business, I didn't find any critical analysis on NVC or its teaching. Rosenberg has been influenced greatly by Carl Rogers and Albert Ellis, and there has been significant research on those approaches. Furthermore, there is a body of literature on aspects of NVC such as empathy, care, needs and perception, language construction and so on. In a conversation with Jane Marantz Connor who has written a book for counsellors on the NVC approach (Connor & Killian, 2004), she reported that she and other academic psychologists in the US are pursuing research on NVC (personal communication, September 2004).

My approach to the literature and to the data generated by the participants is to consider it through a map of Integral Theory as described by Integral theorist Ken Wilber. This theory postulates four different quadrants of experience of our world: the behavioral (Upper right), intentional (Upper Left), cultural (Lower Left) and social

(Lower Right). In Chapter 3, I describe this Integral Theory and link it to how we might be able to understand the NVC learning from an Integral perspective. I will be using the Integral model's use of lines and stages of development, the transition from states to stages and ideas about types, as a framework to consider the questions I have raised about the teaching of NVC skills.

In Chapter 4, I examine more closely the Upper Right or Behavioral quadrant, and more specifically, the neurological aspect of consciousness and memory. In Chapter 5, which is about the Upper Left or Intentional quadrant, I explore the individual psychology of our interior experience. Chapter 6 is an exploration of both Lower quadrants. The cultural Lower Left aspect of cultural consciousness is about how we share aspects of consciousness through culture and language. The Lower Right concerns the socio-political, measurable and exterior aspects of community. Issues relating to systems of politics, ecology and community organization will be discussed. Throughout, linkages and connections to NVC will be made. The implications of this analysis, recommendations and future steps form the basis for Chapter 7.

1.4 The Method and The Participants

For this probe I selected participants by invitation. My selection was influenced by considering experience of teaching NVC, seniority within the NVC training group, trainers who have taught in and teach NVC in BC, and reputation in the NVC community as offering a quality training. I contacted four trainers, and all of them were enthusiastic about being interviewed. All of the participants were offered anonymity and all preferred to be identified in this study. I have observed two of the participants lead and facilitate

NVC training. Further, I have had informal conversations with several more trainers through telephone conversions, and have been discussing these issues with practitioners over the past year. I had an opportunity to reflect on this topic with the founder of NVC, Marshall Rosenberg when he visited Vancouver in the fall of 2004, in addition to observing him and other senior trainers when they offer workshops and trainings.

I interviewed the main four experienced trainers in person or on the phone over a period of three months in 2004, each interview lasting 1 to 2.5 hours. Each had, in advance, a list of my initial questions (see Appendix A) but was invited to speak about what caught their attention and so the interviews were open-ended. I found that each interview built on the previous ones and so they tended to evolve from one to the next. The transcripts were sent to the participants (member checking) and all were invited to send in further comments.

The analysis of the data was organized into themes that arose from the Integral Theory model, as well as the topics that suggested themselves from challenges of teaching NVC. I will now present some brief information about the main participants in this probe.

Rachelle Lamb is an NVC certified trainer living in Victoria who was drawn to NVC because it increased her awareness of the power of language in creating human experience. She trained with Marshall Rosenberg as well as other certified trainers. She was certified by the Centre for Nonviolent Communication in 2002 and was President for the BC Network for Compassionate Communication during 2002/03. In 2002, she wrote *Communication Basics: An Overview of Nonviolent Communication* and is now writing a book on the use of NVC in business. Rachelle's enthusiasm for sharing Nonviolent

Communication stems “from witnessing its powerful results in the lives of those [she] share[s] it with.” She herself described her early involvement with NVC as “akin to a spiritual awakening... something to bring us back to our own humanity” that converged with other personal growth research she had been doing.

Robert Gonzales, Ph.D., Clinical Psychology, lives in Arizona and has been offering NVC since 1986. He has taught psychology, counselling and communication at Prescott College. He met Marshall Rosenberg in 1985, and has been offering NVC in some form since 1986. His background is primarily in individual and couples counselling. He has offered NVC training to community colleges, high schools, churches, social workers, psychologists, mediators, teenagers, and public groups. He has taught psychology, counselling and communication at Prescott College. Robert opened the Prescott Center for Nonviolent Communication in Prescott, Arizona in June 2000. He has been a trainer at International NVC Intensive Trainings (IIT) . What struck Robert about NVC was that after exploring many dimensions in personal growth and counselling he found several missing pieces he had not encountered elsewhere, “ It all centers around the needs awareness and how it relates to feeling” and how this leads to living spirituality. “To me that is the objective of NVC... to manifest a certain spirituality.”

Wes Taylor lives in Washington State and BC and has conducted numerous trainings for a wide range of professional, educational, and civic groups. Wes helped establish the Flagstaff Center for Compassionate Communication in 1998 to promote NVC in Northern Arizona and to support the larger NVC network. Wes has conducted numerous trainings for a wide range of professional, educational, and civic groups. He has devoted significant time offering training to medical groups and has found great

excitement in recent years working with political activists and peace advocates. Prior to his involvement with NVC, Wes's background includes 17 years of offering counselling and psychotherapy in private practice, outpatient clinics and hospital settings, working with addictions, trauma survivors, and other psychiatric issues. When Wes discovered NVC, he thought he had found "material that [he] considered to be an evolutionary step beyond what [he] was doing...coming to understand the power of completely putting my attention on the experience of another person rather than compassionate diagnosing." On a personal note, Wes explained, "within twenty four hours of using the model with my kid I had some dramatically different experiences compared with the interaction that had gone before".

Alan Rafael Seid, who did his first IIT in 1999, lives in the Bellingham area of Washington State and has worked for fifteen years in sustainability work which he defines as the long term vitality of human societies and the natural world. He teaches workshops in several different areas including NVC, the sustainability on personal finances and Ken Wilber's integral approach, the last area being a major frame for this project. On being introduced to NVC, he "realized that none of the stuff I had been working on, all of the sustainability stuff I worked on was not going to be successful if we didn't learn how to work together, to truly collaborate nonviolently...to negotiate egos".

As explained earlier, I will use the data generated from my interviews with these participants in ways that will both raise challenges in the teaching and awareness of NVC, as well as illustrate the Integral framework I will be using. In the next chapter, I will now present an overview of NVC.

Chapter 2

A DESCRIPTION OF NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION

This chapter will explore some of the basic skills and precepts of Nonviolent Communication (NVC)¹. Marshall Rosenberg, in the approach he calls NVC, proposes a practical skills-based training that offers reflexive dialogue and a usable skills-set by looking at the language we use and the way we focus our attention.

2.1 What is NVC?

“When people can get over their diagnoses of each other – their judgments, evaluations, criticism – and connect to what’s going on in each other, conflicts which seem impossible to resolve seem to almost resolve themselves” (Rosenberg, 2003b). NVC enhances the ideas of Carl Rogers on how to create relationships where mutual growth can occur (Russell, n.d, p.1). NVC echoes the ideas of cognitive therapists by examining thinking that distorts our sense of personal efficacy and autonomy. It has practical applications simple enough for young children, and it is also profound enough to engage those who want to reflect on its spiritual and political underpinnings (CNVC, n.d. p.1). In many ways NVC is not new but part of honoring George Albee’s and George Miller’s efforts to ‘give psychology away’ (Rosenberg, 2001a, p. xi).

Marshall Rosenberg developed NVC in response to his experience of violence in the world and as a contribution towards offering solutions (Rosenberg, 2001a, p.1). He wanted to understand why, given similar circumstances, some people behave with violence and yet others respond with their most compassionate nature. From these

¹ A version of this chapter appeared in *The B.C. Counsellor*, 25 (2), 2003, p. 7 – 16.

observations he saw a need for communication (i.e. expressing oneself and receiving another's expressions) that encourages goodwill. The communications we are usually trained to engage in, he observed, builds resistance, creates judgment, and provokes evaluation. NVC emphasizes taking personal responsibility for our choices and improving our ability to choose our behavior rather than respond habitually. It enables us to put our attention on ways that promote connection rather than ways that promote fear, guilt, or shame. It is effective even if only one party is familiar with the NVC process.

After studying with Carl Rogers, studying comparative religion and exploring cultures where there is little violence, Rosenberg concluded that we have a natural awareness to recognise that our well being and the well being of others are one and the same, that we all share the same human needs and that when we connect with each other's needs it is inevitable that conflicts will be worked out. Giving to each other, says Rosenberg, is our greatest need and our greatest joy (Killian, 2003, p.5).

At first, this reads like naïve new age idealism. Yet, Rosenberg walks the walk and the results are overwhelmingly positive. He goes to some of the most troubled places in the world, working to resolve conflicts in Israel and Palestine, Sri Lanka, Rwanda, Bosnia and inner city schools in the US. NVC is now taught for parenting, conflict resolution, social change, business and counselling. NVC is the basis of resolving conflicts and is an educational philosophy in many schools in Israel, the European Union, Italy, Serbia and the USA (Rosenberg, 2001a, p x).

2.2 The Basis of NVC

The heart of NVC is about maintaining connection. “What I want in my life is compassion, a flow between myself and others based on a mutual giving from the heart” (Rosenberg, 2001a, p.1)

NVC approaches gaining this connection in two ways: first by examining how language makes it difficult for us to remain connected to our compassionate nature, and second, by encouraging the use of language that enhances our ability to remain connected to it. Rosenberg (2001a, p.15) says that this natural giving is not always evident because we have been educated to think in terms of evaluative language that implies wrongness and deficits. This language is comparative, diagnostic and judgmental. It is full of terms like ‘should’, ‘bad’, ‘have to’, labels and phrases like, ‘it’s school policy’, ‘you deserve it’, ‘I don’t have a choice’, and ‘it’s always done’.

This language implies ‘power over’ rather than ‘power with’. These evaluative words tend to bring distance between us and other people because it often is heard as criticism. Furthermore, it disconnects us from our own feelings and needs in relationship to others and ourselves. For example, when we believe that there really is such a construct as a deserving person or a bad child, not only will it prevent us from connecting to the other person’s needs, but will cut us off from our own feelings, values and needs. This limitation is equally applicable when we use positive judgments such as “a good child”, a “beautiful”, “successful” person and so on.

The NVC process is more a state of consciousness than a technique. To look at the process it is important to note that if we do NVC as a technique we are not relating in ways that promote its purpose; getting caught up in the technique may get in the way of

connecting. However, NVC provides us with tools that allow us to develop this consciousness, and these tools also include ways of recognizing when we are in or out of this consciousness. People using NVC often report that they notice their behaviours in relationships is more aligned with their higher values of compassion, forgiveness, and caring. Hence, the model of NVC which follows is not meant to be a set of rules or virtues: they are structures that offer opportunities or guidelines that will enable people to have feedback on whether they are in relationship or in empathic connection (Rosenberg, 2000a, p. 32; Rosenberg, 2000b).

2.3 The Four Steps of NVC

Nonviolent Communication helps us to make clear observations, express and hear feelings empathically, identify needs and to make doable requests. By being conscious of these steps we bring ourselves closer to the kind of empathic connection that will facilitate conflict resolution. These steps are used both for expressing ourselves and for hearing other's expressions. They can be used explicitly or implicitly, i.e., by speaking them, or as an awareness of how the steps have been covered because of the context or the quality of the dialogue. They can be used in a very natural way, although at first they may seem forced or lacking in authenticity.

Step 1- Accurate observation

Krishnamurti has said, "The highest form of intelligence is the ability to observe without evaluating" (Rosenberg, 2003a, p. 10). An accurate observation describes what is happening or what people are saying without adding any evaluation, to see and hear, as

a video camera would record. Most people find this difficult. For example to say ‘John is angry’ would not be an observation as there is an added interpretation to what the camera might record. ‘John’s face is red and he is speaking in a voice that is louder than I like’ or ‘John told me he is angry’ would be an observation.

NVC acknowledges that we use evaluations but recommends separating them from observations. For example, one could say, ‘When John’s face is red I think he is angry’. That would be an observation of what I am seeing and thinking. In learning NVC, much time is spent in learning and mastering this skill.

Step 2- Expressing and Hearing Feelings.

To be aware of what we are feeling in the present is a basic function of NVC. Feelings are often an experience of what is ‘alive in us’ and are considered to be important pointers to what our needs are (Rosenberg, 2001a). For example, I may feel hunger because I have a need for food, defiant because I have a need for autonomy or happy because my need for community is being met. These examples also illustrate another NVC view about the cause of feelings.

Feelings are nearly always caused by needs (values) that are perceived as being met or not being met. They are usually ‘triggered’ by the perception of internal and external events. Feelings of anger, guilt and shame are exceptions because they are caused by both evaluative thoughts and needs. For example, anger is caused by evaluating that something or someone, is wrong and perceiving that some needs are not being met.

NVC also trains us to make distinctions about words that describe feelings and words that do not. For example: words that follow “feeling” with ‘that’, ‘as if’, ‘I’, ‘she’, ‘he’ or ‘they’ usually indicates the speaker is not clearly describing a feeling but is adding an evaluation: “I feel that you should know better” “I feel as if I have better things to do”. These would be clearer and would signal the underlying need if the thought and feeling and need were clearly identified. For example, one could say: “I think I didn’t get a fair deal and I feel frustrated because I value using my money wisely’. Many, but not all, words that end in ‘ed’ also do not clearly describe a feeling and have an evaluation included and keep us from being aware of our feelings and needs that might help us connect with others or our self in life serving ways. Examples would be: “I feel abused” which suggests an evaluation that may keep one from feelings of hurt, terror, loneliness that might suggest needs for nurturing, belonging or support, which if expressed or heard might connect us in a deeper way. Other words like this are: “blamed”, “attacked”, “cheated”, “ignored”, and “victimised” can limit our awareness of our felt sense and needs we want met.

Step 3- Expressing and Hearing Needs

In NVC, needs or values are stressed as the most important component for a compassionate connection. The quality of connection we want is unlikely to be experienced until we can connect at this level. Examples of these universal needs are: autonomy, affection, celebration, integrity, interdependence, physical needs, and understanding. A need is more an expression of life energy that we ascribe words to

describe a calling forth of biological, social and spiritual requirement to make life wonderful.

It is important to separate the use of needs from requests or strategies. A need does not make any specific reference to any one doing anything, that is, it is not attached to any person. For example: Parent to child, “I need you to do the dishes” would be a strategy to get a need met and could miss out on a connecting dialogue about the parent’s and child’s needs. The parent’s possible needs for support or for cleanliness, or the child’s need for autonomy or need for fun does not get connected to, and may end in a power battle instead of a solution. When needs are expressed indirectly in evaluation, like “you don’t care about doing your share” the child may hear criticism and may feel defensive and are more likely to make a counter criticism than connect in a compassionate manner.

We have been so educated in evaluation, thinking that our child is lazy, is ignoring us, ‘should’ obey us because we are in authority that we miss the opportunity to have someone support our values and needs willingly, and the child misses out on the joy of contributing or having their need for autonomy recognised.

Step 4- Making and Hearing Requests

Most often when we communicate with others we are requesting something from them. Again, NVC makes recommendations on how this might be done to maximise the connection in relationship, and make it more likely that everyone will get their needs met. Requests are in the positive, are doable, concrete and are not demands. In the NVC consciousness we want people to meet our needs willingly with compassion. The

opposite of this is a demand, which would be for them to do it out of fear, guilt, duty or obligation.

A good test to see if a request or a demand has been made is to check on the response that is made when someone says “no”. If the response to a “no” is an argument, a “should” or a criticism, it is most likely that a demand rather than a request was made. The chances of getting a need met in the way that maintains relationship are seriously diminished. No matter how much we try to make a request the other person may hear a demand or a criticism. This is especially true when the speaker is in authority or the listener has had negative experiences with those in authority making evaluations and demands.

Sometimes this takes dialogue in the form of further NVC conversation but can be helped if the request is made with an inquiry about the willingness of the listener to meet your need. This might sound like this: Would you be willing to meet my need for tidiness by helping me clean the dishes for the next 20 minutes? If the child says no, then we might respond with the most powerful process in NVC: we might respond with empathy. For example we could say: “ Are you feeling pressure because you would like to be out playing with your friends right now?”

If we are truly in the NVC consciousness we never hear a “no”; we only hear what feelings and needs the listener is saying yes to, that people only do what they do to meet their needs. This reframe of “no” can be transformative just in itself.

There are two types of requests: connection requests and action requests. Connection requests are used to ask for empathy for yourself or to have further understanding of the other person. For example, “would you be willing to tell me what

you heard me say?” would be to check how you were heard and “Would you be willing to tell me how you feel when you hear me say this?” could be used to check your understanding of the other person.

Action requests are doable and specific. “Would you be willing to give me a ride to the ferry at two PM tomorrow?”

2.4 Empathic Connection

NVC has recommendations on how empathy can be given to maximise compassionate connection. It is important separate out evaluation, which can be expressed as advising, interpreting, or judging. It is also important to differentiate sympathy from empathy. While sympathy can deepen connection it can disconnect if the person is needing empathy because it puts the focus back on the speakers felt experience and away from the other person. For example saying, “ I am sad that you feel that way about the dishes” misses on connecting to what the child is saying ‘yes’ to. Empathy is where we put our attention, away from our experience or thoughts and on the feelings and needs of the other person.

2.5 NVC Links to Other Theories

Carl Rogers is well regarded for his research and contributions to therapeutic relationships. His theory of human emotional growth is based on being open to experience, to trust in one’s experience, to have an internal locus of evaluation and a willingness to be in process (Raskin & Rogers, 2000, p.135). Rogers held that three attitudes of a therapist create a growth-promoting climate: acceptance (unconditional

positive regard), genuine-ness (congruence of what therapist appears with what they look like), and empathic understanding. A fourth characteristic later introduced (Raskin & Rogers, 2000, p.134), is that when the therapist is closest to their inner, intuitive self, it leads to a quality of presence that is releasing and helpful. There is considerable evidence that these attitudes with clients support them to have increased ratings of maturity, more ability to deal with stress, more self directed and more freedom in expression and experiencing (Raskin & Rogers, 2000 p. 157). The therapist facilitates the client's discoveries of the meanings of his or her own current inner experiencing through a therapeutic relationship. They avoid giving direction, evaluation, interpretation, advice, reassure or criticisms. Conflicts can be resolved when individual and groups can empathize, be genuine and be caring with each other. Student Centered Education developed out this orientation.

One can see how NVC is related to the person-centered approach. Rosenberg has moved theory into practice by articulating this approach into a four-step model that places more focus on needs and requests. Rosenberg considers that 80 percent of empathic connection is an understanding of needs and that every communication carries a request, either for connections or action (Rosenberg, 2000a; Rosenberg, 2003c). Rosenberg includes ideas of the cognitive therapists, especially Ellis, with his key differentiations of observations, thoughts, feelings, needs and strategies.

Since Carl Rogers developed his ideas, there have been developments in feminist and social constructivist perspectives that are synergistic with NVC. Nel Noddings, the leading scholar on care theory, has investigated caring relationships and empathic connections. Care "speaks to the existential heart of life - ... that draws attention to our

passions, attitudes, connections, concerns and experienced responsibilities” (Noddings, 1992 in Reed & Johnson, 2000, p. 246). Thus, care theory with its emphasis on “living together, on creating, maintaining positive relations” (Noddings, 1992 in Reed & Johnson, 2000, p.252) and finding a way towards “a less violent, more caring way of life” (Noddings, 1995, p.186) resonates with the principles and the practice of NVC.

Noddings describes care as a “needs and response-based ethic” (Noddings, 1992, p.21) that involves an encounter between one-caring, or carer, and the cared-for. The carer perceives need and is moved to respond with care. For the caring act to be completed, both need to participate: the carer by receiving the other, and the cared-for by responding or completing the act of care through reciprocity. Caring, in these terms, offers opportunities for people to connect with one another in relationships “characterized by mutuality” (Noddings, 1992, p.17). NVC characterizes this mutuality more as universal need and emphasizes empathic connection as a way of realizing it.

One of the more important concepts of care is reception, or received attention, an ‘emptying of the soul’ in order to “receive unto itself the being it is looking at” (Weil, 1951 in Noddings, 1992, p. 16). This concept parallels Rosenberg’s ideas when he quotes philosopher Chuang-Tze to describe empathy: “the hearing of the spirit ... demands the emptiness of all the faculties...then the whole being listens. There is then a direct grasp of what is right there before you that can never be heard with ear or understood with the mind” (Rosenberg, 2003, p.27).

Since there is “no recipe” for caring, listening and responding differentially has been acknowledged as being one of the greatest challenges to maintaining care, which is true of a counselling relationship as well. To perceive need, the carer has the

responsibility of ‘receiving’ or attending to the other in order to know better how to meet that need, and to initiate care. One of the difficulties raised in care theory is one raised by Weil who asks whether “only he (*sic*) who is capable of attention can do it” (Noddings, 1992 p. 16). How does one develop the capacity ‘to receive’ and thus to care? This challenge is often discussed in NVC training and is met by encouraging empathy circles that seem to both build new habits around some of cognitive distinctions, relieves some of pain that covers our awareness and as they deeply connect with others they seem to receive the needs of other where the experience is often described in spiritual terms (Rosenberg, 2001b).

As carers, we invite others to the dialogue, which is an effective way to also evaluate our efforts at caring. NVC emphasizes the need for getting feedback from people either in the form of gratefulness for needs being met or the gifts of their negative emotions as opportunities to connect with their needs. In this way we can go beyond our self-evaluation (ego stroking) and truly find out if our contribution was meaningful to another.

2.6 Implications for Practice

NVC offers several opportunities for Counsellors. It can increase the ability to offer ‘empathy, genuineness and positive regard’ to students, and can improve relationships in the classroom, with staff and parents. This approach enables teachers and counsellors to support students to be motivated from their needs and values rather than a place of guilt, shame and the threat of punishment.

NVC can offer skills and perspectives on how to resolve conflicts and prevent or de-escalate violence. NVC has been taught to a range of students, from K – 12, using distinctive animal puppets: a Jackal who personifies the evaluative language and the Giraffe who represents connecting language. Rosenberg and many teachers who have been trained in the technique report that it can be used successfully to sort out many of the complex gender and cultural issues we face in the social conditions of the day.

Through the NVC approach of giving empathy to self, counsellors are able to take care of their needs of self-care while also caring for the needs of others. NVC has been used as part of a life skills course or peer-counselling program. Although the skills and perspectives are simple, they can be difficult and most trainees find that to obtain much proficiency they need to invest time in study and practice. Practice groups and training takes place in most centers in BC and programs can be found at the BC Network for Compassionate Communication web site (BCNCC, n.d.).

Chapter 3

INTEGRAL THEORY

Integral theory will be used as a meta-framework to discuss the data of my probe into NVC shifts of consciousness. I have chosen this framework because it meets my preference for a model that includes multiple paradigms on worldviews and lines of development, and it contains theories about how changes in transformation of consciousness might occur. This chapter is a brief overview of Integral Theory as theorized by Ken Wilber, and how it can be related to learning NVC.

3.1 What is Integral Theory?

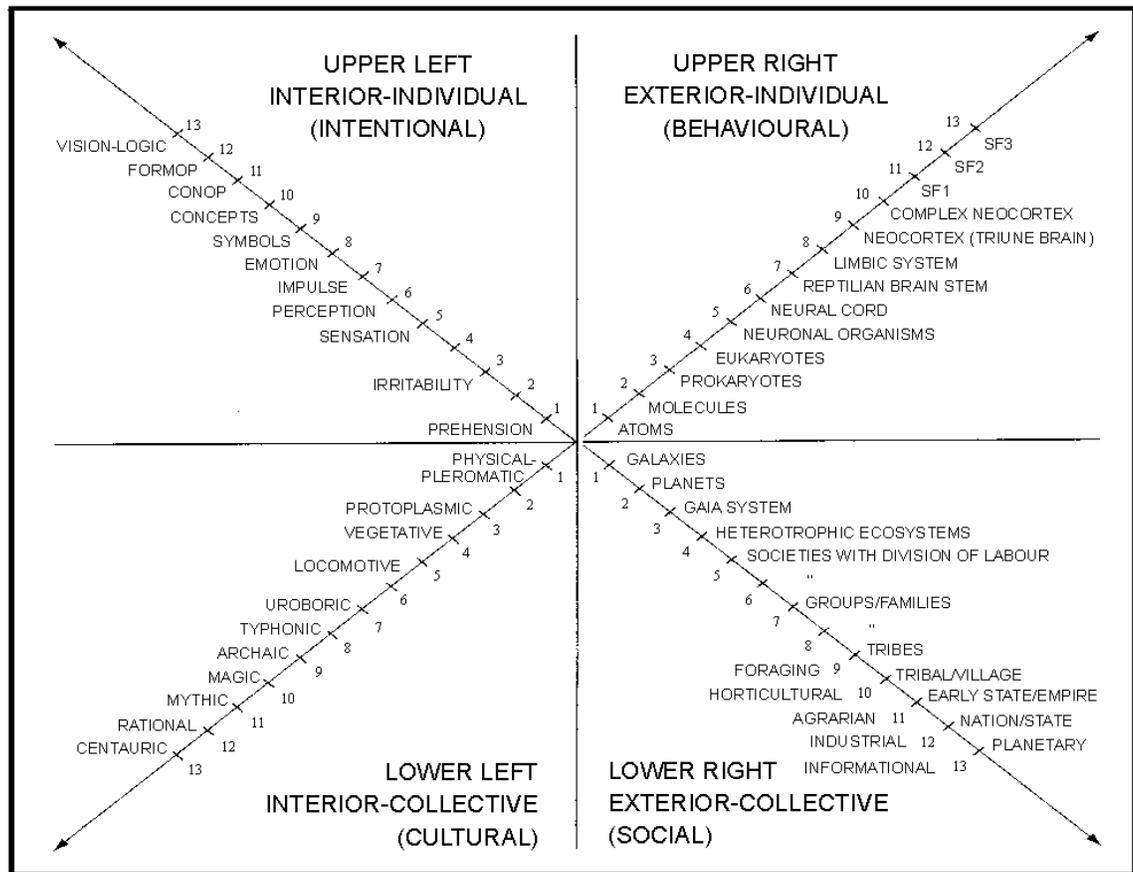
The Integral approach was created by a cross-cultural comparison of most of the known forms of knowledge from which Wilber produced a map of how humans have organized their experience of the world. This integral map has five major aspects consisting of quadrants, stages, lines, states and types, which can be used as a framework to consider a comprehensive, effective, and integrally informed approach to specific problems and their solutions. Accordingly, it is being applied to various fields from psychology to ecology, from business to politics, from medicine to education

Ken Wilber, one of the main developers of Integral Theory, describes it in terms of a basic structure of four quadrants, further categorized into stages, lines, states and types. The following summarizes his rationale:

These four quadrants are a summary of a data search across various developmental and evolutionary fields. I examined over two hundred developmental sequences recognized by various branches of human knowledge -- ranging from stellar physics to molecular biology, from anthropology to

linguistics, from developmental psychology to ethical orientations, from cultural hermeneutics to contemplative endeavours -- taken from both Eastern and Western disciplines, and including premodern, modern, and postmodern sources (Wilber 1995b, 1996d). I noticed that these various developmental sequences all fell into one of four major classes -- the four quadrants -- and further, that within those four quadrants there was substantial agreement as to the various stages or levels in each. Figure 1 is a simple summary of this data search; it thus represents an *a posteriori* conclusion, not *a priori* assumption (Wilber, 1997, p. 71).

Figure 1. Quadrant Model from Integral Theory



This figure is found in most recent publications of Wilber, for example: Wilber, 1997, p. 71.

The four quadrants differentiate and can apply to the interior and external realities of individuals, collectives and cultures as well as the material world. They each have several lines and levels of development.

The Upper Right (UR) quadrant is perhaps the most familiar. It represents the “objective” world and what can be seen, touched and measured. It is the world of ‘its’ and contains atoms, molecules, organisms, brain structures and the measurable functions of these things; in psychology it reflects brain mechanisms, neurophysiology, behavioral descriptions and biological psychiatry. The UR is described in the third person or objective accounts of the scientific facts about the individual organism (Wilber, 2000b, p. 63).

The Lower Right (LR) is the inter-objective world, and it represents how a collective of ‘its’ interact. It includes system and ecological theory. These social systems include political groups, institutions of production. The LR is also described in “it” language.

The Upper Left (UL) quadrant represents the interior of the individual and includes individual awareness (consciousness) from body sensations, to mental ideas, to soul and spirit. The UL is described in the first person accounts of the “I” and it is where the sense of beauty is experienced (Wilber, 2000b, p. 62). Individual therapies that involve subjective reflections on functions and structures would be categorized in the UL quadrant. The “truth” of what is beautiful is in this quadrant (Wilber, 2000b, p. 63).

The Lower Left (LL) quadrant represents the interior of the collective or cultural aspects of experience, the values, meanings, worldviews and ethics shared by any group of individuals. These are represented in development lines such as magic, mythic,

rational (modern), post modern and unity. The LL is described in the second person, we, I-thou language and involves mutual understanding and holds values of what makes something good or ethical. The “truth” of ethics is in this quadrant (Wilber, 2000b, p. 64). This, in my opinion, is the primary quadrant for NVC, an argument that will be made in Chapter 6. These four quadrants are separate but mutually interact and interrelate. An Integral approach or worldview would include all four.

3.2 Lines, Levels and States

In each quadrant there are lines of consciousness that have levels. The lines develop independently through the levels and can include such components, among others, as cognition, morals, self-identity, psycho-sexuality, social-emotional capacity. Wilber (2000c) states that “Not all components of the psyche show development, but many of them do, and those developmental aspects or stages need to be taken into account. They are not the whole story of the psyche, but they are an important part. We live in an evolutionary universe, and those currents of evolution appear to operate in the human mind as well”. He likes to use the analogy of an acorn which develops into a tree through a series of process stages although they are more fluid like overlapping waves rather than linear rungs in a ladder (Wilber, 2000b).

States are altered states of consciousness including everything from drug-induced states to near-death experiences to peak experiences to meditative states. These states can occur in people in various levels of development but how they will be interpreted depends largely on the stage of development within that person. These states are often temporary but may become permanent traits as people develop to the higher reaches of

spiritual development. These stages have been arbitrarily divided into anywhere from 3 to 10 levels depending on the wisdom traditions consulted. An example would be the seven chakras used in Hinduism philosophy to describe centers of spiritual energy in the human body (Wilber, 2000b, p. 14). In fact, Wilber says, “in order for higher development to occur, these *temporary states must become permanent traits*” (his emphasis) (Wilber, 2000b, p. 15).

Lines of development are explained by Wilber in terms of holons, or the fundamental building blocks of states, traits, levels and lines. It is the standard hierarchy presented by modern evolutionary science: atoms to molecules to cells to organisms, each of which ‘transcends but includes’ its predecessor in an irreversible fashion: cells contain molecules, but not vice versa; molecules contain atoms, but not vice versa, and so on -- the ‘not vice versa’ constitutes the irreversible hierarchy of time’s evolutionary arrow (Wilber, 2000b, p 7).

Holons were first described by Arthur Koestler to refer to an entity that is a whole and at the same time is part of a whole. Holons are “entities that are both wholes and parts of wholes, contexts within contexts within contexts”, (Wilber, 2000a, p. 17) Within an acorn is essence of an oak tree, it is part the fully-grown tree, in turn and the oak tree is one part of an ecological system.

Holons have four fundamental capacities: self-preservation, relating to agency and autonomy, self adaptation, relating to communion with other holons, self-transcendence, as the capacity for transformation to greater complexity and self-dissolution which is the opposite tendency to break down and reverse the track of transformation.

Self-transcendence is especially important to the thesis of this project as it suggests a capacity for shifts to increasing consciousness. An example of how two Holons can sometimes combine to form a new emergent whole is when an oxygen atom and two hydrogen atoms are brought together under the right conditions they will become a water molecule which is an entirely new thing with new capacities and properties (Wilber, 2000a, p. 50). In discussing shifts in conscious in learning NVC I will address lines of development stages in consciousness that are relevant to it. A shift in consciousness will be understood as a transformation of a Holon.

In an integral perspective evolution is considered going through four domains, matter (cosmos), life (biosphere) mind (noosphere) and spirit (theosphere). The biosphere evolution to the noosphere is especially important as it the movement from images, symbols, concepts to a linguistic world. (Wilber, 2000a, p. 152) Just as the biosphere is composed of all the organisms on Earth and their interactions; the noosphere is composed of all the interacting minds on Earth.

Whether this evolution is seen as individual child development or as the beginnings of humanity, this is a huge change in worldview because from this space the self can think of the past and plan for the future, it can control biological impulses and can consider things in its mind that are not available to the senses. It can now worry and suffer because now it can anticipate the future and it can feel remorse and regret because it can think about the past.

3.3 NVC and the Integral Approach

The Integral approach looks at any problem—personal, social, ecological, international—and attempts to identify all of the important variables that are contributing to the problem in each of the five major domains (quadrants, levels, lines, states, and types). A truly Integral approach might draw equally on systems theory and meditation, technological innovations and emotional intelligence, corporate culture and behavioral modification—the full spectrum of potentials in all of the quadrants, all of the levels, all of the lines, all of the states, all of the types.

Integral means "inclusive, balanced, comprehensive." The Integral approach, when contrasted to other methods—mythic, rational-scientific, pluralistic—which, in their definitions, privilege their view and perhaps exclude other approaches as being inferior, which makes them partial and incomplete. These latter methods, although widely accepted and dominant in the world's cultures, tend to be incomplete solutions to problems and may not consider important perspectives and are therefore less balanced than the Integral approach. I hope by considering NVC from an integral perspective, I can bring greater perspective on it. In probing how people learn and teach NVC and what the literature says about some of its key features, I hope to discover whether and how these features are part of a transformation upwards in the holons of consciousness, in the four quadrants, in lines of increasing stages of development and from states to stages.

Chapter 4

THE UPPER RIGHT QUADRANT AND NVC

In this chapter I will use the framework of lines of development in Integral Psychology's Upper Right quadrant, otherwise known as the 'IT', to probe aspects of learning, teaching and skill retention of NVC training. In NVC terms, the elements we will be examining are what can be observed and recorded by an outside observer. I will consider the neurological aspects of brain activity that relate to connection, empathy, and focusing awareness, or as it is sometimes called, witnessing. I will also report and examine how my NVC trainer interviewees relate to these ideas. In describing this in terms of the biosphere (the biological world) and the noosphere (the realm of the mind), this section is mostly about the former but there will be discussion about how it impacts the latter.

Rosenberg refers to the importance of connection to each other and to ourselves in practicing NVC (see Chapter II, Rosenberg, 2003b). This connection is usually described in terms of experiential phenomena such as empathic connection which is realized by learning about where to best put our attention (on observations, feelings, needs and requests), and understanding how certain use of language either limits or encourages this kind of connection. In this chapter, I look at some research in neurology and physiology that might offer useful insights about how we might understand and expand NVC abilities and consciousness. Rosenberg also refers to sensing the other, to being present with the other, paying attention to feelings and needs, all of which can be seen as physical phenomena. By reviewing what other investigators have said about these, I hope to bring

useful information to NVC trainers and learners.

I will follow a developmental line of our evolving brain structures that represent increasingly complex holons. Exploring problems of attachment and consciousness that are linked with these structures, I will suggest ways that NVC trainers and other counselling theorists might consider these issues. This section will conclude with some comments on gender types, hormones and empathy skills development.

4.1 Brain theory

4.1.1 The Triune brain

The theory of a triune brain, developed in brain research, offers an approach that can be useful. It is developmental and reveals what we have control over and what we are less likely to have control over. Triune brain theory posits that in response to evolutionary need, the brain developed in increasing complexity in its structures that represent our development from reptiles, to mammals to sapient. It represents the brain as having three or four brains that are more like layers (See fig. 2). They are the reptilian system, or R-complex, the limbic, or mammalian system and the neocortex, our human thinking brain. Sometimes the frontal lobes of the neocortex are considered a fourth brain because of its unique capacity for awareness. These different parts appear to have separate functions, interact and even be considered to have their own consciousness and can act as impulses, feelings and thinking (Caine & Caine, 1990).

Fig. 2. Triune Brain

QuickTime® and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

McFetridge, G. (1999).

4.1.2 The Reptilian Complex

The Reptilian Complex consists of the brain stem and cerebellum. It maintains the body by co-coordinating digestion, reproduction, circulation and breathing. It executes the fight or flight response. It plays a role in establishing home territory and social dominance. Its purpose is closely related to actual physical survival and maintenance of the body. The cerebellum orchestrates movement. Digestion, reproduction, circulation, breathing, and the execution of the "fight or flight" response in stress are all housed in the brain stem. The characteristics of R-complex behaviors appear to be automatic, have a ritualistic quality, and are highly resistant to change (McFetridge, 1999).

4.1.3 *The Limbic System*

Along with mammalian development, the limbic system was the second brain to evolve. It houses the primary centers of emotion and includes the amygdala, which is important in the association of events with emotion, and the hippocampus, which appears to house long term memory of both commonplace experiences and deliberate study. The limbic system mediates emotions and feelings, including emotions linked to attachment. The amygdala comes into play in situations that arouse feelings such as fear, pity, anger, or outrage. Damage to the amygdala can abolish an emotion-charged memory. As the limbic system links emotions with behavior, it can inhibit and mediate the R-complex and its habitual ways of responding. For example, where a reptile may eat its young, such an impulse would be constrained in a mammal. This function usually occurs beneath our awareness; however, as protective loving feelings become increasingly complex they link up with the neocortex in terms of higher values (McFetridge, 1999).

4.1.4 *The Neocortex*

The neocortex constitutes five-sixths of the human brain and makes language, speech and writing possible. It renders logical and formal operational thinking possible and allows us to see ahead and plan for the future. The neocortex also contains two specialized regions, one dedicated to voluntary movement and one to processing sensory information (McFetridge, 1999). The prefrontal lobes of the cerebral cortex seem to be the location of the witness and sense of awareness and can mediate both the R-brain impulses and the limbic emotions (Goleman, 2004) which are so important to NVC

practice.

Goleman (2004) says that each of the brains is intelligently, independently self-aware. Often we assume that thinking requires words and so it can be difficult to accept that each brain actually thinks. Limbic and R formation just do it differently. The heart thinks in sequences of feelings, and the body thinks in gestalt sequences of body sensations.

This knowledge of brain function is relevant to present investigation of NVC learning in the following ways. There are impulses in our brains, and feelings in our limbic brain that are not available to language, an implication when we consider relationships between self and other. Further, research has indicated (Phillips, 2004, p. 335) that the limbic brain is a place of natural empathy that we share with all mammals. Developmental needs such as attachment, support, nurturance, sense of self and autonomy and so on, that are not met in early life can affect the later functioning of our lives as disruptive themes. As I will address later on in the analysis, this issue is a concern for NVC training in that persistent jackal thoughts re-occur and make it difficult to maintain a Giraffe consciousness.

4.2 Empathy

One of the bases of NVC is empathy. Empathic connection is one of the fundamental transformative points in perceiving the need of the other through observation. From my past experience, and from the standard literature on empathy, I have tended to look at this topic from a psychological perspective. However, there is new

and exciting research in neurobiology that brings both the biological and psychological together. In this section, I wish to consider the relationship between neurobiology and empathic connection.

4.2.1 Empathy and Neuroscience

Although we may not associate the word empathy with animals there is neurological research, which gives biological understanding to the connection animals share and what many of us understand intuitively through the example of when our pets seem to know our feelings and similarly, how we know theirs.

Christian Keysers of the University of Groningen in the Netherlands and his colleagues think that empathy might in fact be an incredibly simple brain process. He suggests that the brain simply transforms what we see into what we would have felt in the same situation, concluding that "[e]mpathy is not an abstract capacity" (cited in Phillips, 2004, p. 335).

This means we can feel empathy without building up complex theories about what others feel, Keysers says. Instead, after we have learned what feeling goes with, for example, being touched ourselves, our brains become conditioned to trigger the same feeling when we see others being touched. "We do not need to assume a separate mechanism to understand the social world" (cited in Phillips, 2004, p. 335).

The brain seems to transform what we see into what we would have felt in the same situation. As Rothschild (2004) says, "It's like you slip into another person's shoes to share the experience in a very pragmatic way" (p. 49). She asserts that 'the royal road to empathy' is through the body, not the mind (p. 69).

In further discoveries on the brain and empathic connection, an Italian neuroscience research team attached electrodes to the monkeys' brains in order to observe precisely which neurons fired when a monkey grabbed a raisin with its hand. "Then, during a break, one of the researchers hungrily reached out for a raisin. His fellow researchers coincidentally noticed...[that] neurons in the monkey's brain fired - *the exact same neurons* that had fired earlier when the monkey grasped a raisin itself!" (Rothschild, 2004, p.49, emphasis in original). This research gives evidence for the existence of "mirror neurons" because response of the monkey was not a matter of just recognition of what the researcher was doing, but a brain-to-brain connection. These findings by neuroscientists suggest the body-mind connection through hard evidence.

As suggested by therapists such as Dan Siegal, and Babette Rothschild, however, it is not just the scientific evidence that is exciting, but the implications for therapy. In my present exploration, the point to be made is that further research in humans indicated the same kind of neuro-imaging that occurred in the experiments with monkeys, occurs in humans as well: people are able to "get" the experience of others. "Because empathy is rooted in the body, the more mindful therapists are of their own somatic responses, the more skillfully they can choose to engage mirror neurons to gain valuable information about a client's emotional state" (Rothschild, 2004, p. 49). Rothschild goes on to also express the problems this phenomenon might have on the client-therapist relationship through the lack of awareness of the neuro-imaging. On the one hand, as a therapist it can be useful to know the client's state, but on the other hand, we might be affecting the client's state.

In terms of NVC, there is a clear distinction made, and warning of the

difference between sympathy and empathy. Empathy in the NVC practitioner usage, is closer to what body-oriented therapists refer to as ‘joining’, that is “when counsellors ground and self-regulate themselves in order to provide a safe and supportive container for clients to experiment with their own self-regulatory processes” (Hamel 2004 p. 43). I believe that the description of joining is a useful frame to help NVC practitioners differentiate between sympathy and empathy. “Joining is a specific kind of empathy that requires...clear boundaries and an acute awareness of the relational field” (Stanley, 2003, cited in Hamel 2004 p. 43)

This kind of empathy, the kind that NVC practitioners differentiate from sympathy and body orientated therapists refer to as joining, is a combination of awareness of a set of universal needs all humans share, and a receptivity of the other’s experience whilst recognizing the other’s autonomy and boundaries of human relationships. Further research indicates that there seems to be a shift from limbic empathy to perspective taking that has only been found so far in chimpanzees, gorillas and humans. This perspective taking, or imagining yourself in the physical or mental place of another, moves into empathy as understanding the other’s need.

4.2.2 Limbic Resonance

In order to understand this deep experience of limbic sense, empathy and connection in humans, I have found Lewis, Amini and Lannon’s (2000) A General Theory of Love invaluable. They focus on the limbic brain, which specializes in detecting and analyzing the internal state of other animals, to explain our feeling of connection, care giving and love. “Emotionality enables a mammal to sense the inner states and the motives of the mammals around him” (Lewis et al., 2000, p. 62). They call

this ability to become attuned to inner states and to internally adapt limbic resonance. Limbic resonance is a door to communal connection that creates the harmony and is seen for example between mother and child, a boy and his dog, and between friends. We share in this field of limbic resonance with all mammals that are constantly in contact with and affecting each other (Lewis et al., 2000).

The limbic brain also is the seat of where attachment occurs (Lewis et al., 2000). Attachment theory as developed by John Bowlby (e.g. 1983) and further developed by Mary Ainsworth (1978), holds that approximation of baby to mother is an essential need for bonding and for later healthy emotional development. Ainsworth (1978) notes that it is not constant approximation that is essential but the knowing response to a baby's varying need for closeness and distance, food and sleep that was important. It was this limbic connection that provided the cues. Further research indicated that when mothers were distant or inconsistent the children frequently had much more difficulty in establishing friendships, being independent, and managing emotions in later years (Lewis et al., 2000). "The physiology of relatedness tells us that the attachment penetrates to the neural core what it means to be human" (Lewis et al., 2000, p. 76).

NVC trainers often refer to needs as being not attached to a specific person. In this way there is differentiation from wants, which are preferences in how we want our needs met, from the concept of universal needs. However, given the research on attachment, I believe it is important to consider that attachment needs are restricted to specific people, and not anyone will do.

The next question to explore is why we choose the specific people we choose to attach to in our adult life. According to Siegel (Wylie, 2004) and Lewis et al., (2000) the

people that we are attracted to are directly related to our earliest memories of attachment, usually in the first year of life. These memories are called implicit memories as they are not available to consciousness until the second year of life (Lewis et al., 2000, p.101) when explicit memory is developed. Explicit memory encodes facts, and autobiographical details and develops slowly.

Implicit memory does not serve itself to conscious reflection and this system of memories and limbic interactions that largely respond automatically is the one that guides our systems of love. Lewis et al. (2000) suggest that it is not our later relationship experiences both positive and negative, which shapes our love choices but the slow repetitive ones of early implicit ones. “A child enveloped in a particular style of relatedness learns its special intricacies and particular rhythms, as he distills a string of instances into the simpler tenets they exemplify. As he does so, he arrives, at an intuitive knowledge of love that forever evades consciousness.” (p. 116)

So just as the characteristic language in early childhood develops a similar process produces a structured pattern of emotional relatedness. This is not a repressed pattern but simply one of a different part of the brain to the one that is aware. If there are problems in either process it is going to create patterns that will be automatically played out. As much as we might seek explicit memories to understand, it will make no difference. It is not necessary because it is being played out in present relationships. “Implicit memory warps our window on the world.” (Lewis et al., 2000, p118).

4.3 Making a Link with NVC

In relating this to the practice of NVC, there are two important points I wish to make. One is related to language, and the other about implicit memory and the NVC process especially in conflict resolution. First let me deal with the issue of language.

The practice of NVC is very much focused on the use of language and in some ways learning NVC is like learning a new language. Marshall Rosenberg (2003c) even titled the second edition of his NVC book a “*Language of Life*”. Language learning is mostly an implicit learning. The fact that we as native speakers know the complicated rules of grammar and phonics in our native tongue is an example. Most people would not even recognize the rules. It comes out of the sea of experience and explains why people with complete memory loss can still speak and learn language (Lewis et al., 2000, p. 112).

For NVC to become effective, the language used in its practice must become, I believe, a part of the implicit process of language rather than a set of rules. When Rosenberg suggests that NVC is about becoming well versed in giraffe consciousness, the process is that of the NVC language becoming implicit and therefore participates in a shift in consciousness.

Next, I will examine a challenge in facilitating NVC consciousness that may benefit from this material on implicit memory. From my understanding of NVC practice, it is used successfully in connection to one another’s needs, and out of that experience, there is willingness and creativity to find ways of meeting everyone’s needs. I have observed and been concerned about situations when people get stuck with extreme ‘jackal

responses'. How do we move this process forward towards empathic connection? I believe that the presented information on limbic resonance and related brain research moves us forward in this understanding. "Because human beings remember with neurons, we are disposed to see more of what we have already seen, hear anew what we have heard most often, think just what we have always thought" (Rothschild, 2004, p. 41). There are processes going on below our awareness in our implicit memory that are interfering with our ability to connect. Robert has developed an NVC workshop to address this specific issue and to help people 'get unstuck' with their jackal responses. His insights appear to confirm these connections with limbic resonance. Awareness of these processes, I believe, will help the counsellor or NVC practitioner to navigate these 'jackal' reactions that have arisen from implicit memory.

Robert explains that early intrinsic limbic lessons are mutated into core beliefs about oneself and the world. "What I have found is that there seems to be a repetitive and stuckness of certain 'Jackal' [judgmental moralizing thinking]. I ask why can't some people transform and translate or receive empathy for these thoughts.... So what I came up with is there is core alienating thought that is not being dealt with. This seems to lie deep in our consciousness structure of our identity."

Robert described his own process of dealing with this as taking place in three steps. The first one is to identify a core belief. This may come up in a workshop or he will list core beliefs that exist in our culture and have participants reflect on them. In the second step, he will help them transform the core belief by helping them understand how it is operating in this situation. The third step is to shift alienating behavior by getting in touch with the underlying needs that the behavior it is trying to meet. It is important to

stay long enough with the needs so people don't repeat themselves in reaction. This is done experientially and in the present.

Although Robert agrees that this occurs at the limbic level he attempts to bring it more to a conscious level. "By empathizing with pre-conscious pain I help bring it into consciousness" He does this by tapping "into a state of consciousness where there is a place of universality" where he seems to become the other person or the other person who the client is having difficulty with. Marshall described this state as "just getting out of the way and letting the divine energy do its work." (Personal communication, September 18, 2004). Robert would present it somewhat differently. He says although there is a "certain getting out of the way ... I don't become nonexistent, I become the vehicle. But there is something about the training of this vehicle that supports this divine energy... a training in my consciousness... a cognitive clarity to support it..." "It's not as passive as getting out of the way." He summarized, "It's a living consciousness" rather an integration of being, sensing and cognitive clarity, "It is not disconnected thinking. It is fully integrated cognitive clarity. It is integrated into my senses and being." "Witnessing is part of it, I don't allow analysis; it is more like recognition."

While Robert focuses on how to respond to people whose implicit memories have been affected by early attachment trauma, Rachelle put the emphasis on prevention. She spoke about the importance of preventing these patterns from evolving in the first place through respectful, empathic parenting and by avoiding educating them in domination systems. She believes in nourishing children "in the way they naturally evolve" so that "they would reach that place of receptivity to giraffe consciousness at a much earlier age." Their natural limbic resonance would continue in awareness and would be a

foundation for the greater perspective children wider identity they gain as they mature.

4. 4 The Felt Sense and Focusing

Roberts description of bringing implicit memories into consciousness, leads me to Eugene T. Gendlin's focusing approach (Gendlin, 1981). Marshall Rosenberg, (Rosenberg, 2001a) references him in his book *Nonviolent Communication*. Gendlin worked with Rogers in researching counselling outcomes and came to the conclusion that although the core conditions of empathy, genuine-ness and authenticity were helpful in establishing rapport, a change did not occur unless accidentally or deliberately people were able to access what he later called the felt sense. He was curious about this other process that was going on which he believed accounted for the differences in how some clients were much more successful. His conclusion was that they were, given the healing context of above, able to naturally access the felt sense.

Gendlin stresses the use of the 'felt sense' as a way to experience and evolve past distortions or developmental traumas from the past. According to Gendlin: "A felt sense is not a mental experience but a physical one. ... An internal aura that encompasses everything you feel and know about the given subject at a given time – encompasses it and communicates it to you all at once rather than detail by detail" (Gendlin, 1981 cited in Levine, 1997, p. 67).

We described the attunement he experiences in doing NVC similarly, "The felt sense of another became clear, I step into experience and history of the other person...plugging into the spiritual level that we are all one."

Gendlin's felt sense is pre feeling and thought but this sense is our selves in

relation to nature, the universe and our symbols. There is some awareness, a lived experience, that relates to this and we can focus on this as felt sense. We impact the world and the world impacts us. It is this evolutionary edge and especially the *process* of this edge (not the content) that helps people move beyond their stuckness. There is a ‘calling forward’ or a call to evolve at this edge (Purton, 2004). Gendlin’s understanding “of human life as always an interaction between the felt flow of experiencing and something else” (Purton, 2004, p. 7). He thinks there can be problems of only asking people to “listen to themselves” because he observed that the unsuccessful clients in the Client Centered approach often did not have the resources to create shifts in their condition (Purton, 2004). By this, he means that people have been conditioned and limited by culture, distorted attachment experiences, or lack of education. His solution is to help people put their attention on the felt experience on the edge of evolving self and the contexts impacting them. These could be cultural, relational or biological. I think when NVC practitioners focus their attention on how feeling needs they may access some part of a felt sense, however I think Gendlin articulates a process that might add clarity to occurs between the energy of needs and their impact on cultural and thinking processes.

Gendlin also described how feelings and needs are created by interaction and what he calls inter-affecting.

We can say that we find the felt sense when we turn our attention to what we feel. However, before we focused our attention, there was not this specified feeling. It only emerges as something specific, as a ‘this’ through the impact of our attention. So we could also say that the felt sense is made in the interaction between our feeling-process and our attending to that process (Purdon, 2004, p.176).

Gendlin’s position, that a feeling and a need does not exist until we put attention

to it, is addressed somewhat in NVC, but only peripherally. Rosenberg (2000a) says that NVC is about where we put our attention, but I have not heard him make this deeper connection related to Gendlin's.

4.5 Witnessing and Neurobiology

I have been tracing the development of consciousness through the brain structures and how NVC experiences reflect neurological events. I now want to examine the experience of awareness and witness and how it corresponds to the orbito-frontal lobes of the neocortex.

Witnessing is an expansion of our consciousness which allows us to witness another without needing to change them and which allows us to witness our own internal process (Heller Poole & Levine, 1997). The act of witnessing, or of being witnessed from within or from without, enables people to move out of immobility and into new and creative realms of living (Heller Poole & Levine, 1997). According to Stanley (2003c), languaging a sensation helps to build the connection between the nervous system and the observing presence, the witness. (Hamel, 2004, p. 54).

It is this witness function that supports the development of the Giraffe consciousness of being able to live the key differentiations in NVC about being present and being able to have our attention on observation, feeling, needs and requests in self and others. I think practicing the NVC steps supports this development, and we can further this development by examining how this function develops in other practices that use neurological experiments.

In his book *Destructive Emotions, How Can We Over Come Them?: A Scientific Dialogue with the Dalai Lama*, Daniel Goleman (2004) narrates a meeting of the Dalai Lama with a group of leading scientists and philosophers to discuss how brain research is

validating how meditation and compassion has benefits in transforming negative emotions. It seems that meditation increases the witnessing functioning and that changes in this function can be measured in neurological terms.

In 1998 neuroscientists discovered that new neurons are continually being generated in the adult brain (Davidson in Goleman, 2004, p. 335). This has challenged and refuted what was firmly believed before about the adult brain and has opened possibility of neural plasticity for human emotional growth and change. In terms of NVC, it suggests that success in using the NVC model means there could be neurological changes, and furthermore, that it seems activities and meditation provoke their growth. It also suggests some of these changes can occur through meditation practice.

One of the ways to think about antidotes to destructive emotion is by facilitating the activation of regions of the frontal lobes that suppress or modulate the activity of the amygdala. The amygdala has been shown to be very important for certain kinds of negative emotions, and we know that specific know that specific regions of the frontal lobes reduce this activity of the amygdala. Through this mechanism we change the brain so that a person will show less negative and more positive emotional reactivity (Davidson in Goleman, 2004, p.337).

The left-right ratio is especially important. Negative emotion activates the right side. Positive emotion activates the left side. (The exception was a type of anger where the person was galvanized to positive action). When functional M.R.I. and advanced EEG analysis were given to non-meditators who were then provoked to argument and negative thoughts, their limbic system and reptilian brains were stimulated resulting in chaotic and negative moods and feelings. When the same procedure was applied to experienced meditators who did compassionate meditation, where one focuses on engendering compassionate and positive energy, they showed heightened activity in the UL frontal lobe, and surprisingly little activation in the other parts (Goleman, 2003).

This information confirms neurologically what happens in NVC when someone first focuses on a situation when their need is not met. In a similar process to compassionate meditation, NVC participants report that their negative emotion is often transformed when they put their attention on the “beauty of that need” or how they value this need for all humans.

4.6 Gender Differences

Although gender differences studies are fraught with controversy as they may be perpetuating outmoded gender stereotypes, I think studies on biological tendencies may be useful in understanding some differences on how women and men learn and value NVC. I agree with feminists who have said that biology is not destiny and my position is not about refuting that claim, but to put other ideas out for consideration. I am regarding the biosphere (biological world) rather than the noosphere (the mind world).

In her *Nonviolent Communication Companion Workbook*, Lucy Leu (2003) comments that sometimes, men recognize how skills of empathy seem to come more naturally to or are practiced with more ease by women. It is my personal observation that there are more women than men, about a ratio of about 1 to 5, in NVC workshops and trainings that I have attended, and, in fact, all 6 certified trainers in BC are women. The NVC values of connection, empathy and cooperation seem to represent traditional women’s values, which in part may be cultural but I want to consider what might be biological.

Deborah Blum (2005), Pulitzer Prize-winning science writer and advocate of women as scientists makes a case for differences between men and woman in emotional

sensitivity, in capacity for empathy and ability to read emotions, which give women advantages over men. In looking at some of the stereotypes like ‘women are more likely to share emotions and more likely to seek connection’ she suggests that some of these differences are evident at the beginning of life (Blum, 2002). She notes, “Martin Hoffman, who has studied the emotional responses of day-old infants too young ... before any suspicion of socialization... found that females reacted most intensely to the sound of another’s trouble... even on the first day girls are more likely to be tuned to an empathic response/” (Blum, 2002). She then quotes research that suggests women recover much faster after losing a spouse or a parent, are able to detect micro emotional facial responses much better, have better emotional language, build stronger emotional support systems and seem to intuit children’s needs (Blum, 2002, p. 460 – 463).

There have been studies that show that men and women produce different hormones in reaction to stress, women produce oxytocin and men testosterone (Foreman, 2002). Evidence suggests that “women may be programmed by evolution to deal with stress, by “tending and befriending,” that is, turning to each other for moral support” (Foreman, 2002). Wilber (2000a), writing even more crudely about the oxytocin/testosterone tendencies says “it appears that testosterone has two, and only two drives: fuck it or kill it... males are saddled with this biological nightmare almost from day one” (p. 4).

This does not mean that men can’t become more sensitive but they more likely will need to be educated to do so to expand their consciousness beyond domination paradigms. Furthermore, if it is true that women have biological tendencies in this direction, this may be a somewhat different journey for men than for women. Likewise

for women the journey to autonomy and self worth may be a different journey because of biology and socialization.

How might we accommodate these differences in NVC trainings? I wish to make two points about this. First, I think NVC practitioners could investigate how men learn empathy differently than women in that it may be less of a natural state and more of a learned one. In a literature search I found many papers of about gender differences in knowing, connecting and separating but none on how we might offer differentiated training. Alan Said made some useful comments: the practitioners may be operating out a female climate but the model is just a tool and can be adjusted to any group. He has seen Marshall do it as he watched him address street gangs and businessmen in the same day and the presentation was very different but it was the same model.

The second point is that in NVC training there is much talk about the “domination systems”: “domination systems being ones in which a few people control [many] to their own advantage. In domination systems you have to train people to think in ways that support the system, so they fit the system”(Rosenberg, 1999). There is a very subtle but important distinction here about this domination system and the patriarchy. The latter tends to have a blaming and shaming association. In other words, I want to hold men accountable for their actions and support education about how domination systems do not meet everyone’s need and yet at the same time I don’t want to shame men for being part of a patriarchy and for feeling aggressive testosterone-based feeling. I suspect many men avoid groups where this is the dominant paradigm. I would rather recognize that these differences in hormone-related impulse may have had some value in our evolutionary past, that the idea that biology is not destiny is useful for us, and that men can participate

in evolutionary behaviour to be more inclusive, behaviour to meet everyone's needs and to act with compassion.

Wilber (2000a) believes that as women and men work against their biological givens, as they transcend them, they are participating in evolution. It is important, says Wilber (2000a, p. 5), to not dissociate from them, without erasing them but to transcend and include, to incorporate and go beyond. I think there is a danger of NVC practitioners who so identify with values of peace and connection to reenact some suppression of our biological selves with all the repression of mythic religions. However, I also hear Alan's often-repeated warnings that this may be more about the Green meme consciousness of the practitioners and not about NVC the strategy. This is an important distinction that I want to support.

4.7 Conclusion

In summary, in this chapter I am exploring lines of development related to increasing complexity of brain physiology and shifts in expanding consciousness. I have considered ideas that might fit an integral map in the external measurable quadrant, the upper right, with the purpose of introducing NVC practitioners to knowledge and practices in the neurological sciences, body orientated psychotherapies and gender types. There are parts of the brain that are not available to language and awareness and as an NVC practitioner it was important to look beyond our normal awareness and language to sensing bodily the impulses of flight and fight and the emotions of the limbic system. For almost everyone unmet needs in childhood, (developmental trauma) drive most of our behavior and emotional life, completely outside of our conscious awareness. These

implicit memories 'played back' as outer circumstances trigger us. I have probed solutions available in the focusing approach and meditation that I think are compatible with NVC. I have offered related ideas by the NVC trainers.

Chapter 5

THE UPPER LEFT QUADRANT, THE INTENTIONAL SELF, THE “I”

Having explored neurobiology and Wilber’s (2000b) Upper Right or objective behaviour and links to NVC, I will now look at Integral Psychology’s Upper Left quadrant (UL). In NVC terms this can be described as ‘what is alive’ in the person, that is, what is their experience in terms of feeling, thoughts, perceptions, level of awareness and, perhaps, significantly, what is the intention of these experiences. Intentions are significant in NVC as in being aware of what perception and feelings are saying about intentions, we can then understand others and our own needs, and how they or we would like to have them met. The upper left quadrant is the interior of the conscious self. The UL corresponds with the UR in the following way: perception to neural cord, impulse to reptilian brain, emotion to limbic system, symbols to neocortex and complex concepts to neocortex (as seen in Fig 1 in Chapter 3). As I focus again on just one quadrant it is important to remember that every event can be considered by its four aspects at the same time, which in doing so is an Integral perspective.

In keeping with Wilber’s Integral model, I will use his definition of self in my exploration of its structures and functions as it relates to NVC. I will use my participants’ insights and views to offer suggestions for NVC learning and retention.

5.1 Development Lines and the Self

The Upper Left or Interior Individual Quadrant contains, according to Wilber, at least two dozen relatively independent lines. These include morals, self affects, identity, cognition, ideas of the good, creativity, care, meditative stages and so on (Wilber, 2000b,

p. 28). These lines unfold in sequential stages that most studies indicate cannot be skipped and cannot be altered by environmental conditioning or social reinforcement. All these lines are also affected by the other quadrants, i.e. by the external world, cultural systems, and social systems.

The self-line has its own unfolding which I wish to examine for this probe. To describe development in consciousness we use language of the interior experience with “I” language activity. The development can be described as increasing presence, consciousness or awareness. As this self becomes greater, it means there is greater depth. It gains the complexity of new levels and retains all of the levels below it (of holons, see chapter 2). For example, there is more subjectivity in an ape than a worm (Wilber, 2000b).

All the developmental lines seem to go through a physical, pre-conventional stage, a concrete rule or conventional stage, and a more abstract, formal post conventional stage and to add a transpersonal consideration, a post-post conventional stage (Wilber, 2000b, p. 29).

The self is where identification occurs, defenses develop and where states are changed to stages or traits. It is responsible for balancing and integrating the elements that are present and negotiating these elements so that they can evolve in stages (Wilber, 2001b). Wilber defines the self in two parts: an observing ²self and an observed self, things you can see or observe about yourself, for example: “I am a father”, “I have brown hair”, and “I am a husband”. The first is experienced as an ‘I’ and second a me or mine. The former is the proximate self, and the latter the distal self, since it is more

² This is the same as the witnessing function as described in Chapter 4, the Upper Right.

distant and objective. Together they make the overall self (Wilber, 2000b, p. 34).

As Wilber and Kegan say, the 'I' at one stage becomes the 'me' at the next.

That is, what you are identified with (or embedded in) at one stage one of development (and what you therefore experience very intimately as an "I") tends to become transcended, or disidentified with, or de-embedded at the next, so you can see it more objectively, with some distance and detachment. In other words, the subject of one stage becomes the object of the next (Wilber, 2000b, p. 34).

For Wilber (2000b), the proximate self navigates the basic levels and lines. It goes through sequential or stage-like development. This is not a rigid model but more of where the centre of gravity is in relation to their development.

The transitions in these developmental stages can be difficult and as Wilber (2000b) says " each time the self identifies with a particular level of consciousness, it experiences the loss of that level as a death ... because the very 'life' of the self is identified with that level" (p. 36). He goes on to reason that "the self eventually accepts the death of its given level in that the 'life' of the next higher level is even more enticing and ultimately satisfying." (Wilber, 2000b, p. 36).

When someone expands from, for example, egocentric to socio-centric to world centric it does not mean they have no ego it just means they have the ability to see multiple perspectives. When they make a decision, they will include others because they will be in their own expanded identity. Each time the self approaches a new level of consciousness, it has a new outlook on life because each new level has a different architecture, the self at each level sees a different world, with new fears, goals and problems, a new set of needs, morals and sense of self.

5. 2 Participants' Contributions to Considering NVC in the UR

All of the participants had contributions to make in this quadrant. They generally perceived that NVC is mostly an LL model but thought that focusing on practices and knowledge in this quadrant would add to the NVC practitioners' competency in the model and to living more consciously.

5.2.1 Transforming the Pain of Unmet Needs to the Beauty of Needs

Robert identifies that over the last 3 or 4 years he has put more emphasis on the self-dialogue doing a process he calls "Transforming the Pain of Unmet needs to the Beauty of Needs". He noticed that certain people were stuck in certain places in their development and were not able to completely free themselves from 'Jackal' thinking (evaluative thinking). Robert's process gives people a tool to transform themselves from Jackal thinking. I believe he is describing a process that helps people expand their Giraffe consciousness, their ability to be a compassionate witness to themselves and to others. I have personally experienced this workshop and can say that it had a transformational quality for others and me (or from 'me' to 'I' if I use Wilber's language). I have included his two-page handout in Appendix B.

Looking at this process, the proximate (I) self and distal self, I would suggest that the process begins by having the proximate self, often with an empathic/witness supporter, to negotiate some problematic thoughts that have become "mine". However, the dis-identification already is beginning by having the stimulus described as neutral observations rather than with evaluative language. Robert then moves to accept and embrace these thoughts, much like mindful mediation, to enjoy the Jackal Show, with

all the reactions. The next step of adding the phrase “I am telling myself”, the client then creates more separation between the proximate and distal selves. From here, his approach is more in line with the NVC model by focusing on feelings and needs that arise out of the “I am telling my self...” statements. This is the mourning and grieving stage. The client is encouraged to be in an accepting space until there is a felt shift. The next step is to change the focus from the need as unmet, to the need, which is valued. When someone is focused in this way on the beauty of the need they seem to enter a very positive state that seems to be a mixture of pleasure, regret and a sense of self-expansion.

This brings me to one of the central questions of this project: how do you bring this state to be part of a stage of development? To integrate and navigate is the job of the proximate self and, according to Wilber, this can only happen one step at a time. It may be that as the person does the work on various stuck thoughts, they will change one aspect at a time and they will expand their consciousness. Moreover, they will increase the ability of the proximate self to witness these thoughts and help the distal identified self to become less attached.

The next step, choosing a strategy for taking action, consolidates this state into stage development of qualities; as Robert describes it, “The qualities that come from this process are: **clarity**, **compassion** for self, and **empowerment** to move forward in deep self-connection and meeting needs” (Gonzales Handout, 2004 p. 2, emphasis in original).

5.2.2. Spirituality

NVC is often described as a spiritual process. Marshall Rosenberg states:

I think it is important that people see that spirituality is at the base of Nonviolent Communication, and that they learn the mechanics of the process with that in mind. It's really a spiritual practice that I am trying to show as a way of life. Even though we don't mention this, people get seduced by the practice. Even if they practice this as a mechanical technique, they start to experience things between themselves and other people they weren't able to experience before. So eventually, they come to the spirituality of the process. They begin to see that it's more than a communication process and realize it's really an attempt to manifest a certain spirituality. So I have tried to integrate the spirituality into the training in a way that meets my need not to destroy the beauty of it through abstract philosophizing. I need a way to think of God that would work for me, other words or ways to look at this beauty, this powerful energy, and so my name for God is "Beloved Divine Energy." I know Beloved Divine Energy by connecting with human beings in a certain way. I not only see Divine Energy, I taste Divine Energy, I feel Divine Energy, and I am Divine Energy. (Rosenberg, 2001, p. 2)

In discussing this aspect of NVC with Robert, he begins with emphasizing needs awareness as the core element of NVC. Next, he emphasizes awareness of the key differentiations, which add to the power of knowing needs: differentiating between observations and evaluations, differentiating feeling from thought and differentiating between the universal need and the strategy (see chapter two for details). Robert makes a key distinction between an intra-spirituality and an inter-spirituality. Intra-spirituality is the development of spirituality within an individual, an individual expansion of consciousness. Inter-spirituality is developing this dimension between or among people.

He described his experience of this spirituality:

I tapped into a power that I don't think I was aware of before...I role played a [a workshop attendee's] mother, who was mentally ill and was not available for any kind of contact with her daughter...there is something that both she and I tapped into, not very scientific I guess, but we tapped into a state of conscious where I would describe I became her mother...a place of universality...and she connected with me at that level

When I asked Robert how this experience could be integrated from a state with the beloved energy to a stage of development, he re-iterated that when his body-mind is there, he is fully conscious; he is using the vehicle of his consciousness to facilitate his healing. It is not disconnected thinking but a wisdom that is fully present to being, which becomes a vehicle to create clarity about the true energy. In this presence, her pain can free itself from the wounded structures that are kept deep inside her. By presence “I can help free the heart held captive...she can be conscious of the fear and oppression she is experiencing.” This experience is an expression Wilber’s description of the proximate self performing its role of negotiating the other elements of self, especially implicit memory, identified narratives and the line of self development.

The integration of this expanded state of consciousness (Giraffe consciousness) is further made with the help of mentors. Wilber, in arguing for evidence that higher stages of consciousness exist, describes how it takes an experienced monk to ascertain the attainment of desired stages of consciousness (Wilber, 1995). Zen students can only be assessed by Zen Masters who have achieved that level themselves. It takes an experienced reader to know that someone is really reading. The correct answer - a state of consciousness - to a Zen Koan can only be ascertained by someone who has experienced the state or stage of consciousness that is the target of this consciousness-raising riddle.

In developing NVC Giraffe Consciousness, it might be important to use practitioners who have attained advanced stages of NVC consciousness for feedback on learners’ ability to be at “giraffe consciousness”. They could validate states of empathy,

connection and present awareness. This happens informally, of course, but I am recommending that this mentoring feedback become a conscious strategy for NVC teachers so that it might support both the development and retention of the “giraffe consciousness”. Furthermore, the trainers could devise strategies to get learners beyond the techniques of the key NVC steps and distinctions. In a personal conversation with Marshall Rosenberg, (personal communication, September 18, 2004) he said that he thought if someone was in a “giraffe consciousness” and even if they used judgmental language they would still likely make a good connection with self and other.

When I shared my Zen analogy with Robert, he commented, “without the labels there seems to be a similarity with intent to train one’s consciousness... when we try to move this to a deeper level... it is important to make NVC a mindful practice...so it becomes a living meditation. ” Robert reported that when he framed it this way and started to practice every moment of every day there was a tremendous acceleration in his learning and integration of NVC.

It seems that as Robert progressed through observations, reactions (Jackal) feelings, grieving the lack of needs and entering the beauty of needs he is following a developmental line of consciousness, especially when he describes the state he sometimes moves into, that he describes as a place of universality. This line of self-development corresponds with some of the lines that Wilber (2000b p. 197 - 217) summarizes in his charts that compare the developmental lines identified by such diverse writers as Erik Erickson, Abraham Maslow, Lawrence Kohlberg, Stanislav Grof, Jane Loevinger, Sri Aurobindo and more. Most of these describe states that are beyond conventional awareness that reflect a non-dual state, described in terms such as intuitive mind,

transcendent level and God Communion.

Robert summarized what he wanted to say about NVC by focusing on action, “You can use the beauty of need...as an energy, the living quality of our heart, from which you can act...you can create the kind of transformation you want...and engage the quality of empowerment”.

5.2.3 Readiness

Rachelle suggested that people’s receptivity to NVC and its value may be about timing. Sometimes the ground is not ready for the seed or the seed has to wait for individual life circumstances and personal development. She has noticed that sometimes she has done an NVC workshop and people will contact her years later and ask for training. I consider her comments in the light of observations made by Rosenberg that “[r]esearch shows that about 30 percent of the population have the consciousness that can master this enormous task ...to improve our collective communication...Our NVC network brings together such people” (Rosenberg, 2004). I think it may be that NVC might only be of interest to a limited number of people and we should not fret if it does not “take” with some who hear about it. In Integral theory, Wilber includes ideas of how people may not be ready to consider these values until they are well into modern and post modern thinking or higher in their development. I will consider these ideas more in depth in the LL quadrant section.

Rachelle spoke of two kinds of readiness to learn NVC. The first is development: “When the ground is fertile the plants will thrive”. The second is when childhood openness to life is not stifled: when people are educated in certain ways that it moves

them further and further away from Marshall's message. From her experience, she believes that, if we could nourish people in the way they naturally evolve, they would reach that place of receptivity, at a much earlier age. She thinks it is very hard for people to make a shift to taking personal responsibility for feelings and needs: "that is how they are constructing the world. It's like the saying, 'We don't see that world as it is but as we are.'" "

Rachelle notices that some of her students, after having raised their awareness with practicing NVC, keep asking her the question, "How can I become less reactive?" She thinks part of the answer "is to create more space in one's life, a sense of spaciousness so that when you are triggered by some event you are aware that there is space to make a choice". She recommends meditation or other similar practices to help people awaken to this personal spaciousness. Rachelle summarizes that although NVC seems to have an affect of waking people up and connecting them to their spirituality, "[i]t doesn't address how you cultivate awareness." She seems to be agreeing with Wilber's concept that in meditative training, the proximate self can be aware of the reactivity that occurs in the distal self.

I will now address some other practices that can help with this transformation.

5.3 Byron Katie and NVC

Both Wes and Rachelle identified Byron Katie's work as being helpful in development of the self. Byron Katie is a developer of the model of letting go of painful thoughts by "Loving What Is" (Katie, 2002), which both summarizes what she calls "The Work" and is the title of her book. 'The Work' is based on four questions and a

turnaround that when applied to a problem, changes our thinking about the problem.

After writing down a thought, the questions she asks one to consider are:

1. Is it true?
2. Can you be absolutely sure that it's true?
3. How do you react when you think that thought?
4. Who would you be without that thought?

Write or speak a turn around so that if it is about someone else it becomes about yourself" (Katie 2002, p. 16).

In terms of NVC, Rachelle sees that these questions can bring peoples' attention to belief systems and strategies that no longer serve their needs, or serve them in a way that they like. Therefore, in this respect she likes to tie in her work to NVC

Wes considered a slightly different interpretation of Katie's work by looking at how she "gets to an explicit exploration of how I am creating meaning." He goes on to say that meaning creation and perception are missing pieces in NVC. He says we create meaning in the cognitive place between perception and feeling. For example, in NVC, needs are considered important but we may miss the awareness that when we interpret whether a need is met or not, we do so based on perception. This perception is based on the meaning both others and we assign to the situation, "it's our interpretation of whether a need is met, or going to be met...and that piece is unexplored in NVC".

Wes reported a conversation he had with Robert and they came to an agreement that "to the degree we define our needs as some commodity that can be fulfilled or unfilled, needs don't exist...its purely perception". He gave the example of how we may say we have a need for connection, or interdependence or autonomy but really, these are more like conditions inherent in our existence. One can't do anything to meet another's needs for these. "I impact you period...it's a matter of whether we recognize it or not".

He gives the example of autonomy as a need someone can not meet for us: “autonomy is best experienced when you are making a choice for yourself when you are up against someone else who would like you to do something else. Its not best experienced when I am in a room by myself doing what ever I want.” It might be better, he says, to take a stand for recognizing autonomy, respect or connection so that he can remember or remind people of them or to tap into the beauty of them.

In terms of my theme of a line of increasing stages of self-development, I think Wes is moving into a subtle level that is difficult to explain in words. Wes suggests that this awareness is the edge of his development: “There is some huge freedom in this way of looking at [the issue of needs as perceptions]...I have not developed the ability to the degree I would like to...to communicate this and give people the tools to operationalize this way of doing it.”

Wes described a process of teaching NVC with an expanding spiritual consciousness in mind, “with expanding self to ever increasing larger circles from self. He tends to put the four steps more in the background and emphasize people’s inquiry into self by utilizing the general questions in NVC. He asks “What is alive in this person or myself, in what ever language you use that effectively communicates what’s alive” It doesn’t have just to be feeling and needs as long as it captures the energy and people get it. The second question is, “What will make life more wonderful?” which, is for finding the strategy or request.

The four steps are there to guide people to increase their ability to answer these questions. He then notices where they are engaging in the work and if it is not landing in the right place, he guides them with questions through what I would call a self-

developmental line and stages. He asks them first what they sense in their body, what thoughts are in their head, what feelings and needs are they having and in doing so guiding their experience to a larger circle, away from [distal] self. He does this, while still maintaining physiological safety, so it can be unpeeled in contained ways. By grounding them increasing present experience in this way he hopes to avoid a possible NVC pitfall, which is that, “people can misapply feelings and needs as the new diagnostic process.”

5.4 NVC trainers are Not the NVC model

Alan was the last to participate in my NVC trainer interviews and so in his session I was able to build on some of the points the others raised - many of which he confirmed. He had recently returned from a week of study in Integral Theory and so he was able to add perspective on using this theory in considering NVC.

Alan got early advice to remember that the consciousness is more important than the specifics of the model so he focuses on this intentionality when he teaches NVC. He believes that a good model of human development is “usually designed for the practitioner to transcend the model itself”. He goes on to say that it does not create dependency. It is important to remember, however, that it is necessary to have a model, foundationally, to be developed, strengthened or adapted, in other words, to preserve the integrity of the NVC model so that there is a community of practitioners who can relate to and who reproduce the model. The challenge is to have a balance between a strict scripting of the NVC stages and the creativity of ‘transcending’ the model.

In NVC trainings, it is frequently mentioned that when you separate a need from a strategy it engenders the awareness that a need is never tied to one strategy and there are

many ways to meet a need. However, this is the first time I heard it used as a comment about NVC itself. Alan sees NVC as a strategy that is very effective at what it does, which is to train our attention in ways in which we are more likely to connect with people and get everyone's needs met in non-coercive manner. This insight points to the possibility that there may be better tools and other tools than NVC for developing the consciousness. He himself teaches other models, mostly about sustainability, money and integral theory, but is careful about not mixing them in presentations, or, he cites the sources if he brings in another model. He sees NVC fitting into an integral practice, "as a tool that fits into a broader framework with a lot of other pieces". He thinks people get frustrated when they try to use NVC to do things for which it is not intended.

He thinks Integral theory may offer some possibilities for improving the teaching of NVC. It could be taught, "maybe in stages of development...stages of learning...and making sure they get an experience of empathy as it's hard for people to get it until they receive it (Alan)." It might be important to know what level of consciousness the teacher and students are at and the degree to which they are integrally informed, so that "all approaches are true but partial". One of the limitations of NVC practitioners (not the model) would be if they reduce all of the world's problems into an NVC framework and then tried to solve them with NVC. In addition, he suspects that "a lot of trainers are stuck in a retro green framework³" which limits how they respect worldviews of other levels. So in this regard, Alan believes that it is important to separate the practitioners from the model so that we don't blame the model for the limitations of the practitioners.

³ This refers to the Spiral Dynamics model that is described in the next chapter, and the Appendices.

5.5 Summary

To frame the participants' data, I used Ken Wilber's map and the upper left quadrant of Integral Theory, the intentional 'I', and described how the proximate self navigates and integrates its experience of the world. Integral theory proposes this by examining lines of development of the self. Although NVC theory does not usually discuss theories of self development, all my participants discussed benefits of paying attention to self: finding ways to expand or free the self from blocks to development (Robert), creating more awareness space (Rachelle), increasing the circles of self identity (Wes), and considering the problems that might arise if NVC practitioners identify with the model (Alan) and miss other more appropriate strategies if they are not Integral enough. In addition, there is a theme that perception affects meaning and is attributed to observations, feelings and needs (Alan). As Rosenberg says, NVC is a training of and focusing of attention. It would seem that focusing on what attention is, how it develops, and how it gets blocked, would be useful for a deeper understanding of NVC. The importance of this awareness, I believe, would be helpful in the learning and teaching of NVC.

Chapter 6

THE LOWER QUADRANTS –CULTURAL AND SOCIAL

In Chapter 5, I related NVC to Integral Theory's analysis of individual consciousness. In this chapter I will introduce the cultural and social components with a special attention to the cultural because it relates closely to NVC.

The lower half of the integral map makes up the communal aspect which is divided into an interior cultural quadrant, the lower left, and into an exterior social quadrant, the lower right (Wilber 2000b). The 'Cultural' is the common meanings, values and identities we share with our tribal, national or world communities. The social differs from the cultural in that it is an expression of the institutional forms of the community such as the political structures of these cultural aspects (Wilber, 2000b).

Sociological investigation of community divides into camps along interior and exterior lines, with some wanting to understand the meaning and function of behavior in groups and others only want to understand what can be counted and measured. The former (the lower left or cultural) wants to interpret behavior from being involved, by being told what the meaning is by the people themselves and attempting to achieve mutual understanding. The latter (the lower right or exterior) is more interested in the quantitative aspects of the behaviour in social systems.

Like the UR and UL these quadrants contain lines of development and, like them, have correlates (See figure 1 chapter III). The archaic cultural corresponds to the social structure of foraging tribes, the magic with the horticultural villages, the mythic with agrarian empires, and rational with industrial states and existential with the informational global federation. Individual holons exist in communities of similar values and world spaces.

6.1 The Lower Left

The lower left cultural can only be understood by interpretation and this interpretation is context bound. To find truth in this quadrant, we don't use objective propositional truth as in the UR or the subjective truth of the UL but intersubjective truth, which means that we gain this through mutual understanding (Wilber, 2000b). This means we can live together with cooperation: "Can you and I arrange our subjective spaces so that we can see eye to eye?" (Wilber, 2000b p. 103). To the degree we can do this will be the degree that communication can exist. This also includes morals, ethics, laws, and collective identity. As the interpretation of culture is context bound and cultures develop through increasing complexity, I now wish to explore Spiral Dynamics as a theory that proves useful in understanding and/or representing this development of complexity.

6.2 Spiral Dynamics

Integral theory uses Spiral Dynamics (SD) as a framework to explain development lines in cultures and individuals. Based on Clare Graves' seminal work and further developed by Don Beck and Christopher Cowan, SD is a construction of a developmental scaffolding on which all political, economic, religious, educational, and psychological theories can be placed (Wilber, 2000b). It tracks our historic emergence from clans to tribes, to villages, to feudal state, to modern nations and world identities through seven variations or stages. It integrates various worldviews and suggests reasons for these worldviews based on the evolving of cultural complexity. Wilber states that this

model has been well researched and “has been tested in over fifty thousand people from around the world and there have been no major exceptions.” (Wilber, 2000b, p. 41).

Wilber uses this model very significantly in his presentation of evolutionary schema. However, some members of the SD community, while acknowledging his contribution, challenge Wilber arguing that he has oversimplified and even misunderstand parts of spiral dynamics (Cowan and Todorovic, 2001). In reviewing the issues I find Wilber’s overview (see Appendix C) meets my need to explain how the theory works. I will now present a brief overview of Wilber’s integration of Spiral Dynamics and what he calls the ‘waves of existence’ (Wilber 2000b, p. 48 onwards).

Wilber identifies these as levels, the first six as being at a subsistence level, and marked by what he calls ‘first-tier thinking’. These eight levels of self in development are described as colours and “memes” and represent a certain place of development. As the levels progress, they become more complex states of self. The first, Beige, is the most basic, with self existing at survival and instinctual levels. This state is associated with the first human societies, and in the present time can be recognized in newborns, senile older people, some mentally ill people and so on.

The next level, or Purple is called Magical- Animistic. Thinking is animistic, and in the realm of magic, and spirits. Tribal communities, and their social political organizations have been associated with this level. The next level is associated with the terrible twos, with rebellious teenagers as well as frontier characters, feudal kingdoms, epic heroes and villains, gang leaders and new age narcissism. This is the level Red or Power Gods, where the self emerges, distinct from the tribe. From here, Wilber moves on

to the Blue or Mythic Order where society is organized according to rigid hierarchies, and are often paternalistic.

Life has meaning, direction, and purpose, with outcomes determined by an all-powerful Other or Order. This righteous Order enforces a code of conduct based on absolutist and unvarying principles of "right" and "wrong." Violating the code or rules has severe, perhaps everlasting repercussions. Following the code yields rewards for the faithful (Wilber, 2000b, p. 48)

The Orange level is the one of Scientific Achievement and “seeks truth and meaning in individualistic terms--hypothetic-deductive, experimental, objective, mechanistic, operational--"scientific" in the typical sense” (Wilber, 2000b, p. 49). The self in this level is often achievement oriented, rational, and is the basis of corporate states.

Wilber identifies the next level with the ecological movement, postmodernism, humanistic psychology, liberation theology, cooperative inquiry, diversity movements, postcolonial theory and so on. This is the Green level of the Sensitive Self, where the “human spirit must be freed from greed, dogma, and divisiveness; feelings and caring supersede cold rationality;” (Wilber, 2000b, p. 49) and the emphasis is on relationships and dialogue. Decisions are made through reconciliation and consensus, spirituality is refreshed and revived, and harmony and the enrichment of human potential are valued.

With the completion of the green meme, human consciousness is poised for a quantum jump into "second-tier thinking." Clare Graves referred to this as a "momentous leap," where "a chasm of unbelievable depth of meaning is crossed." In essence, with second-tier consciousness, one can think both vertically and horizontally, using both hierarchies and heterarchies (both ranking and linking). One can therefore, for the first time, vividly grasp the entire spectrum of interior development, and thus see that each level, each meme, each wave is crucially important for the health of the overall Spiral (Wilber, 2000b, p. 49).

I offer this theory as way to consider an approach to thinking about and learning NVC. Accordingly, it would seem that NVC fits most closely with the Green wave and higher with its emphasis on values of compassion, communication and respect for experience of feelings and needs. Alan believes that it could be valued by Orange if presented as a tool to realize the values of individual thinking, rights for all, and productivity by using more words such as ‘important goals’ rather than needs.

In terms of development, nobody is fixed at a wave. We are often in transition, and in surveys about wave value systems, usually we are 25 % at the next wave higher, 50% at a given one and about 25% at the one lower. This suggests there is plenty of room for people to be open to have ideas outside of their current wave. Integral Theory proposes that a holon contains all of the holons below it so that an NVC practitioner should be able to understand all the strategies to meet needs below them. As cited in Chapter V, Rosenberg says “[r]esearch shows that about 30 percent of the population have the consciousness that can master this enormous task ...to improve our collective communication...Our NVC network brings together such people” (Rosenberg, 2004 p. 3).

Spiral Dynamics may also explain why NVC may not be understood by 70% of the population. Both Les and Rachelle wondered about their perception, that given the number of people who hear about NVC, only a few seem to value it enough to make the effort to learn the model and the consciousness. Perhaps spiral dynamics offers a part of the answer to this. Alan suggests that it would benefit NVC teachers, practitioners and learners if there was an increased awareness of spiral dynamics. SD offers a framework that explains one of Wilber’s challenges to understanding and reflecting on spirituality.

He wants to make a separation between the kind of magical and mythical thinking in pre-rational societies, from the kind of spirituality that transcends rationality. He calls this pre/trans fallacy or pre/post trans fallacy, and one of my participants refers to this.

Alan points out that “each of the levels can have a healthy expression and pathological expression...like the pre/post transrational fallacy...or the retro romantic notion of Paradise lost”. Alan is referring to one of Wilber’s main tenets that because the early, prerational, stages of consciousness and the latter, transrational, stages of consciousness are both not rational, they can be easily confused with one another (Wilber, 1995).

When they do get confused, two fallacies can occur. The first one occurs when genuine spiritual experiences are reduced to pre-rational states. Modern thinkers like Freud or Marx see spiritual experiences as regression to narcissism, or desire for an undifferentiated womb like experience or identification with false mythology (Wilber, 1995). Rationality is considered the highest state; any thing outside of it is considered to be an emotional problem or lack of maturity.

The other fallacy occurs when someone is accepting of spiritual states but confuses pre and trans rational states that they mistakenly elevate to prerational states. So they might mistake the practices of a magical, archaic or mythic culture as deeply transpersonal when in fact they are merely undifferentiated and lacking integration (Wilber, 1995). Wilber thinks Carl Jung and some of his followers make this mistake (Wilber, 1995).

Spirit is indeed nonrational; but it is trans, not pre. It transcends but includes reason; it does not regress and exclude it. Reason, like any particular stage of evolution, has its own (and often devastating) limitations, repressions, and distortions. But as we have seen, the inherent problems of one level are solved (or

"defused") only at the next level of development; they are not solved by regressing to a previous level where the problem can be merely ignored (Wilber, 1995 p. 207).

Wilber points out that his argument is not to debase cultures that hold myths dear; they are appropriate for the holon or level they are part of. They get us in touch with our roots and therefore help us keep the energy they provide; we can avoid dissociating from our deeper holons (Wilber, 1995).

The relevance to NVC is that it is a model attractive to people in green wave culture and so practitioners may fall into the pre/trans fallacy of looking to archaic and magical cultures for a spirituality that is not there. They might also miss how the lower holons, which seem dominating and violent and patriarchal, are in fact responding appropriately to the level they are at. To live beyond these values, it is important to not be dissociated from them but to transcend them. Understanding this dynamic encourages compassion for those with different worldviews, especially those who do not subscribe to the Green values.

6. 3 Social Constructivism and NVC

[Three umpires] are sitting around over a beer, one says, "There's balls and there's strikes, and I call 'em the way they are." Another says, "There's balls and there's strikes, and I call 'em the way I see them." The third says, "There's balls and there's strikes, and they ain't nothin' until I call 'em." - (Walter Truett Anderson quoted in Freedman, J. & Combs, G. 1996, p.19)

The premise of social constructivism is that members of our culture in their daily interactions construct our values, customs and beliefs that make up our social reality and even what constitute our selves (Freedman et al. 1996). This conception of self is at odds

with the idea of a fixed static self. “The subjective world is situated in an intersubjective space, a cultural space, and it is this intersubjective space that allows the subjective to arise in the first place” (Wilber, 2000b, p. 102). Even our own thoughts would not have meaning without the context and development in culture. The joke above summarizes the stances on reality that have evolved over the last century.

The first umpire suggests the orange modern view, that reality is knowable and its elements can be described and used like a machine. The second umpire suggests the humanist view that reality is a function of the subjective experience of the observer (like a feeling for example), and the third suggests the green, post modern social constructionist view that reality is constructed by creations of the observer (although to reflect the post modern view we would want to acknowledge that his creations are negotiated with other members of the baseball culture – or he would be booed or fired).

This view is both fearful and liberating. On the one hand, a loss of my sense of self as being something deep and essential seems destabilizing as it seems to go against my lived experience. On the other hand, it allows for the richness that can come from the intersubjective space where interpretation occurs in community with others. It also allows for identities, considered by self or others to be problematic, to be renegotiated (Freedman et al., 1996). For example, some who have taken on an identity of low self worth because of abuse, or for example, women or minorities who are limited because they have been defined in certain ways, can shift their identity as they deconstruct how their identities have been culturally created. Not holding your identity as deep and essential can help free up this process.

In some ways this is analogous to the ‘Beauty of the Needs’ (see Appendix B) approach offered by Robert: instead of considering them intrapsychically, the postmodern approaches take the schemas into the intersubjective space where they can be deconstructed and constructed in preferred ways. As the person considers internalized ‘problem’ identities in the light of family and cultural narratives, they are able to bring more consciousness on how they originated, are supported and reproduced. They now have a choice to ignore the assigned identity or they can choose a different aspect to present.

Rosenberg considers how language blocks or enhances connection and recommends process language that transforms evaluative language to a feeling/needs process. I have not heard how he considers these postmodern ideas about identity and social processes and I believe this is an area that would benefit from further investigation.

The Postmodern worldview is that since there is no objective truth and all we can do is interpret experience and there are many ways to do so, they challenge the notion that there are ‘grand narratives’ to explain reality. When I have presented NVC to people with this worldview they tend to like the process language and the emphasis on personal values but balk at the idea that there is such a thing as universal needs. They also wonder about the cross-cultural application and whether it respects cultures different than western individualistic ones. I have pointed out how NVC has been successfully used intraculturally and interculturally but they were not convinced. They see NVC as having a worldview more like the second umpire, supporting subjective experience but failing to see how their perceptions, feelings and needs are likely to be constituted by family and culture. This may be an inaccurate perception and certainly in my interviews there was

knowledge of post modern approaches but I think there would be value in considering how NVC could be presented to this population especially as they make up large numbers of academia.

One way to consider the “needs” is that they are not part of a ‘grand narrative’ but that they bring awareness to the tier two, yellow meme, view of the unity of life. At a modern level, they may be perceived as something have filled, or at the green they may be values or meanings to negotiate but at the non-dual yellow second tier they could be understood as pointers to energies to be experienced not analyzed. These energies pull and propel life and as such they are not part of grand theory and by paying attention to them they become a practical way of knowing the divine. I think this is what Rosenberg is saying when he says that by putting our attention on needs we realize the spiritual basis of NVC. Rosenberg acknowledges that his inspiration for NVC was a spiritual shift in his awareness and that he wanted to incorporate into a useable model (Rosenberg, 2001b).

I think that one reason that NVC does not take with many people is that it is perceived to challenge long-standing beliefs when it teaches a process language that does not confirm the use of right/wrong language and moralizing judgments. For some people, being asked to shift from their cultural interpretations and labels that they consider as reality can be perceived as asking them to be disloyal to their cultural roots. In this situation it may be better to keep NVC as a tool that can be brought out and used rather than something that purports to transform their consciousness. This might be more acceptable to people.

As much as NVC and people with a green postmodern worldview see that notions of ‘right and wrong’ are socially constructed, cultures with different world views hold

what is ‘right and wrong’ and what is true as making the tradition what it is. Cultures change and the NVC needs-based approach can help people to connect and resolve conflict. The notion that ‘right and wrong’ language is problematic is a leap that many people have trouble with. From personal experience, in presenting NVC to MDs and psychologists, I have seen well-educated people get stuck on this point- although it may be this very education that has encouraged them to believe they have the right thinking, or that their evaluations are “true”.

In considering this problem in a process-orientated psychotherapy called focusing (introduced in Chapter IV), Purton says, “In traditional cultures there is neither the need nor the possibility of psychotherapy. In such cultures, if someone encounters a personal problem...they will consult someone who knows the traditions of the culture very deeply who advise how such situations are to be handled.” (2004, p. 189). This is all that an elder can do but when the culture begins to be questioned, as it is in a modern orange meme or above, the tradition no longer satisfies. Then something new is needed; a person, like a person centered counsellor (much like an NVC practitioner), “who is not an expert (an elder) in any tradition, except that tradition which encourages the person to go beneath the surface of traditions and await what comes from the intricacy of their own experiencing of their situation” (Purton, 2004, p. 190).

I believe that with awareness of this dynamic, NVC trainers can adapt their presentation to their audiences. My personal observation in using NVC with ‘at risk youth’ is that they could benefit from my facilitation of their conflicts and could learn some of the steps of the model but some of premises of the model were of little interest to them.

6. 4 The Lower Right

I have been focusing on the Lower Left quadrant, the internal “we” and will now explore a few things about the Lower Right, the “its”. This quadrant is where political systems and rules and so on are located. In counselling or conflict resolution, for example, it means we may want to take into account how social institutions, economic factors and access to services all might have causal effect on the individual’s, family’s, group’s or community’s situation. The Lower Right has much in common with the objective Upper Right so I will not be dealing extensively with this quadrant. The main difference from the UR is that it is more concerned with exterior function, roles and systems. Systems theory has and continues to be a large impact in the mental health field, especially family therapy. Marshall Rosenberg does not ignore this quadrant but wants to put a human face on it. He wants “...people [to be] aware of how the training can be used to transform domination systems into life-serving systems” (Rosenberg, 1999). His focus is more with understanding and connecting the needs behind these systems, to humanize them. If you want to change a system, then you need to find the right people and have a giraffe conversation with them (Rosenberg, 1999).

This emphasis on the left quadrants and the meaning and needs of behavior interpretation can create problems as illustrated by Alan’s description of a workshop he attended. “[W]e were in a workshop where this guy who happened to be African-American was talking about oppression in society and the trainer said there was no such thing as oppression. ...the guy was quite angry ... This guy was talking about the lower right quadrant, social systems, and the trainer was talking about the upper left.”

Alan's comment reiterates how oppression can be perceived not to exist when we are focusing on interpreting people's deeper feelings and needs. Alan recommends that it would work better if we acknowledge how oppression, in a political frame is experienced. If the person is thinking from the LR and where he is only focusing on surface then she/he will feel anger and frustration about not being understood. After their political position is acknowledged, they may welcome an NVC process to consider internal intentions. NVC could be used to translate political positions as strategies to meet universal needs and thereby help the person to be free of enemy images through the use of empathy, and by understanding the needs that might be met by the strategies that were perceived to be oppressive. From this perspective it would be easier to understand how oppression does not really exist but is part of a language that disconnects us from ourselves, and from focusing on the needs of others whom we are blaming. They may be creating images of being a victim. This alternative approach suggests a healing and connecting view that includes the importance of validating people's different worldview and experience.

I will now discuss Chaos theory, which is a useful approach to consider how systems develop teleologically.

6. 5 Chaos Theory

Despite its name, chaos theory is about discovering the subtle strands of order that lie beneath what appears be chaotic in dynamic systems. When holons come to their highest complexity, before they transform to an organized higher level of complexity, they tend to disintegrate into chaos (Wilber, 1995). This tendency has been observed in

systems such as weather, economics, biological, and human systems. Chaos explains why many systems are not predictable, as well as why they tend to reorganize into new levels. These changes seem to be teleological in the sense they are about being pulled to an omega point that represents the highest point of that holon. Piaget declares “that there is no structure which lack development, and that the process of development can only be understood in view of the structure which exists at the beginning and the structure into which it will evolve” (cited in Wilber, 1995, p. 76). The structure they are in, and to which it will evolve, the attractor or an omega point “is the inherent teleological force within us that leads to self-manifestation” (Wilber, 1995, p. 77). The shift from one type of attractor to another is called a bifurcation. To invoke the acorn metaphor used by Wilber again (see chapter 3), the acorn’s code, (its DNA) has a tree written in it, has a direction toward future functions and so has purpose (Wilber, 1995). As it grows, it goes through transformations as it unfolds to be the tree it will become.

Different theorists can postulate different omega points; for Piaget it may be formal operational thinking, for Marx, a classless society in which labour and production are healed in shared mutual care. NVC practitioners would likely postulate an omega point that is calling to a compassionate society where everyone’s needs are met in nonviolent ways.

Chaos theory as a theory of complexity, much wider and deeper than presented here, shares with other new systems theories like cybernetics, autopoietic theory and others, that systems are self winding or self-organizing. These theories have meaning for NVC practitioners for several reasons. NVC practitioners can recognize the pull of their omega point in doing so and relax and allow the shifts that occur in using the model.

Practitioners sometimes refer to translating Jackal to Giraffe language. A teleological model suggests that what they are doing is supporting the transformation from one kind of consciousness to another. There may be a bifurcation point where the attractor shifts from winning, dominance and right and wrong thinking to an attractor of compassion, win-win and needs based. In learning the model there may be periods of chaos, confusion and disintegration, as a whole new worldview becomes the end point. We may make this easier if we get into a consciousness of allowing teleological force to work. Perhaps when Rosenberg says “When you connect with the energy that connects through you can heal anything... healing comes through us” (personal communication) he is speaking about this evolutionary force, that healing is about this force working.

6.6 Summary

In this Chapter I introduced how Integral theory views the communal aspects of life as represented in lower left and right quadrants, which contain, respectively, the interior cultural and exterior social. I presented spiral dynamics including the waves and values. I then offered some ideas on how NVC might relate to the theory of spiral dynamics and what it might mean for teaching and practicing NVC.

With a brief overview, I offered Spiral Dynamics as the basis for understanding how a Pre/trans fallacy can occur. I suggested that NVC practitioners might fall into a fallacy where they could believe that some of the prerational spirituality may be confused with the post rationality. As the Green wave contains the postmodern worldview, I reviewed some of its basic premises and showed how this perspective may be useful to NVC practitioners. Although some postmodern narrative therapists have expressed

concern that NVC is offering a grand narrative, I tried to offer credence to their social constructivist views and also offer an alternative view, i.e., that needs, when seen from a yellow meme, non-dual view can become more like life energies rather than social constructs. In addition, I suggested that NVC may be best taught by relating to the worldview of the audience and there may be people with certain worldviews (spiral dynamic waves) that will have more trouble accepting some of its basic tenets.

My next sections dealt with LR social systems. I started with how NVC practitioners could alienate some people if they try to reduce their experiences of political systems to only issues of LL mutual understanding without first giving some background of how these two world views inter-related but have different views of the world and different “truths”. I then explained some chaos theory and suggest that by being aware of how systems and individuals make shifts in their development by teleological attraction to the end points in holons we can both better understand evolutionary shifts and be more effective in supporting them with the practices and consciousness of NVC.

Chapter 7

CONCLUSION

7.1 Coming Back to my Questions

The purpose of this project was to contribute to the learning, teaching and practice of NVC. I wanted to offer to NVC practitioners some new perspectives and possibilities that would be both immediately useful and be an inspiration for further personal and academic investigation. More specifically, I wanted to investigate the knowledge, process and development of NVC ‘Giraffe’ consciousness, which might be a different or similar process to learning the models.

My method was to first review NVC descriptions and examine whether and how they might address the questions I raised. I reviewed related literature to discuss how these might relate to NVC. I interviewed experienced NVC trainers to see if there were practices and knowledge used by NVC trainers that target these shifts in consciousness, and if so, to see how these might contribute to NVC practice.

In this review and probe, the particular methods, experiences and literature I examined are those that deepen a sense of empathy, connection and sense of witnessing and are less likely to produce acts of judgment, coercion or domination. I used Integral Theory as a way to both focus my probe and broaden the way NVC is considered. By following this framework I was able to have insights into the process of NVC from a variety of worldviews and perspectives. Further, I hoped that this project might make a contribution to the fields of counselling and conflict resolution communities outside of the NVC community by discussing subjects they might have in common and introducing them to the premises, skills and consciousness of NVC. The scope of this project was a

general probe into many sides of my question rather than a comprehensive academic investigation but I still wanted to present enough information that it would be useful, as it is, to NVC practitioners.

7.2 Navigating the Questions: The Framework

In chapter 2, I gave a brief overview of NVC, its roots in the work of Carl Rogers and its affinity to care theory. These theories stress the importance of needs-based connections in relationship and how being able to respond to each other in a mindful, proactive and compassionate manner allows us to create strategies to contribute to everyone's well being. They also emphasize that although models and techniques help structure our relationships, it is a certain type of consciousness that is most important. This consciousness is variously described as being in touch with the unknown inner intuitive self (Raskin & Rogers, 2000), emptying of the soul, (Noddings, 1992), and as being in touch with the beloved divine energy (Rosenberg, 2001b). It is important to see that the NVC *model* is only the beginning of NVC because there is a danger that people will conclude that NVC is just a formula for how to speak with people. It is for this reason that I thought it was important to focus on this consciousness, which is the end goal of NVC.

As Ken Wilber is a recognized expert on the development of consciousness I chose to use his theory of Integral Theory as the framework for my project. In Chapter 3, I gave a brief introduction to Wilber's Integral theory of quadrants, levels, lines, states and types. I believe this map offers NVC practitioners a way to consider NVC in a wider and more inclusive framework. As this framework includes ideas of how the course of

evolution is an unfolding manifestation of spirit, I believe it offers NVC practitioners a way to consider the development of NVC consciousness as spiritual consciousness. As NVC can be seen as preferring the world view of understanding of each other (lower left quadrant), there is a risk that practitioners can disconnect from those who prefer or have been educated to prefer the objective or political systems approaches. Having explored and reflected on integral theory, I believe that NVC as a model is very compatible with integral theory. The model engages the quadrants as follows: its emphasis on making accurate observations fits the upper right, objective quadrant; its emphasis on feelings, intention and purpose fits the upper left, intentional quadrant; its emphasis on shared needs and understanding fits the lower left 'we' quadrant; and its emphasis on transforming political structures fits with purposes behind the lower right social systems quadrant. NVC practitioners can gain greater perspective and understanding from these and other components of the NVC model by learning more about integral theory. Three of my participants appeared to be well informed about Integral theory and were applying it in their NVC work, although they did not necessarily agree with all of it and talked about some contradictions as well.

Integral Theory offers a way to understand the diverse views that are preferred by people in our present world and in our world history. Integral Theory asserts that all worldviews are valid from their perspective, a level of development. Trying to understand Integral theory as it might relate to NVC was a frustrating task as I tried to balance my purpose of offering a structure with not wanting to distract from my participants and related research. The NVC community perceives domination systems as those in which a few people control many people to their own advantage. In domination systems you have

to train people to think in ways that support the system, so they fit the system by suppressing themselves, make moralistic judgments, think in ‘should’ and use ‘deserve’ language (Rosenberg, (1999). As almost all of these domination systems are hierarchical, NVC practitioners are adverse to hierarchies (as are most people at the green meme). A large part of integral theory is about individual and cultural evolution along lines of development, which represents a hierarchy. It is important to differentiate between natural hierarchies of complexity and hierarchies of domination systems. The former are more inclusive and are supportive of greater wholeness, while the latter is exclusive and elitist. For example, upward steps of moral development or ego development include a greater perspective and a larger circle of identity. One reason Ken Wilber prefers the word holarchies is to avoid this confusion (Wilber, 2000a).

Some things to explore further in NVC with Integral theory would be: to identify and explore lines of development that are specific to NVC, to see if there is a hierarchy of needs, to consider using NVC with an intention to include all quadrants, with an awareness of lines of development, with an awareness of states and stages and with an awareness of types.

7.3 The Four Quadrants in Integral Theory: Implications in Summary

In Chapter 4. I looked at how some approaches and knowledge of the scientific objective worldview could be useful in the teaching and practice of NVC. In terms of NVC consciousness, I looked at the development of brain structures, biological basis for empathy and awareness, body orientated psychotherapies and gender types.

There are parts of the brain that are not available to language and so their activity can be experienced as impulses and emotions. NVC practitioners can become less reactive and more intentional (i.e. have their behavior more in line with values) by understanding how impulses of flight, fight and freeze are triggered in the Reptilian brain and how the emotions of the limbic system operate. By understanding how unmet needs in childhood, (developmental trauma) are ‘played back’ when implicit memories are triggered by present circumstances, NVC practitioners can become more mindful of others and their own needs. As we hold these with a curious consciousness we are less likely to think and behave in ways that disconnect our selves from others and from ourselves.

Similarly, by considering some of the trends in the biological differences in men and women NVC practitioners can become more observant of biological processes that affect consciousness. There may be a risk of using this information to excuse or avoid responsibility for one’s behavior, however I think being aware of the science of these dynamics helps in avoiding making others wrong for having biological impulses and increases our ability to make choices in line with our highest values. I believe that there is a danger of unconsciously acting out these patterns when we dissociate from them. When Rosenberg says that NVC is not about being ‘a nice dead person’ I think he is asking people not to cut off from their sensations, impulses, feelings but just to be aware of what needs they are connected to (Rosenberg, 1999).

Wes also supports it when he says: “The way NVC is taught currently, it is completely a conscious process...how do we get into their [learners’] nervous systems? ... How do we get it into their unconsciousness, so it becomes something they can really

use, even in the heat of stress?” He recommends engaging the body and helping learners stay in a physiological state. “The more you engage the nervous system in the learning the deeper it’s going to go... and adhere in the nervous system. ... Sometimes I will coach someone to ... become aware of your body. What does your body want to do? What’s going on in your body? So they experience physiologically difference the between the pain of the unmet need and that of the beauty of the need”.

Some NVC practitioners may react to the language of this quadrant’s use of “objectivity” and static language as a claim to truth and the evaluations that come with such claims. As NVC practitioners place emphasis on feelings and needs rather thinking, this quadrant may be seen as not meeting the NVC community’s needs. I agree with these concerns and agree that using a process language avoids labeling people. When we remember, however, that the Integral model is an all-quadrant model so that such language is seen in relation to UL intentions, LL culture and needs and LR ecological effects, then it is more inclusive and process orientated. In addition it is useful to remember that truth in this quadrant is not absolute but propositional and evidence-based which is always open to new experiments and validation procedures.

In Chapter 5, I explored NVC-related ideas that I think fit into the Upper Left, the interior intentional quadrant. This quadrant holds an individual’s experience of feelings, thoughts, perceptions and levels of awareness and includes the intention of these experiences and how consciousness development occurs and how blocks might be overcome. These experiences are always affected and even created out of relationship to the physical, cultural and social worlds. All of the participants, however, found benefit in separating out this area as a way to support development in awareness, increasing the

circles of self-identity and healing ingrained “jackal thinking” or schemas that may be blocking our giraffe skill and consciousness development. All of the trainers I spoke to were cognizant of the importance of NVC being considered as much more than a skill set, but as a consciousness. This is a significant point that bears further exploration and research.

In addition, it is useful for the NVC practitioner to examine whether NVC is an identity for them, a philosophy of knowledge, a philosophy of being or a methodology that can be applied as the practitioner wishes. I think the answer to these questions help practitioners grow in awareness of how they relate to NVC.

Several participants commented how perception affects meaning and is attributed to observations, feelings and needs. Developing the distinction that perception determines whether a need is met or not, could be key in developing a giraffe consciousness. In this consciousness we can hold our needs a little lighter, have more ease in hearing others’ needs and be open to the possibility that some needs like connection and autonomy are more like conditions that we may take a stand for.

As Rosenberg says, NVC is a training and focusing of attention. It would seem that focusing on what attention is, how it develops, and how it gets blocked, would be useful for a deeper understanding of NVC. The importance of this awareness, I believe, would be helpful in the learning and teaching of NVC.

In Chapter 6, I introduced the lower two quadrants, the cultural and social components, and looked at aspects of knowledge and practice in them that might add to the teaching and practice of NVC. Spiral Dynamics theory could explain how strategies to meet needs are often learned in culture and that some cultures may be more amenable

to the NVC model. I don't think this means they don't value connection and compassion; it is just that the model has ideas that may not be compatible with the understanding of the model. Nor does it mean that individuals in that culture would not be open to it, but suggests that they would have transcended some the absolutes of their culture. This perspective can offer NVC practitioners an ability to meet people at where they are and invite them to take steps in conscious development that is comfortable for them.

Becoming more aware of how NVC can sound to people of different world views helps us to present NVC in ways that connects with them, and helps with understanding their strategies they are using to meet universal needs.

One of the purposes of this investigation is to make a distinction between the techniques of NVC and NVC consciousness, especially the movement of the former to the latter. Although I have focused on consciousness development in this paper, I also wish to emphasize that the four-step methodology is foundational to NVC. I find a comment made by Ed Edwards in a spiral dynamics publication, useful in this connection: "You've got to differentiate before you can integrate!" (Cited in Spiral Dynamics Newsletter, 2005) My interpretation of this, is indeed to be aware, both in myself and others, of how the differentiation of the model (both the steps and key distinctions) needs to be practiced instead of rushing to integrate it before we are ready. My suggestion is that we stay with the awkwardness of the language and be mindful of our developing competence.

7.4 Personal Reflections

The journey with this project has been both academic and personal. The questions that this project has led me to consider and the explorations they stimulated, have touched me in many ways. I was most impacted by the interviews with the participants. I recall always returning home after my interviews feeling stimulated and enthusiastic about NVC and my project. I treasure their insights.

All of the participants impressed me with their valuing of the basic model. They expressed a need for a community of support and the need for ‘practice, practice, practice’. In addition, each one offered me something unique. From Rachelle I got the insight of how NVC suggests focusing awareness on needs, but that the model does not articulate or offer ways of developing this skill. She recommends going to other practices such as meditation to promote this skill. Robert gave me a deepened appreciation of the spirituality of needs and the significance of transforming deep patterns of jacked or negative schemas, into ‘the beauty of needs’. Wes’s gift to me was his emphasis on neurobiology and his advice to avoid compassionate diagnosing. His warning is that NVC can be misapplied into another diagnostic process, such as making people wrong about their language, or constant correction of language. Alan gave advice about appreciating the model for the tool it is and not to try to do or be something it is not. It is effective at what it does, which is to train our attention in ways in which we are more likely to connect with people and get everyone’s needs met in a non-coercive manner.

From my perspective at the end of my project I see that there were parts of NVC that I had not considered. Through the participant interviews, Ken Wilber’s writings and my general readings I have been introduced to new perspectives and have gained new

understanding of how NVC relates to other approaches and worldviews. Although I am aware of some of the challenges of teaching NVC, I have a new appreciation of NVC and conclude that it has more elegance and applicability than I had imagined. My understanding of “Giraffe Consciousness” has shifted from a simple increased awareness of the model to an understanding that it means developing awareness along many lines: an understanding of the model, development of the proximate self, increased circles of identity and developing an awareness of body sensation, and being able to transform deep patterns of evaluative, judgmental, ‘jackal’ thinking.

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Appendix A: PROPOSED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Transformational shifts in learning Nonviolent Communication (working title)

Name of Investigator: Simon Beck
 Program: Counselling Psychology, M.Ed.

The following is illustrative of the main questions and the probing questions that will be asked of the participants in this research study.

1. Could you please describe briefly your background (in any way you choose to disclose this - professional and/or personal)?
2. When and how did you first hear of NVC (nonviolent communication) ? Can you describe your first encounter, workshop, video or other interaction?
3. What do you remember as the highlight for you? Were there any transformative or revelatory experiences? What was that like?
4. Can you describe your continued engagement with NVC? Do you use it on your professional work? In your personal life? Why have you chosen to continue with NVC?
5. I would like to focus now on how you learned NVC -
 - a) First, what are the ways in which you learned NVC?
 - b) What had the most impact on you?
 - c) Did you have identifiable shifts in your understanding of NVC, or did this occur gradually without your immediate realization?
 - d) What was the most helpful in your progression of understanding?
6. How have you used your own learning experience of NVC to teach NVC?
 - a) How do you personally define the most important points about teaching NVC?
 - b) Why did you pick these in particular?
 - c) How do you teach NVC? (methods, sequencing etc)
 - d) What do you notice about those who are learning NVC in your groups?
 - e) What would you identify as a key point, or key learning points in their progression?
 - f) What are the challenges of teaching NVC?
 - g) Do you do introduce activities or use methods that are intended to bring about a change in consciousness?
 - h) If so, how do you differentiate these activities from ones used for learning of the skills, competencies and knowledges?

Appendix B:
Transforming the Pain of Unmet Needs to the Beauty of Needs

Transforming our relationship to experience to connect with life.
 Transforming pain to the beauty of needs

1. Stimulus →
 What was said or what happened just before you reacted.
 List observation only.

2. Reaction (life- alienating thinking)
 Write down your exact thoughts:

{

a. recognition/naming
 b. “enjoy” the jackal
 c. differentiation

3. Feelings **Needs**
 What feelings arise? What are the needs?

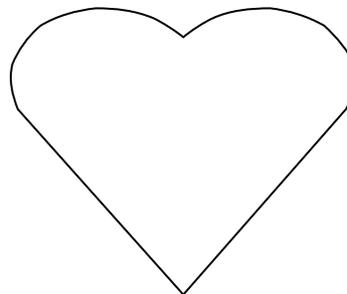
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4. Mourning – be with the feelings,
 enter them, surrender to them.

3a. Sense the feelings in your body

5. Beauty of Needs – now
 put your attention on the need itself.



5. Action. Notice any request you
 may have of yourself. What actions(s),
 internal or external. Do you want to make

CLARITY
 COMPASSION
 EMPOWERMENT

Transforming the Pain of Unmet Needs to the Beauty of Needs

1. Acknowledge the stimulus, the neutral observation that you are responding to. Be specific and concrete, describing the precise stimulus for your feelings.
2. Acknowledge your reaction. There are 3 steps to transforming the “jackal”:
 - a. **recognition/naming** the thought or message; **b. embracing** or “**enjoying the jackal show**”. Allow any reactions, judgments, anger, etc. to come into your awareness, and express it to yourself silently, out loud, or **best written** for clarity. **And c. differentiation** from the jackal thinking. In this part you can use a phrase like, “I am telling myself (...the jackal message.) Go through this process with each message.
3. What feelings arise in you? Notice/feel authentic feelings.
4. What are the unmet needs that give rise to the feelings? Stay with feelings and needs.
5. Stay with steps 3 and 4 until you have given yourself sufficient empathy. Allow yourself to “be with” the feelings of pain of your unmet needs. This is the mourning/grieving stage.
6. Stay in the mourning stage until you have felt a shift in your feelings. You will usually feel some relief and/or relaxing of feeling.
7. Very often what can occur at this stage is a re-stimulation of jackal thinking. If this happens, empathize with the feelings and needs behind this jackal and go back to mourning, or “being with” feelings and needs.
8. Now focus on the need itself. Not the unmet need, but the “beauty of the need.” Sense/feel the positive value, the inherent vision of why this need is important to you. Allow yourself to immerse your awareness on this aspect.
9. Notice any request you may have of yourself. What action(s), internal or external do you want to take to meet any need(s) that is/are present.
10. This entire process is not a linear, but rather a dynamic, organic process. You will probably move from one dimension to another, staying focused on what is alive.
11. The three qualities that come from this process are: CLARITY, COMPASSION for self, and EMPOWERMENT to move forward in deep self-connection and meeting needs.⁴

⁴ Robert Gonzales
 NVC Training Institute; www.nvctraininginsitute.com
 2004

Appendix C: SPIRAL DYNAMICS AND THE WAVES OF EXISTENCE

The first six levels are "subsistence levels" marked by "first-tier thinking." Then there occurs a revolutionary shift in consciousness: the emergence of "being levels" and "second-tier thinking," of which there are two major waves. Here is a brief description of all eight waves, the percentage of the world population at each wave, and the percentage of social power held by each.

1. Beige: Archaic-Instinctual. The level of basic survival; food, water, warmth, sex, and safety have priority. Uses habits and instincts just to survive. Distinct self is barely awakened or sustained. Forms into survival bands to perpetuate life.

Where seen: First human societies, newborn infants, senile elderly, late-stage Alzheimer's victims, mentally ill street people, starving masses, shell shock. Approximately 0.1% of the adult population, 0% power.

2. Purple: Magical-Animistic. Thinking is animistic; magical spirits, good and bad, swarm the earth leaving blessings, curses, and spells which determine events. Forms into ethnic tribes. The spirits exist in ancestors and bond the tribe. Kinship and lineage establish political links. Sounds "holistic" but is actually atomistic: "there is a name for each bend in the river but no name for the river."

Where seen: Belief in voodoo-like curses, blood oaths, ancient grudges, good luck charms, family rituals, magical ethnic beliefs and superstitions; strong in Third-World settings, gangs, athletic teams, and corporate "tribes." 10% of the population, 1% of the power.

3. Red: Power Gods. First emergence of a self-distinct from the tribe; powerful, impulsive, egocentric, heroic. Magical-mythic spirits, dragons, beasts, and powerful people. Archetypal gods and goddesses, powerful beings, forces to be reckoned with, both good and bad. Feudal lords protect underlings in exchange for obedience and labor. The basis of feudal empires --power and glory. The world is a jungle full of threats and predators. Conquers, out-foxes, and dominates; enjoys self to the fullest without regret or remorse; be here now.

Where seen: The "terrible twos," rebellious youth, frontier mentalities, feudal kingdoms, epic heroes, James Bond villains, gang leaders, soldiers of fortune, New-Age narcissism, wild rock stars, Attila the Hun, Lord of the Flies . 20% of the population, 5% of the power.

4. Blue: Mythic Order. Life has meaning, direction, and purpose, with outcomes determined by an all-powerful Other or Order. This righteous Order enforces a code of conduct based on absolutist and unvarying principles of "right" and "wrong." Violating the code or rules has severe, perhaps everlasting repercussions. Following the code yields rewards for the faithful. Basis of ancient nations. Rigid social hierarchies; paternalistic; one right way and only one right way to think about everything. Law and order;

impulsivity controlled through guilt; concrete-literal and fundamentalist belief; obedience to the rule of Order; strongly conventional and conformist. Often "religious" or "mythic" [in the mythic-membership sense; Graves and Beck refer to it as the "saintly/absolutistic" level], but can be secular or atheistic Order or Mission.

Where seen: Puritan America, Confucian China, Dickensian England, Singapore discipline, totalitarianism, codes of chivalry and honor, charitable good deeds, religious fundamentalism (e.g., Christian and Islamic), Boy and Girl Scouts, "moral majority," patriotism. 40% of the population, 30% of the power.

5. Orange: Scientific Achievement. At this wave, the self "escapes" from the "herd mentality" of blue, and seeks truth and meaning in individualistic terms--hypothetic-deductive, experimental, objective, mechanistic, operational--"scientific" in the typical sense. The world is a rational and well-oiled machine with natural laws that can be learned, mastered, and manipulated for one's own purposes. Highly achievement oriented, especially (in America) toward materialistic gains. The laws of science rule politics, the economy, and human events. The world is a chessboard on which games are played as winners gain pre-eminence and perks over losers. Marketplace alliances; manipulate earth's resources for one's strategic gains. Basis of corporate states.

Where seen: The Enlightenment, Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged*, Wall Street, emerging middle classes around the world, cosmetics industry, trophy hunting, colonialism, the Cold War, fashion industry, materialism, secular humanism, liberal self-interest. 30% of the population, 50% of the power.

6. Green: The Sensitive Self. Communitarian, human bonding, ecological sensitivity, networking. The human spirit must be freed from greed, dogma, and divisiveness; feelings and caring supersede cold rationality; cherishing of the earth, Gaia, life. Against hierarchy; establishes lateral bonding and linking. Permeable self, relational self, group intermeshing. Emphasis on dialogue, relationships. Basis of value communities (i.e., freely chosen affiliations based on shared sentiments). Reaches decisions through reconciliation and consensus (downside: interminable "processing" and incapacity to reach decisions). Refresh spirituality, bring harmony, and enrich human potential. Strongly egalitarian, anti-hierarchy, pluralistic values, social construction of reality, diversity, multiculturalism, relativistic value systems; this worldview is often called pluralistic relativism. Subjective, nonlinear thinking; shows a greater degree of affective warmth, sensitivity, and caring, for earth and all its inhabitants.

Where seen: Deep ecology, postmodernism, Netherlands idealism, Rogerian counseling, Canadian health care, humanistic psychology, liberation theology, cooperative inquiry, World Council of Churches, Greenpeace, animal rights, ecofeminism, post-colonialism, Foucault/Derrida, politically correct, diversity movements, human rights issues, ecopsychology. 10% of the population, 15% of the power. [Note: this is 10% of the world population. Don Beck estimates that around 20-25% of the American population is green.]

With the completion of the green meme, human consciousness is poised for a quantum jump into "second-tier thinking." Clare Graves referred to this as a "momentous leap," where "a chasm of unbelievable depth of meaning is crossed." In essence, with second-tier consciousness, one can think both vertically and horizontally, using both hierarchies and heterarchies (both ranking and linking). One can therefore, for the first time, vividly grasp the entire spectrum of interior development, and thus see that each level, each meme, each wave is crucially important for the health of the overall Spiral.

As I would word it, each wave is "transcend and include." That is, each wave goes beyond (or transcends) its predecessor, and yet it includes or embraces it in its own makeup. For example, a cell transcends but includes molecules, which transcend but include atoms. To say that a molecule goes beyond an atom is not to say that molecules hate atoms, but that they love them: they embrace them in their own makeup; they include them, they don't marginalize them. Just so, each wave of existence is a fundamental ingredient of all subsequent waves, and thus each is to be cherished and embraced.

Moreover, each wave can itself be activated or reactivated as life circumstances warrant. In emergency situations, we can activate red power drives; in response to chaos, we might need to activate blue order; in looking for a new job, we might need orange achievement drives; in marriage and with friends, close green bonding. All of these memes have something important to contribute.

But what none of the first-tier memes can do, on their own, is fully appreciate the existence of the other memes. Each of the first-tier memes thinks that its worldview is the correct or best perspective. It reacts negatively if challenged; it lashes out, using its own tools, whenever it is threatened. Blue order is very uncomfortable with both red impulsiveness and orange individualism. Orange individualism thinks blue order is for suckers and green egalitarianism is weak and woo-woo. Green egalitarianism cannot easily abide excellence and value rankings, big pictures, hierarchies, or anything that appears authoritarian, and thus green reacts strongly to blue, orange, and anything post-green.

All of that begins to change with second-tier thinking. Because second-tier consciousness is fully aware of the interior stages of development--even if it cannot articulate them in a technical fashion--it steps back and grasps the big picture, and thus second-tier thinking appreciates the necessary role that all of the various memes play. Second-tier awareness thinks in terms of the overall spiral of existence, and not merely in the terms of any one level.

Where the green meme begins to grasp the numerous different systems and pluralistic contexts that exist in different cultures (which is why it is indeed the sensitive self, i.e., sensitive to the marginalization of others), second-tier thinking goes one-step further. It looks for the rich contexts that link and joins these pluralistic systems, and thus it takes these separate systems and begins to embrace, include, and integrate them into holistic

spirals and integral meshworks. Second-tier thinking, in other words, is instrumental in moving from relativism to holism, or from pluralism to integralism.

The extensive research of Graves, Beck, and Cowan indicates that there are at least two major waves to this second-tier integral consciousness:

7. Yellow: Integrative. Life is a kaleidoscope of natural hierarchies [holarchies], systems, and forms. Flexibility, spontaneity, and functionality have the highest priority. Differences and pluralities can be integrated into interdependent, natural flows. Egalitarianism is complemented with natural degrees of ranking and excellence. Knowledge and competency should supersede power, status, or group sensitivity. The prevailing world order is the result of the existence of different levels of reality (memes) and the inevitable patterns of movement up and down the dynamic spiral. Good governance facilitates the emergence of entities through the levels of increasing complexity (nested hierarchy). 1% of the population, 5% of the power.

8. Turquoise: Holistic. Universal holistic system, holons/waves of integrative energies; unites feeling with knowledge; multiple levels interwoven into one conscious system. Universal order, but in a living, conscious fashion, not based on external rules (blue) or group bonds (green). A "grand unification" [a "theory of everything" or T.O.E.] is possible, in theory and in actuality. Sometimes involves the emergence of a new spirituality as a meshwork of all existence. Turquoise thinking uses the entire Spiral; sees multiple levels of interaction; detects harmonics, the mystical forces, and the pervasive flow-states that permeate any organization. 0.1% of the population, 1% of the power.

With less than 2 percent of the population at second-tier thinking (and only 0.1 percent at turquoise), second-tier consciousness is relatively rare because it is now the "leading-edge" of collective human evolution. As examples, Beck and Cowan mention items that include Teilhard de Chardin's noosphere, chaos and complexity theories, universal systems thinking, integral-holistic theories, Gandhi's and Mandela's pluralistic integration, with increases in frequency definitely on the way, and even higher memes still in the offing.... (Wilber, 2000b, p. 48)

Appendix D: Ethical Approval



University
of Victoria

Human Research Ethics Committee
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University of Victoria
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Human Research Ethics Committee Certificate of Approval

| | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| <u>Principal Investigator</u> Simon Beck Graduate Student | <u>Department/School</u> EDUC | <u>Supervisor</u> David de Rosenroll | |
| <u>Co-Investigator(s)</u> : | | | |
| <u>Project Title</u> : Transformational Shifts in Learning Nonviolent Communication | | | |
| <u>Protocol No.</u> 230-04 | <u>Approval Date</u> 07-Jul-04 | <u>Start Date</u> 07-Jul-04 | <u>End Date</u> 06-Jul-05 |

Certification

This certifies that the UVic Human Research Ethics Committee has examined this research protocol and concludes that, in all respects, the proposed research meets appropriate standards of ethics as outlined by the University of Victoria Research Regulations Involving Human Subjects.

Dr. Martin Taylor
Vice-President, Research

This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the procedures. Extensions or minor amendments may be granted upon receipt of "Request for Continuing Review or Amendment of an Approved Project" form.

230-04 Beck, Simon

Vitae

Simon R. Beck

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 Fort Langley, B.C. V1M 2S5
 Tel. (604) 888-7223
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Education, academic

- 2005 **M. Ed. (candidate) Counselling Psychology,**
 University of Victoria,
 Victoria, B.C.
- 1982 **Theatre Arts Diploma**
 one year program.
 David Thompson University Centre,
 Nelson, B.C.
- 1975 **Diploma in Child Care-**
 6 months of practica at a variety of placements.
 University of Victoria, B.C.
- 1975 **BA** (with distinction) Child Care Counselling
 University of Victoria,
 Victoria, B.C.

Education, non-academic

- 1992 **Family Systems Therapy Certificate**
 two year program.
 Pacific Coast Family Therapy Training Association,
 Vancouver, B.C.
- 1984 **Neuro-Linguistic Programming Certificate (NLP).**
 26 day training in using language, patterns and rapport to effect
 change.
 Vancouver, B.C.
- 1979 **Child Care Counsellor Certificate**
 Two year in service training. Continued with 4 years of specialized
 topics such as group, strategic, and family therapy.
 Ministry of Health, The Maples,

Burnaby, B.C.

Workshops

Workshops and Training include:

In service Training for Child Protection Work;
I-level training;
Sexual Abuse Victim Therapy Workshops;
Narrative Counseling with Michael White,
Brief Therapy;
Art Therapy;
Group Counselling;
Native Issues;
Drug and Alcohol Counselling;
Ericksonian Hypnotherapy.
Child Development courses with Gordon Neufeld, Ph.D.
Suicide Risk Assessment
Anxiety and phobia intervention training
Cognitive interventions with Borderline Clients
Nonviolent Communication trainings – including 10 day residential
international intensive training.

Publications:

Beck, S. (2003). Nonviolent Communication: Meeting out in Rumi's field, *The B.C. Counsellor*, 25,(2), 7 – 16.

Professional Associations

Registered Clinical Counsellor, (RCC) BCACC member
B.C. Association of Child Care Counsellors-past board member

Work Experience

- 1990- Present **Private Practice - Therapist, Workshop Leader, Mediation/conflict resolution**
 Therapy for individuals, couples and families.
 Designed and presented Child Development workshops for a preschool, Cultural Diversity and grief workshops for Hospice Societies and community agencies.
- 1987-2004 **Coordinator, ICCR Program**
Youth Mental Health Team, Ministry For Children and Family Development, Fraser South Region, full time.
 (ICCR) was a program that provided community based treatment for behaviorally and emotionally disturbed adolescents and their families. As the coordinator, I chaired Inter-ministerial planning meetings, supervised residential resources, therapists and Youth Care workers and provided counselling to youth and families in the program.
- 1984- 1986 **Social Worker- Child Protection**
Ministry of Social Services (Now MCFD), East Vancouver
 Investigated child protection complaints, gave evidence in court and provided child and family social services.
- 1983- 1984 **Child Care Worker Supervisor**
Ministry of Social Services, Eileen Corbett Reception Centre
 Supervised a team of Child Care Workers in their duties in providing residential care, assessment and treatment for children aged 3 to 12 year old who were recently apprehended or in need of placement planning.
- 1976- 1983 **Child Care Worker**
Ministry of Health, Maples Adolescent Treatment Centre
 Provided residential and day program treatment for behaviorally and emotionally disturbed adolescents and their families through a variety of individual, group and family counselling interventions. Acted for supervisor. Received extensive in-service training in many aspects of individual, family and group counselling.

1971 – 1976

Other

Held a number of different positions in the social services and counselling field including: Wilderness Skills Instructor for youth probationers. Child Care Worker at Brannen Lake School and Victoria Receiving and Diagnostic Centre, Boys Club Street Worker, Victoria Crisis Line phone operator.

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Title of Project:

Developing Nonviolent Communication:
An Integral Approach

Author: _____
(Signature)

SIMON R. BECK

(Date)