

## CROSSING FOCUSING AND NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION

### Reflecting for Deeper Implications

F. Javier Romeo-Biedma, M.A.

#### ABSTRACT

Both Focusing and *Nonviolent Communication (NVC)* are based on the idea that people get insights and their inner processes get *carried forward* when some of their words are reflected. Reflection enhances connection both with oneself and with the companion. And reflection brings deeper implications, as implied aspects come into existence and become conscious.

However, Focusing and *Nonviolent Communication* put the stress on reflecting different aspects of the original communication. Focusing follows felt senses in the body as a new way to create new meaning. *Nonviolent Communication* tries to find the universal *needs* that are at the core of every human action. Focusing and *Nonviolent Communication* have been *crossed* in different ways (a short revision of some crossings is explored in this paper). Focusing can be enriched by introducing a new awareness for *needs*, especially when Asking. And *Nonviolent Communication* can be enhanced by a new sensitiveness to the original expressions of the person—not just trying to “translate” everything, but also valuing habitual language as metaphors.

When both processes are combined and the companion/therapist reflects aspects of both levels of awareness, the person achieves relevant results as deep implications emerge.

**Keywords:** Focusing, *Nonviolent Communication (NVC)*, Empathy, Reflect, Crossing.

#### TOWARD A MORE AUTHENTIC CONNECTION

When back in the beginning of 2009 I decided to open my own website, I started to look for a name that would convey what I was trying to do. I had been learning *Nonviolent Communication*, sharing it in practice groups and workshops and using it to accompany inner processes of other people since 2007. After weeks of trying various combinations—I did not know it then, but I was doing Focusing: looking for a handle—I found that my goal was bringing people *toward a More Authentic Connection*, so that was it. The name expressed clearly my conviction that there is always some kind of connection, and at the same time it conveyed the idea that we can always find a connection that is more authentic, both with our inner processes and with other people. By then I was satisfied with the quality of the connection I was able to create with others and with the depth of connection I could help to develop in people when accompanying their processes.

However, there was something missing. The so renowned *self-empathy*—the ability to stay with our inner processes in a way so that we find new steps—eluded me very often.

Although I could accompany others, sometimes I did not find the way to accompany my own inner processes, and I was frustrated about it. So I approached Focusing in June 2009 as the way to open and widen the path to self-empathy.

Focusing was the missing piece. With Focusing I discovered the bodily dimension—I was already comfortable with *feelings* and emotions, so I was gratefully surprised with the freshness and the movement that references to the body can bring to the whole inner world. With Focusing I also developed a richer confidence in the self-propulsion of processes, and completed my way of being fully present in silence or with minimal expression while accompanying. And with Focusing I thought about the use of language in order to create connection.

I could see from the start that both Focusing and *Nonviolent Communication* worked on the assumption that reflection enhances connection with oneself and with the companion. In fact, saying back selectively what has been said can bring the speaker new insights. So, since the first trainings in Focusing, I was blending Focusing and *Nonviolent Communication* in a way that seemed natural for me. When learning how to listen to a *felt sense*, I could not avoid thinking that there was a *need* somewhere underneath, and that “*Nonviolent Communication* awareness” helped me to stay connected with the process. And vice versa, while guiding somebody through a *Nonviolent Communication* process, I developed a new “Focusing attitude” toward whatever was alive, being aware that the harshest of expressions was not just “*a sentence to be translated*” but “*a handle that did not fit well—yet*”.

The path of Focusing proved itself rich and fruitful, and in 2012 I became a Certified Focusing Professional. Although during my training I learned to do Focusing on its own, when I teach either of the approaches, I always recommend the other. Moreover, when accompanying people in their inner processes, I offer and use both—as well as other therapeutic tools—organically, letting my own *felt senses* guide the decisions of when and to what degree to use each process.

### **FOCUSING AND NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION: A COMMON GROUND...**

Both Focusing and *Nonviolent Communication* share a Humanistic approach, so from the start I found that crossing both was supported by a common ground. Eugene Gendlin studied with Carl Rogers, obtained his doctorate, and both men continued a fruitful professional collaboration for over a decade. Eventually, Gendlin’s research took him to a related but autonomous path, one that included Focusing, Thinking At the Edge (TAE) and the Philosophy of the Implicit.

Marshall B. Rosenberg obtained his doctorate in Psychology and continued his training from a Humanistic approach that finally culminated in the creation of a process he called *Nonviolent Communication*. His quest for a deeper understanding of human processes and relationships led him to learn Focusing. As a result, Rosenberg incorporated parts of Focusing in his practice, and recommended it in his advanced trainings.

Much has been written about the Humanistic roots of Focusing and *Nonviolent Communication*. For me the starting point in wanting to cross them was the fact that both approaches share the three main conditions of Rogerian psychology. In order to compare the similarities, throughout this article we will use the word “Listener” to identify the person

that listens in either Focusing or *Nonviolent Communication*, be it a therapist, a guide, a companion or even the person when listening to an inner process (Cornell, 2005; 2013). “Listened To” will be used to name the person—or even an inner part or partial self—that is accompanied in the process. From a Humanistic point of view, both Focusing and *Nonviolent Communication* rely on a confidence that the person has enough inner resources to overcome whatever occurs when he or she is provided with a relationship that is based in *unconditional positive regard* (“Every person is intrinsically good and deserves appreciation in him or herself”), congruence-authenticity (“A way can be found to express whatever is alive”) and empathy (“The Listener can understand the inner experience of the Listened To as if he or she was the other person or the inner process, but without leaving his or her own awareness”). However, both approaches go a step further: Focusing originated when Gendlin et al. (1968) discovered that the client who starts therapy with a low score in the Experiencing Scale (Klein et al., 1969) progresses only half a stage on this Scale. Therefore Gendlin developed the six steps of Focusing to provide low-scoring clients with specific help to raise their experiential level in order to make their therapy more effective. *Nonviolent Communication* also shares the goal of bringing the person to a deeper level (the level of universal human needs).

Another aspect that I followed to cross Focusing and *Nonviolent Communication* was the awareness that two features define the work that is done in both approaches. Although these ideas are implied in all the teachings of both approaches, we will follow the formulation by Belgrave (2001). First, *attention* is directed to the *present*. The Listened To may explore past, future or possible situations as long as he or she stays grounded in the present experience, as in “*When I remember that event, I feel (now)...*” or “*When I imagine that that may happen, I feel (now)...*” One of the main tasks of the Listener is helping the Listened To to keep referring to his or her own present experience. And the second feature is the shared *intention* to create a *more authentic connection*. The process or processes of the Listened To are invited to be just as they are—with no change intended. “*Good*” intentions—alleviating suffering, releasing blocks, facilitating change—that do not take into account and acknowledge the deep implications of unpleasant experiences may very often stop the processes the Listener wants to help. Precisely for this reason, the intention of both approaches is usually worded as “*Staying with whatever that is and getting to know it better in its own timing*”.

My starting point to cross Focusing and *Nonviolent Communication* was that the way to create and maintain the connection with the Listened To (be it a person or an inner process) is, in both approaches, to reflect, that is, to say back what has been said. It is assumed that selective reflection is enough to accompany the person to *carry forward* the inner process. However, what is reflected (and how) is different in each approach, as we will soon see.

I found many other common characteristics. I want to highlight a final one: both Focusing and *Nonviolent Communication* are structured in “*steps*” for the sake of learning, and at the same time, they are much more than their steps. These “*steps*” are a “*map*”, a guide to a common human territory that is far bigger and more intricate than the “*components*”. Thus, Focusers are encouraged to develop a so-called “*Focusing attitude*” that goes beyond the six steps, and *Nonviolent Communication* practitioners are expected to rise to a “*Nonviolent Communication awareness*” that reaches further than its four steps. We will see that this “*attitude*” and this “*awareness*” are what will enable the crossing of Focusing and *Nonviolent Communication*.

... AND SOME DIFFERENCES

Focusing and *Nonviolent Communication* are different approaches, so, of course, there are many differences between them. They both require systematic training and practice in order to develop and master some innate—but usually unrecognized—abilities that are summarized as “*empathy*”. In this article we will explore a subset of these abilities, namely the competence of the Listener to reflect—to say back—in order to generate deeper implications. However, there are some differences that I found necessary to keep in mind.

| <b>Focusing</b>   | <b><i>Nonviolent Communication</i></b>   |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Objective:</b><br/>The Listened To lets form and identifies an intricate bodily feeling, the <i>felt sense</i>.</p>   | <p><b>Objective:</b><br/>The Listened To is accompanied to recognize and acknowledge the underlying met or unmet <i>needs</i>.</p>   |
| <p><b>Consequences:</b><br/>The <i>felt sense</i>, when given a space, carries forward the process to its fulfillment, the full development of its <i>implying</i>.</p>           | <p><b>Consequences:</b><br/>The Listened To experiences a sense of relief, as identifying the core <i>needs</i> provides a very much needed acknowledgment (it is said that “<i>Needs need more acknowledgment than fulfillment</i>”) and an openness to consider new alternative <i>strategies</i>.</p> |
| <p><b>Reflection:</b><br/>Saying back as precisely as possible what the Listened To is saying, selectively choosing words related to inner processes with a bodily component.</p> | <p><b>Reflection:</b><br/>Translating what the Listened To says into a <i>needs</i> language, deliberately rephrasing sentences to <i>Observations-Feelings-Needs-Requests</i>.</p>  |
| <p><b>Responsibility of the Listened To:</b><br/>Checking the reflection with the inner bodily experience (Resonating).</p>   | <p><b>Responsibility of the Listened To:</b><br/>Checking the reflection with the inner experience (verifying whether the words, especially the <i>needs</i>, convey the inner process).</p>   |
| <p><b>Precondition:</b><br/>The person Listened To is able to stay with his or her inner processes and relate to them with interested curiosity (Cornell, 2005; 2013).</p>        | <p><b>Precondition:</b><br/>The person Listened To is willing to explore new wordings, letting go of the original expressions and the initial <i>strategies</i>.</p>   |

Table of some key differences between Focusing and *Nonviolent Communication*.

## A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO *NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION*

*Nonviolent Communication* is the tool developed by Rosenberg to create a level of personal connection (interpersonal connection, but also connection of the person with his or her inner processes) that facilitates a pacific resolution of conflicts. He was interested in understanding why some people can respond with compassion to other beings, while other people are not able to find that compassion in themselves. He discovered that a big part of the problem lies in the fact that most of the cultures we know are based in judgments, labeling and “*power over*” instead of “*power with*”. From his roots in Humanistic Psychology, and with research in different cultural traditions, he structured a process in four steps that he called *Nonviolent Communication* (to honor its roots in the movements of Non-Violence) and also *Compassionate Communication*. The purpose of *Nonviolent Communication* is achieving an authentic expression as well as an empathic listening, with the objective of taking into account all the *needs* that are alive, and from there finding *strategies* that serve all the people affected (or all the inner parts of a person, in an inner conflict). The basic steps are:

- *Observation*. The aim is to discover and specify exactly what has been the trigger of the inner reaction. The main difficulty is differentiating *observations* from judgments and evaluations—which have a value in themselves when we realize that they are not *reality*, but *our interpretation of reality*. The sentence would then start as “*When I see/hear/think...*”
- *Feelings*. The challenge is finding “*pure*” *feelings*, (like “*joy*”, “*sadness*”, “*anger*”, “*uneasiness*”, “*despair*”...) instead of *feelings mixed with evaluations* (for example, “*abandoned*” expresses a *feeling* of sadness combined with an interpretation such as “*somebody should have been with me*”, that assigns blame to somebody). I have found that for people coming from a Focusing background, this distinction between “*pure*” and “*mixed*” feelings can be difficult, as the word *feeling* can convey different meanings. The subtle differentiations in *Nonviolent Communication* and Focusing between *feeling* (which is close to emotion), *sensation* (which can be physical, as in “*a constriction in my throat*” or symbolic, as in “*like a tube that is blocked*”) and *felt sense* are acquired through training. It is also important to note that while in Focusing a *feeling* mixed with an evaluation, as in “*abandoned*”, can effectively *carry forward* the process, in *Nonviolent Communication* arriving at a “*pure*” *feeling* is an important part of the process. A “*pure*” *feeling* is regarded as a handle for the inner movements. The sentence would then continue as “*...I feel...*”
- *Needs*. In *Nonviolent Communication* it is assumed that the origin of *feelings* is not in what happens outside, but in the inner *needs*. *Needs* (also expressed as *principles* or *values*) are the expression of aliveness—although they are not alive in the same proportion in every moment, or in every person. They are also universal to all human beings—they are not linked by definition to specific people or things. *Needs* are to be differentiated from *strategies*, the practical ways of meeting those *needs*. For example, all human beings have a *need* for “*connection*”; however there are many different *strategies* of meeting that *need*: in some moments we need some time alone to reconnect with ourselves, in others we create connection with an intimate conversation with a friend, or we have family dinner, or we organize a party, or we attend

a cultural event—the number of people involved and the quality of “*connection*” is different in each *strategy*, but it is somehow the same *need*. The sentence would go on as “...because my need for X is met / is not met...”

- *Request. Nonviolent Communication* is a process oriented to action. When the person arrives at deeper *needs*, new and inclusive *strategies*—*strategies* that take into account all the *needs* that are alive in all the parts and people involved—arise naturally. *Nonviolent Communication* proposes a way to build jointly *requests* that are precise, realistic, affirmative and negotiable—so they are truly *requests* and not *demands* (that is, trying to motivate, even if it is done subtly and apparently with respect, out of fear, guilt, shame or obligation, rather than out of willingness and genuine giving). The sentence would end as “...and I ask you/myself/them...”

A very simplified example of a process would be sitting with a sentence, such as, “*My job cuts my wings. I am just writing reports that nobody reads!*” until the deeper meaning of the sentence is unveiled as, “*When I see that I have been doing reports for the last nine months* (observation: external reality) *and I think that nobody reads them* (observation: the thought belongs to the internal reality of the person) *I feel discouraged and sad* (feelings) *because my needs for meaning, growth and contribution are not met* (needs) *and I ask myself to ask for a meeting with my boss next week to see how to improve this situation* (request: it is still a very general request, it would take a more precise form staying longer with the process)”.

Obviously, this is a summary of a much richer process that includes many reflections – saying back and forth translated versions of what is said, until all parts are satisfied that they have been heard and understood. Interested readers can explore *Nonviolent Communication* starting with the introductory books by Rosenberg (2003) and by Thomas d’Ansembourg (2001) and investigating the resources available online in the website of the *Center for Nonviolent Communication* ([www.cnvc.org](http://www.cnvc.org)).

## **A QUICK OVERVIEW OF CROSSINGS OF FOCUSING AND NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION**

When I first encountered Focusing, it became clear that the closeness in perspective and the complementary approaches would bring a natural interest in crossing Focusing and *Nonviolent Communication* to many people from both fields. I found that *Nonviolent Communication* trainers and practitioners were recommending Focusing in their trainings, and in Focusing trainings there was usually somebody who had heard about *Nonviolent Communication*. I started to investigate, and I was happily surprised to discover that so many had combined both models in different ways already. I offer a quick overview that is intended to reveal the richness and variety of possibilities, as long as it is accepted that what I am presenting is just a glimpse of the actual work done by probably hundreds of individuals worldwide, evident, for example, in the existence of an “NVC & Focusing Google Group” (<http://groups.google.com/group/nvcf>) with over 140 members—and that is just one English speaking group. That said, the following enumeration will be partial, and by no means exhaustive. For the sake of clear representation, and to ensure that each technique is soundly transmitted, only professionals that have been certified in either or both approaches will be mentioned. However, it must be kept in mind that there are many other individuals

combining these two models in their personal lives and in their professional practices in ways as enriching as the ones mentioned here.

First of all, for me it was very encouraging to discover that there are several trainers certified both in Focusing (by The Focusing Institute) and in *Nonviolent Communication* (by the *Center for Nonviolent Communication*), for example: Gina Cenciose (Canada), Shulamit Day Berlevtov (Canada), Elizabeth English *Locana* (UK), Peter Kuklis (Slovakia and UK) and Allan Rohlfs (USA).

There are also Certified Focusing Trainers with a strong background and teaching practice in *Nonviolent Communication*, who explicitly use both approaches. Among others I can mention are: Beatrice Blake (USA and El Salvador), Leona Dawson (Australia), Yara Gabriela Jiménez (El Salvador), Melba Jiménez (El Salvador) and Solange St-Pierre (Canada, specialized in the practice of Restorative Circles, an application of *Nonviolent Communication* in community settings), and the author of this article, F. Javier Romeo-Biedma (Spain).

I have also found that there are many *Nonviolent Communication* Trainers that have been certified by the *Center for Nonviolent Communication* who use Focusing or bodily practices closely related to Focusing. However, for a long time, there has been a strong request from the *Center for Nonviolent Communication* about not combining the use of *Nonviolent Communication* with other techniques in their trainings, so that clarity about the technique is maintained, and that consideration makes it more difficult to identify trainers that use both. Among the trainers that explicitly employ Focusing are Lynd Morris (USA) and Gabriele Lindemann (Germany). However, there are many other trainers that use some sort of “Focusing awareness”, as for example, *Nonviolent Communication* founder Rosenberg (USA), who was trained in Focusing and uses the process to accompany personal processes in combination with *Nonviolent Communication*; and trainers like Robert Gonzales (USA) and Susan Skye (USA), who have developed a process called “*Transforming the Pain of Unmet Needs into the Beauty of the Needs*” that resembles Focusing; Bridget Belgrave (UK) and Gina Lawrie (UK), who have created the “*NVC Dance Floors*” with dynamics that bring the body into the process; Inbal Kashtan (USA) and Miki Kashtan (USA), who offer several exercises that consist in “*giving bodily empathy (in silence)*”; and many others.

Finally, although the amount of written materials about crossing Focusing and *Nonviolent Communication* is not proportional to the work done by so many people, there are some interesting references (Blake, 2010; Blake and Rice, 2007; Day Berlevtov, 2010; Rice, 2008), and many others in personal or professional websites and blogs. Readers interested in this issue are invited to explore further to discover many other practitioners of crossings of both approaches.

## **BRINGING A “FOCUSING ATTITUDE” TO THE NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION PRACTICE**

*Nonviolent Communication* works with the idea that some wordings allow a better connection—with oneself and with other people—than others. However, the point of *Nonviolent Communication* is not *translating* every sentence into the *Observation-Feelings-Needs-Request* model, but rather, identifying the core *needs* that unite all human beings and empathizing from that kind of connection. I discovered that Focusing training

improves *Nonviolent Communication* practice with a deeper consideration for the expressions used—be they judgments, evaluations, *feelings* mixed with interpretations, *strategies* misunderstood as *needs*... Holding the idea that an expression is a symbol, although maybe one that may not fit well, brings a new openness toward what is being expressed. Thus, the reflection and the search for a better expression for me has more to do with finding a handle that captures the situation more adequately than with “*correcting*” the expression. This “Focusing attitude” enriches the process with a welcoming way of listening and with the motivation to find *needs* out of the words that *already imply them*.

The idea of staying with a process in its own timing is not new in *Nonviolent Communication*. However, I have developed a deeper confidence in inner processes through the Focusing concept and experience of *implicit intricacy*. Being aware that there is always something more that waits to be listened to and symbolized has provided me with a form for staying with whatever appears in a calmer, more respectful way.

I have seen that the whole process of Focusing comes naturally to many advanced practitioners of *Nonviolent Communication*, and sometimes they even express that they were already doing some kind of Focusing. On the other hand, people who are beginning to learn *Nonviolent Communication* benefit especially from the bodily awareness that Focusing brings to *feelings*, emotions, and sensations.

Finally, Focusing has helped me to become deeply and quickly aware of my own *felt senses* while I am accompanying somebody else. I have learned to recognize and acknowledge whatever appears in me in a way that allows me to continue accompanying the process while being genuine to myself. Focusing enriches the practice of *Nonviolent Communication* in many other ways, but for the scope of this article these outlines will suffice.

## **BRINGING A “NON VIOLENT COMMUNICATION AWARENESS” TO THE FOCUSING PRACTICE**

In my experience, I have found that the Focusing practice can be enhanced by several considerations of *Nonviolent Communication*. We will explore two of them: first, the “*Nonviolent Communication awareness*” and second, the use of *Nonviolent Communication* when Asking.

To begin, I have experienced that having the framework of *needs* as the core motivation for all human processes helps the Listener to be aware that under every expression, emotion, symbol, or feeling...there is at least one universal human need. This awareness supports the Listener in being more present, trying to sense how it feels to have that underlying *need*. So, for example, when we hear that “*something tight*” appears, we want to be open to what that is all about, *without necessarily saying anything aloud*. “*Is that “something tight” related to a need for safety, for “wanting to be sure that something is under control”?* Or does it have to do more with the opposite, that “*something tight*” is experienced as a barrier to the fulfillment of the needs of freedom, self-expression or spontaneity?” Maybe the process continues in a way that we had not foreseen (for example, that “*something tight*” may be expressing a *need* for support and companionship, or for harmony and peace), and nevertheless in some way our attitude of listening to the *needs* has helped the Listened To and the Listener to be open to deeper implications at the level of the *needs*.

On the other hand, *Nonviolent Communication* techniques can be used explicitly, especially when Asking. Although it is generally accepted that questions in Focusing are to be used in a measured way, there are processes that are helped by asking or making a suggestion directly to the *felt sense*. While the usual way of listening includes reflecting as precisely as possible, questions are risky because they offer an expression *that does not exist yet in the Listened To*, they are just deduced or supposed by the Listener. In the practice that I propose, the question is a sentence offered to the Listened To with the intention of *carrying forward* the process one step more, trying to make *explicit* what is *implicit* or what is *implied* in the process. The Listened To is invited to check inwardly, to see if something resonates with the sentence, and if it does, then to follow its implications if the sentence serves the process, or to reject it if it does not fit. *Nonviolent Communication* can be a source for creating questions because it provides a framework—namely, universal human *needs*—to reword the discourse of the Listened To, in the following ways. For example:

- The easiest question, already proposed in all Focusing materials is “*What does it need?*” Although the ideal is that this question brings into awareness a core universal *need*, it can instead bring a *strategy* (a concrete way of fulfilling the underlying *needs*, that is linked to the circumstances) and even so *carry forward* the process.
- A more elaborate question that I adopt directly from *Nonviolent Communication* can take the form of guessing and asking for the underlying *needs*, like “*Are you needing support/care/space/meaning...?*”. In my experience, the Listened To checks inwardly, and then three main possibilities arise: 1) if there is a fit, an expression like “*Yes, that is it, I am needing support. I want to be helped and sustained*” can appear; 2) the question does not fit the experience, but brings a deeper awareness at the *needs* level that *carries forward* the process, for example, “*No, it is not support. I am needing reciprocity. I want to be taken care of as I take care of others*”; or 3) the feeling does not suit the process and can be discarded, as in, “*No, it is more like a knot of gray metal wires...*”.
- In *Nonviolent Communication feelings* are considered indicators of *needs* that are alive and that require close listening. When *feelings* appear in a Focusing process, I have found that *Nonviolent Communication* rephrasing can be very useful to uncover unmet *needs*, as in “*Maybe you are feeling vulnerable because your need for safety is not met?*” or “*You may want to check if that sadness has to do in some way with your need for meaning and connection*”. As we saw before, the guess may fit or not; however I have frequently observed that it can somehow move the process to a deeper level.
- Handles and *needs* can be linked and explored together—but only when the process is advanced and the Listened To is fully connected to the process. For example, in “*So there is that blue stick that has to do with making that activity enjoyable, and maybe you are needing playfulness and enjoyment?*” or in “*There is that unmet need for autonomy and self-expression that is like a dark fist clutching your throat, does that sound right?*” And the guess is verified with the inner experience.

Of course, in order to Ask, it is necessary to be in disposition of receiving whatever comes, whether the new information is what we were expecting (the *needs* we guessed, or at least other *needs*) or not (an entirely new image or emotion appears). For me it is very important that the Listener keeps in mind that these questions are just other handles suggested to

the Listened To, and if they do not fit, the process can be *carried forward* just by listening to it a little bit more.

Apart from the advantages for the Listener of having in mind universal *needs*, in my experience *Nonviolent Communication* helps the Listened To deal with stoppages. I have found *Nonviolent Communication* especially useful when the inexperienced Focuser starts to get nervous at a certain point and wants some way to release a block. A language of *needs*, that combines language and discourse with inner awareness, allows the Focuser to “*come to the surface of discursive language to take a breath and be able to go deeper in symbolic language*”.

### WHAT CAN A COMBINED PROCESS LOOK LIKE

A process that combines Focusing and *Nonviolent Communication* can take very different forms, but it will always include the “Focusing attitude” and the “*Nonviolent Communication* awareness” mentioned before. We will examine a part of a process that I followed in order to write this article, with **F** to comment on Focusing aspects and **NVC** to comment on *Nonviolent Communication* considerations. Although I was accompanied, and I am grateful for the support throughout the session, I was intentionally leading this part of the process, with minimal reflection by my companion at my request.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <i>I would like to know how it feels in my body all about writing the article...</i>   | Start with <b>F</b> .   |
| <i>Hmm...There is something there...It is like a crystal...in front of my stomach... It is kind of translucent, not completely transparent...And it is soft...Not soft, no, more like not completely hard, with rounded edges...</i> | <b>F</b> process of finding a <i>felt sense</i> , finding a handle and resonating.  |
| <i>It has something to do with clarity...</i>  | Still an <b>F</b> insight, the whole meaning of the word “ <i>clarity</i> ” yet unclear.  |
| <i>Maybe I want to have clarity about what I want to transmit in the article...</i>  | <b>NVC</b> guess, exploring “ <i>clarity</i> ” as a <i>need</i> .   |
| <i>No, it is not about having clarity myself... but about providing clarity... I want to bring clarity about how each process works and how they can be combined...</i>  | <b>NVC</b> process, exploring the aspects of the <i>need</i> for clarity.   |
| <i>Yes! And I want to give clarity because I want to contribute, I want to make meaningful remarks about both processes! Aha! (Physical movement and deep breath).</i>   | An initial <b>NVC</b> <i>need</i> for “ <i>clarity</i> ” brings two deeper <i>needs</i> , of “ <i>contribution</i> ” and “ <i>meaningfulness</i> ”. |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><i>And I can see that the crystal is kind of shining upward and downward...</i></p>  | <p>After the <i>NVC</i> insight provides relief, the <b>F</b> aspect steps forward again with more symbolizing.</p>  |
| <p><i>The light shining upward has to do with “uniqueness”...with realizing that every process is unique...and I want people to see that...Yes...</i></p>   | <p><b>F</b> continues with more symbolizing, that brings new <i>NVC needs</i> of “<i>consideration</i>”, of “<i>care</i>”, of “<i>valuing each process as unique</i>”.</p> |
| <p><i>And the light shining downward has to do with “universality”...with acknowledging that under every process there are universal needs that unite us as human beings...Hmm...</i></p>   | <p>And more symbolizing from the <b>F</b> process that brings new <i>NVC needs</i> of “<i>awareness</i>”, of “<i>connection</i>”, of “<i>interdependence</i>”.</p>         |
| <p><i>So that is what this crystal is about...It is about clarity, it has to do with contribution and meaning, and it wants me to bring clarity about the uniqueness of each process and at the same time about the universality of underlying human needs. Yes! Hmm...And I am sensing that something new appears...</i></p> | <p>This part of the process is summarized and resonated with both <b>F</b> and <i>NVC</i>, and the process goes on.</p>  |

## A FINAL REFLECTION ON REFLECTION

In this article we have explored how I have experienced the crossing of Focusing and *Nonviolent Communication*. Since the beginning, crossing both approaches has been natural, logical, and organic. We have seen how I started from some theoretical aspects that are common to and that differentiate both approaches. Then we have reviewed a bit of the history of crossings, a fact that encouraged me to find my own way of crossing them. We have examined instances in my practice that show how each approach can enrich the other. Finally, we have observed in detail what a combined process can look like.

As a conclusion, I want to stress that both in Focusing and in *Nonviolent Communication* we reflect in order to create a deeper connection: a deeper connection of the Listener with the Listened To (what is usually called “empathy”), but even more important, a deeper connection of the Listened To with his or her inner processes. Focusing invites us, among many other things, to appreciate the uniqueness of every human process, to enhance its originality and to follow its inner knowledge, because whatever is implied can become explicit with enough listening and care. Hence, the Listener is in a position of humility and awe, with a profound respect toward every expression that the Listened To uses, reflecting back the words as something precious and yet not completely unfolded. *Nonviolent Communication* guides us to see that under every human expression there are underlying universal human needs. This process fosters a sensation of interdependence and connection with all human

beings, and a confidence that we can connect with the motivation of every human being, even when we disagree with the *strategies* chosen to meet those *needs*. Also facilitated is the creation of an inner space where the *needs* that are alive can be acknowledged, and where *strategies* can be considered from a new perspective that includes as many *needs* as possible. Having both considerations in our consciousness will make us more respectful toward the life that is expressed in the words and gestures of the Listened To, and at the same time more attentive to our common human nature. Let us continue working to find deeper implications by listening and saying back from the crossing of these perspectives—and from many more.

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**F. Javier Romeo-Biedma** is a clinical psychologist and a Certified Focusing Professional based in Madrid, Spain. He has been using Focusing when accompanying people with their inner processes and sharing it since 2009. He has also been using and teaching his understanding of Nonviolent Communication since 2007. He currently works with at-risk youth in a non-profit organization, as well as at Espirales Consultoría de Infancia (an international consultancy firm specializing in childhood, affectivity, protection and communication—[www.espiralesci.es](http://www.espiralesci.es)) and he also has a private practice and teaches at Conexión Más Auténtica ([www.conexionmasautentica.es](http://www.conexionmasautentica.es)). He can be reached at [javier@conexionmasautentica.es](mailto:javier@conexionmasautentica.es).