

1. Empathy exercise for 2 or more people:

Here's how I like to use the cards to give people an experience of Feelings & Needs- style Empathy, especially with people who have no knowledge of, or exposure to, NVC. You can do this in pairs, or small groups of up to four people.

One person is the Storyteller and the other(s) are Listeners. The Storyteller holds the Feelings cards and the Listener(s) split up the Needs cards.

The Storyteller briefly tells the story of any (preferable recent) incident in their life which has stirred up feelings: the stronger the better. The other(s) listen silently. After telling the story, the Storyteller goes through the Feelings cards, silently reading them and selecting those which feel alive for them, laying them down on the table in front of them.

Then the listener(s) take turns guessing Needs which may relate to the Feelings cards shown, laying down one Need card at a time on the Feeling card it seems to connect with. They do this silently, just by looking through the cards in their hand, and selecting ones that they think/feel fit the feelings words. There can be any number of Needs cards placed on top of the Feelings cards, layered as you would in solitaire, so you can see the Feeling word and all the Needs words in a stack.

After all the cards have been placed which seem to be appropriate, the Storyteller may, if they wish, pick up one or a few Needs cards and say how those words particularly resonated for them.

Then the cards are gathered up and redistributed for the next round, with a different person taking the Storyteller role.

It is important that there is no discussion, just the placing of the cards and the Storyteller's expression.

2. Solitaire

Something with juice to it has happened and you want to do some self-connecting.

Thinking about the incident, go through the Feelings cards slowly, one by one, laying down each one that seems to have an emotional "hit," or that gives you a sensation anywhere in your body. There may be a lot. Spread them all out.

Now go through the Needs cards, one by one, again noting which ones have a "hit" for you. At this point, do not try to relate them to the Feelings cards, unless there is an immediate and obvious connection. After you have chosen all the Needs cards that you want from the deck, go through them again, this time grouping them with the Feelings cards that connect. You may find at this point that the feelings also are seeming to come together in a few groups. Keep rearranging and sitting with the cards until some inner shift or release happens in your body.

To extend this further, you may want to do some free journaling or art, stimulated by the cards.