

Self-Empathy & Self-Empowerment

Myra Walden

Engage in this practice to transform anger, release pain, increase clarity about your needs in a difficult situation, and gain insight about how to meet your needs.

1. **Situation** Write down what happened without adding your thoughts, feelings, or interpretation about the situation. For example, “My son said, ‘I can’t take this’ and left the house” or “My supervisor said that I need to improve my productivity rate.”
2. **Judging and Blaming** If you are feeling angry, write a letter addressed to the person, and express any and all judgments, criticism, and blame—uncensored. Express judgments without justification (“I have a right to be angry”) or self-condemnation (“I shouldn’t judge people”). Continue in this manner until you experience an organic shift. Then, tear up the letter.
3. **Sensations** Bring your attention to your body. What physical sensations do you notice? Use the sensations inventory, to help you.
4. **Feelings** How do you feel now about the situation? Write it down.
5. **Needs** What needs of yours are/were not met in this situation? What is the most important need in this situation? Write it down.
6. **Mourning** Connect with this need in your body. What are your physical sensations? Experience the pain of the unmet need fully; feel the sorrow; cry, if you are able. Spend plenty of time here.
7. **Inner Silence** When you experience a shift, and not before, place a hand on your chest next to the heart, and find inside a place of silence. Rest there for three minutes. If you are unable to find this universal place of silence, go back to the first step and write down thoughts and judgments, and find the unmet needs underlying the judgments. Then, come back to the inner silence.
8. **Strategy** Ask yourself, “What can I do at this time to meet my needs in this situation?” Rather than thinking about the answer, allow a response to arise from intuition. If a response arises from intuition, write it down. If not, keep the question alive in you until the action becomes clear.

Adapted from the work of Marshall Rosenberg | Center for Nonviolent Communication | cnvc.org

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