

# HOLY CONVERSATION

“Be ye holy in  
all manner of  
conversation.”  
(1 Peter 1:15)



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# **SH'MIRAT HA'LASHON**

**“It is not what goes into  
the mouth that defiles a  
person, but what comes  
out of the mouth; this  
defiles a person.” (Mat  
15:11, ESV)**



# HUMILITY & EMPATHY

“Do nothing out of selfishness or conceit, but with humility consider others as more important than yourselves, looking out not only for your own interests but also for the interests of others.” (Php 2:3-4, TLV)

**Humility** = Making space for others.



If "violent" means acting in ways that result in hurt or harm, then much of how we communicate could indeed be called "violent" communication.

# *Nonviolent* **COMMUNICATION**

A Language of Life



Words and the way we think matters.  
Find common ground with anyone, anywhere,  
at any time, both personally and professionally.

**MARSHALL B. ROSENBERG, PhD**

Foreword by **Deepak Chopra**

Endorsed by Satya Nadella, Arun Gandhi, Tony Robbins,  
Marianne Williamson, John Gray, Jack Canfield, Dr. Thomas Gordon, and others

## **NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION**

**Nonviolent Communication (NVC)** is a conflict resolution framework developed by Dr. Marshall Rosenberg, for practicing humility and empathy in our day-to-day conversations.

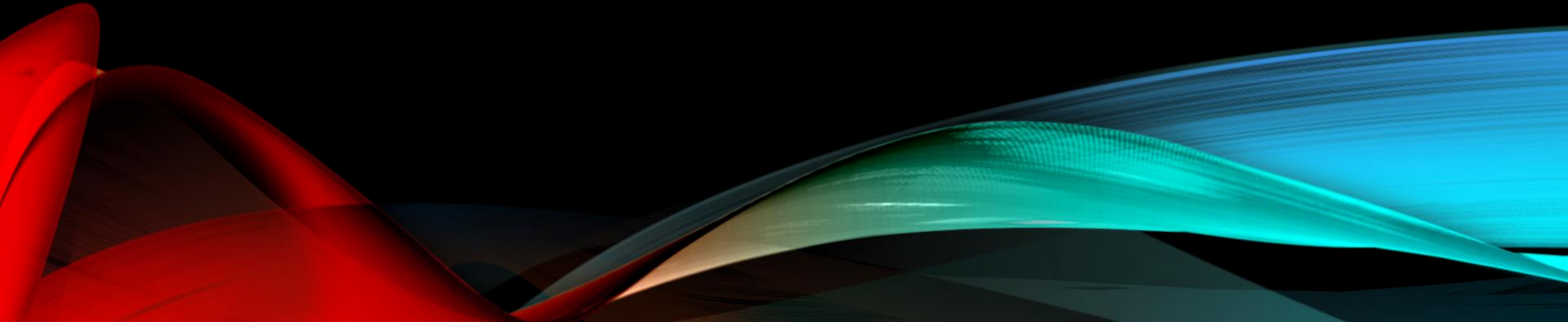
NVC slows us down and helps us speak in a way that honors both our own needs and the needs of others — without judgment or accusation.

“

“LET NO HARMFUL LANGUAGE COME FROM YOUR MOUTH, ONLY GOOD WORDS THAT ARE HELPFUL IN MEETING THE NEED, WORDS THAT WILL BENEFIT THOSE WHO HEAR THEM.”

”

Eph 4:29, CJB





# NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION



**Observation** – Describing what happened without judgment or interpretation.

**Feeling** – Naming the emotion we're experiencing in response to the observation.

**Need** – Identifying the universal human value or longing connected to that feeling.

**Request** – Asking for a specific action that could help meet that need.

# 1. OBSERVATION – SEEING WITHOUT JUDGEMENT

Humility in conversation begins with the courage to see what's happening without assigning blame, moral verdicts, or hidden motives.

An **observation** is a simple, verifiable description — what could be captured on camera or heard in an audio recording. A **judgment or evaluation** adds interpretation, assumption, and often a moral verdict.



"Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment." (Jhn 7:24, NAS95)

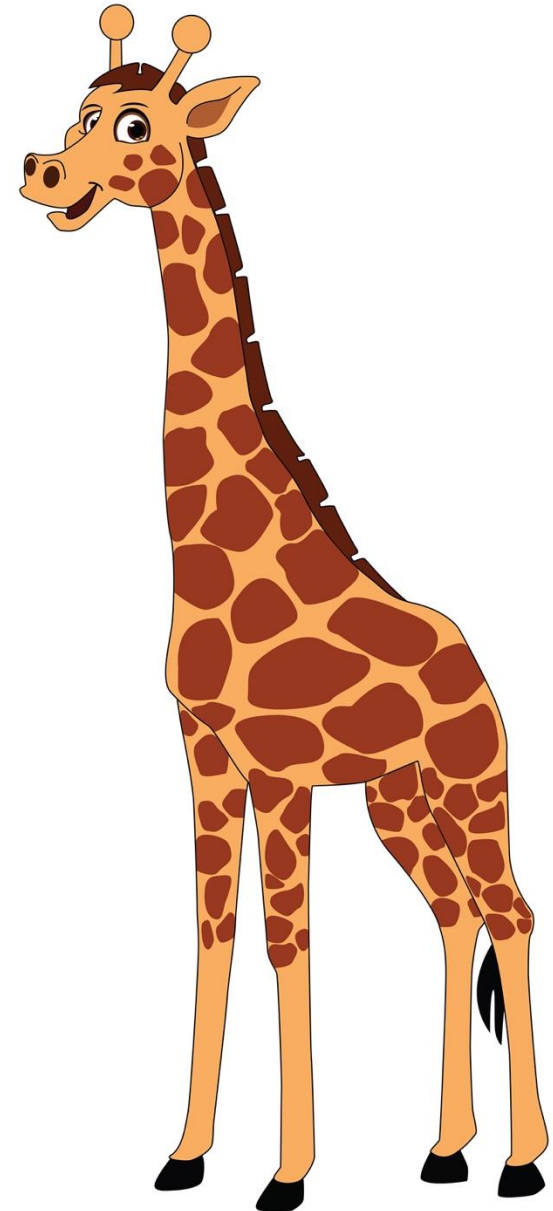
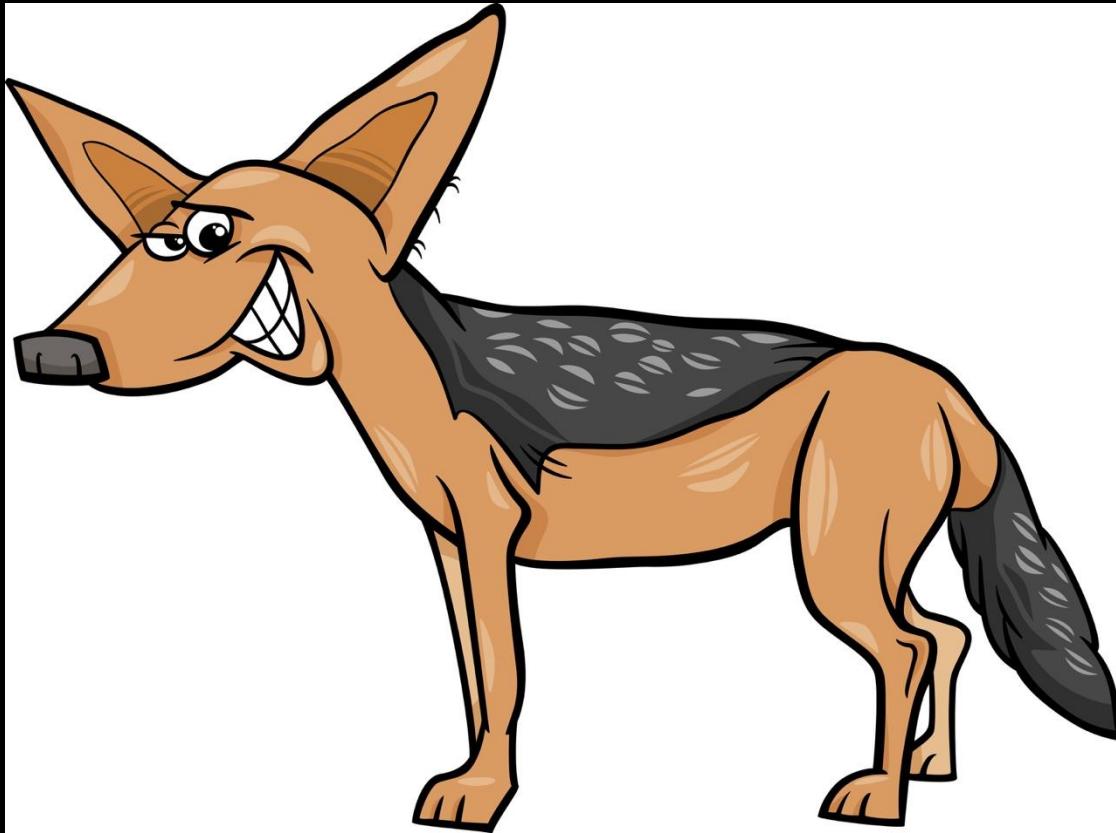
# TYPES OF JUDGMENT

While Adonai charges us to practice righteous judgment, most of the judgments people make about others are unrighteous.

- **Value Judgments** express the qualities we believe serve life—honesty, freedom, kindness, peace. These reflect our **beliefs** for how life can best flourish.
- **Moralistic Judgments** are about labeling people as right or wrong, good or bad, based on whether they meet our values. They often imply that someone is “less than” or deserving of punishment if they fall short. Example: *“He is a lazy and terrible person.”*



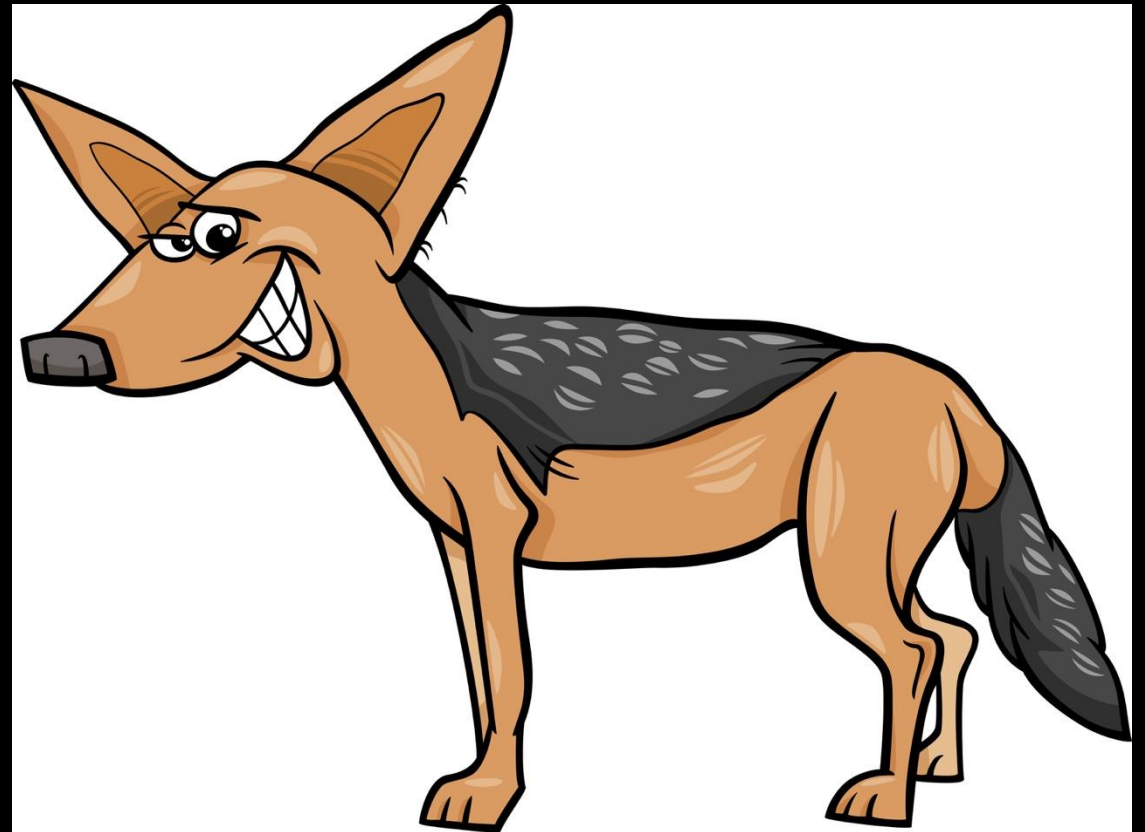
# JACKAL & GIRAFFE



# THE JACKAL

The **jackal** = life-alienating communication. As an animal, the jackal is low to the ground, a scavenger, competitive, and fierce.

It represents the reactive voice inside us that views the world through **right/wrong**, **good/bad** dualities and seeks to control through fear, guilt, and shame.



# JACKAL: THE INNER INTERPRETER

A **defense attorney** – “I have every right to feel this way.”

A **mind reader** – “She said that because she thinks I’m incompetent.”

A **spiritual judge** – “The Spirit showed me their true heart.”

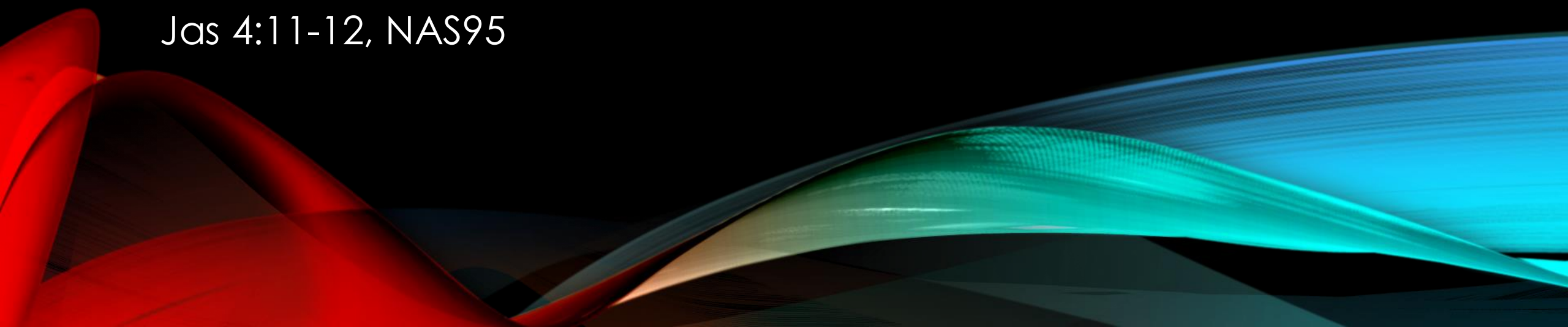
A **historian** – “They always do this; they never change.”

A **director** – “I know where this is going, I’ve seen it before.”



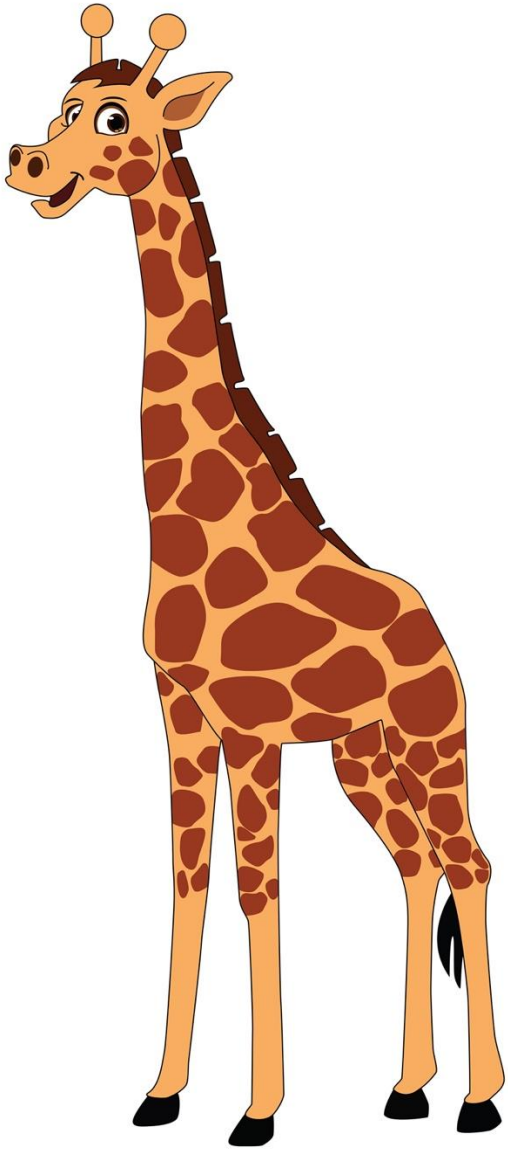
“Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it. There is only one lawgiver and judge, the one who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor?”

Jas 4:11-12, NAS95

The bottom of the image features an abstract graphic with flowing, wavy lines. On the left, there are vibrant red waves. On the right, there are bright blue waves. In the center, where the red and blue waves meet, there is a glowing greenish-cyan wave. The overall effect is dynamic and colorful against the dark background.

# JACKAL'S FOUR D'S OF DISCONNECTION

- **Deserving** – Sorting people into those who deserve reward and those who deserve punishment.  
*“She doesn’t deserve my trust after what she did.”*
- **Diagnosing** – Judging, labeling, and making assumptions about motives.  
*“The problem with you is that you’re selfish.”*
- **Denying Choice** – Using guilt and blame to avoid responsibility.  
*“I have to do it because you won’t.” or “You made me so angry.”*
- **Demanding** – Pushing compliance through fear or control.  
*“You’d better do this if you know what’s good for you.”*



# THE GIRAFFE - COMPASSION

In contrast to the Jackal, the **giraffe** represents life-serving communication. With the largest heart of any land animal and the longest neck for perspective, the giraffe reminds us to speak from the heart and keep the bigger picture in view – one of humility – God, others, self.



# GIRAFFE'S FOUR R'S OF CONNECTION

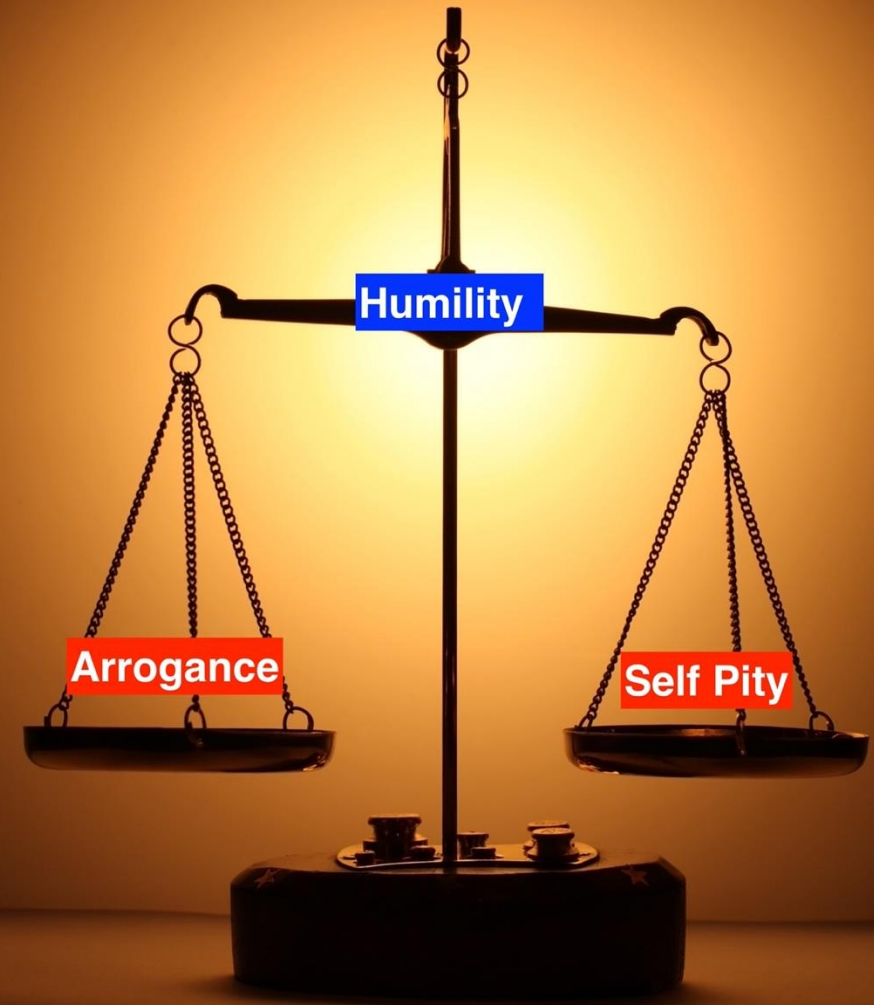
- **Remembering** – We are all unique, interconnected, and interdependent.
- **Respecting** – Ourselves and others, knowing we're all trying to meet legitimate needs.
- **Taking Responsibility** – For our beliefs, feelings, thoughts, and actions.
- **Requesting** – Inviting, not demanding, and accepting “yes” or “no” as a step toward dialogue.

# OBSERVATION & RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT

The clearest way to silence the jackal and speak giraffe is to start with an observation. An **observation** is a simple, verifiable description. Ask: *Could this be recorded on video or audio exactly as I'm describing it?* If not, it's probably a judgment.

- **Judgment/Evaluation:** "You've been ignoring me."
- **Observation:** "We haven't spoken in two months."

Humility keeps us from  
usurping God's role as  
Judge of hearts.  
Observation keeps us  
tethered to truth instead  
of imagination. And  
empathy—rooted in  
humility—keeps our hearts  
open long enough for  
reconciliation to be  
possible.





## 2. FEELINGS

- Take Responsibility for your own emotions.
- This does not mean dismissing hurt or excusing harmful behavior.
- Instead, it ensures that your response is governed by the Spirit rather than by emotional reactivity.

“No matter what has happened, we are all responsible for how we feel one hundred percent of the time. How we feel is a direct reflection of our thoughts, [beliefs, and values]. Change your perspective about an incident and you will change how you feel.”

Salaberrios, Micah. *The Art of Nonviolent Communication* (p. 22). Brackets mine

# the brain's response to STRESS



AMYGDALA

The brain's  
alarm center.  
Detects threats.

Starts stress  
response



HYPOTHALAMUS

The brain's  
operation manager.  
Releases stress  
hormones.

Prepares you  
for fight  
or flight



HIPPOCAMPUS

The brain's  
biographer.  
Retrieves memories  
from the past.

Anticipates  
what will  
happen



PREFRONTAL CORTEX

The brain's CEO.  
Analyzes information  
and designs a response.

Creates a plan  
to respond to  
stress

## NAMING EMOTIONS

In conflict, our brain is operating from the limbic system—the emotional center that includes the amygdala, our built-in alarm system. While the amygdala is helpful in emergencies, it can be destructive in relationships. Neuroscience shows that when we label our feelings, we engage the prefrontal cortex—the brain's reasoning and empathy center.

# SAYING “I FEEL” WHEN WE ACTUALLY MEAN “I THINK”

- **Judgment disguised as feeling:** “I feel manipulated.”  
**Pure feeling:** “I feel uneasy and anxious about this conversation.”
- **Judgment disguised as feeling:** “I feel rejected.”  
**Pure feeling:** “I feel lonely and hurt when I don’t hear back from you.”
- **Evaluation disguised as feeling:** “I feel attacked.”  
**Pure feeling:** “I feel tense and unsafe when voices get raised.”
- **Evaluation disguised as feeling:** “I feel like you’re not listening to me.”
- **Pure Feeling:** I am feeling concerned and annoyed with our conversation.





# GIVING EMPATHY TO OTHER'S FEELINGS

- **Part of responsibility in communication is ensuring the other person's feelings are adequately heard.**
- Sometimes this means gently guessing what they might be feeling—not to project or assume, but to offer a bridge: “It sounds like you might be feeling... Is that right?” Even if we miss the mark, we show that their inner life matters enough for us to try.

“Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, to know how you ought to answer everyone.” (Col 4:6, TLV)

### 3. NEEDS OR VALUES BEHIND EMOTIONS

Needs are the things we can't live without like air, food, water, and shelter. But they also represent our values, wants, dreams, desires and preferences for a happier and/or more meaningful experience as a human. Although we have different needs in differing amounts at different times, they are universal in all of us. When they are unmet, we experience feelings, and when they are met, we experience feelings.

# RECOGNIZING OUR NEED OR VALUE GIVES CLARITY

- **Anger** may signal a need for fairness, safety, or respect.
- **Sadness** may reveal a need for comfort, connection, or reassurance.
- **Anxiety** may point to a need for security, stability, or guidance.
- **Frustration** may signal a need for progress, clarity, or effectiveness.
- **Loneliness** may reveal a need for belonging, intimacy, or companionship.



When we see the need beneath the emotion, our perspective shifts. Where we once assumed bad motives or sinfulness, we now see an unmet need—an opportunity for empathy instead of judgment.

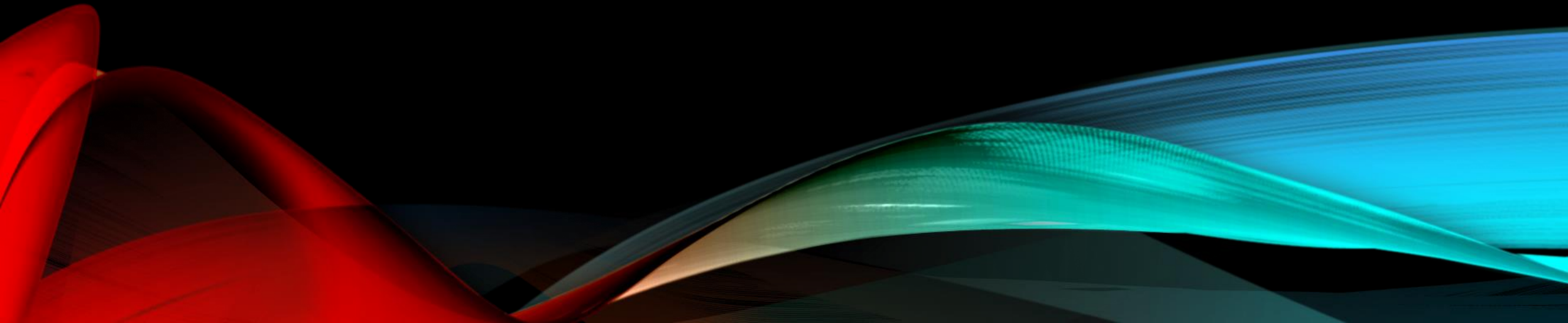
**“The intent of a man’s heart is deep water, but a man of insight draws it out.”  
(Pro 20:5, TLV)**

Identifying needs is not about excusing hurtful actions, it is about moving from accusation to curiosity. It opens the possibility for understanding, for asking questions that draw out the heart, and for finding solutions that honor both parties.



“ WHEN WE CAN SAY, “I’M FEELING ANXIOUS BECAUSE I  
NEED REASSURANCE ABOUT THIS DECISION,”

WE GIVE THE OTHER PERSON SOMETHING CONCRETE TO  
RESPOND TO, SOMETHING THAT CAN BE DISCUSSED, ”  
NEGOTIATED, OR SUPPORTED. IN CONTRAST, “YOU’RE  
MAKING ME ANXIOUS” BLAMES, ACCUSES, AND CLOSES  
THE DOOR.



## Needs also invite prayer.

When we name a need before God, we position ourselves to receive from Him first, whether through His direct comfort or through the help of others.

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up **according to their needs**, that it may benefit those who listen.” (Eph 4:29, NIV)



Your Father knows what you  
need before you ask Him.  
Mt. 6:8



# NEEDS: JACKAL VS GIRAFFE

**Jackal** often disguises needs behind **demands, moralistic judgments, or blame**:

“You *should* listen to me.” (need for being heard)

“You’re selfish.” (need for cooperation)

“You never spend time with me.” (need for connection)

**Giraffe** makes needs **explicit and mutual**:

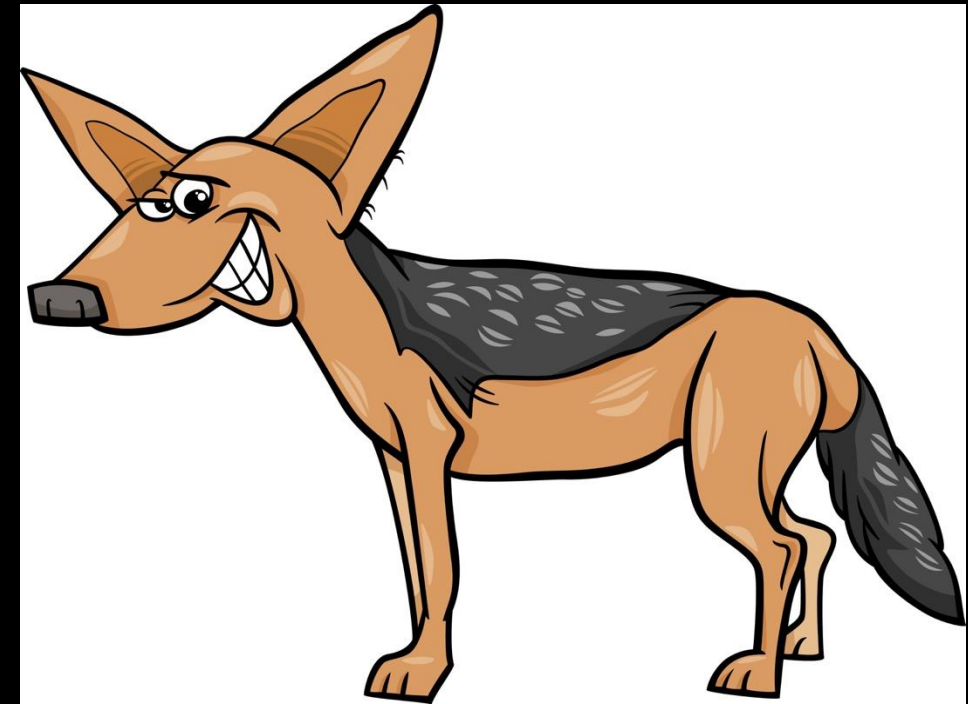
“I need to know my voice matters in our conversations.”

“I’m longing for more cooperation as we share this workload.”

“I’d like to spend more time together because I value our friendship.”

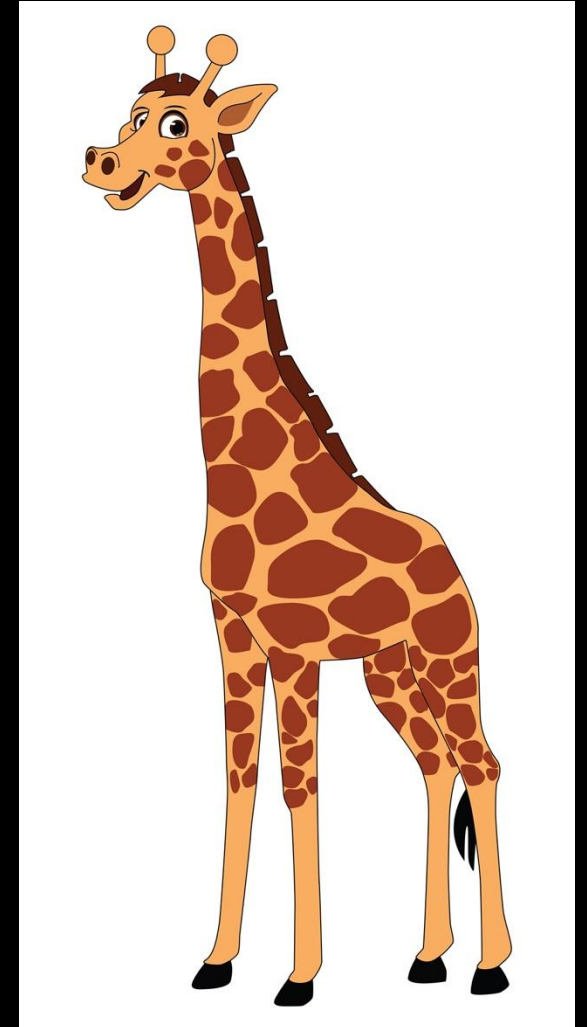
# FOUR D'S OF A JACKAL

- **Deserving** – “I’ve worked hard all day; I *deserve* to be left alone.”
- **Diagnosing** – “You’re lazy; that’s why you didn’t help.”
- **Denying Choice** – “I have to do everything around here because no one else will.”
- **Demanding** – “You *must* call me every day.”



# FOUR R'S OF A GIRAFFE

- **Remembering** – “I’m needing some rest and quiet after a long day, and I know you need time together—can we plan both?”
- **Respecting** – “I need help with the chores, and I respect that you’ve had a full schedule too—can we divide the tasks?”
- **Taking Responsibility** – “I feel overwhelmed doing this alone, and I’d like to find a way we can share the work.”
- **Requesting** – “I feel connected when we talk regularly—would you be willing to check in each week?”





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- **Jackal language** tells people what they've done wrong.
  - **Giraffe language** tells people what would make life better—for both of you.

When we connect our emotions to our needs, we gain insight, self-control, and compassion. We also prepare ourselves for the next step: expressing those needs in the form of a clear, respectful request, rather than a demand.

**“Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way you fulfill the Torah of Messiah.” (Gal 6:2, TLV)**

## 4: REQUESTS

A request is simply an **invitation to meet a need**—yours or another's—in a way that keeps the dignity of both people intact. The request is the ebb and flow of giving and receiving, back and forth, that provides the opportunity for everyone's needs to be met.

- A **demand** communicates: *“Do this or else you’ll be judged, rejected, shamed, or punished.”*
- A **request** communicates: *“Here’s what I would like—are you willing?”* and leaves room for freedom, dialogue, and even a “no” without retaliation.

When people hear a demand, they immediately weigh how to protect their own autonomy. Even if they comply, it will likely be from fear, guilt, or resentment, not from a place of love and giving from the heart.

Making requests also tests the sincerity of our humility. Philippians 2:4 says, *"Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others."* A request honors the other person's perspective and interests too. It says, "I value you enough to ask, not assume or coerce."





When we turn needs into demands, we put the relationship at risk—because if the demand isn't met, the next step is judgment and punishment, which is how idols of the heart are created.

But when we turn needs into requests, we plant seeds for mutual understanding and cooperation.





# WHY WE AVOID REQUESTS

- Fear rejection or disappointment.
- Assume the other person “should” already know what we need.
- Confuse hinting or complaining with asking.
- Worry about being a burden.
- Equate asking with weakness.
- Struggle with clarity.
- Default to demands.

# QUIT SHOULDING YOURSELF

- **Criticism, not clarity:** Saying “You should have...” only tells the person what they did wrong, not what they can do differently next time.
- **Breeds guilt and shame:** Internally, “I should...” fuels self-criticism and feelings of inadequacy, draining energy and focus.
- **Creates resistance:** People rarely feel motivated to change when they feel judged or shamed. Instead, they push back or shut down.
- **Focuses on the past:** Since no one can go back in time, “should” statements highlight failures rather than offering actionable steps for the future.
- **Undermines connection:** Whether in parenting, leadership, or friendship, “should” communicates disappointment, not care.
- **Turns needs into demands:** “You should do this for me” replaces an honest request with pressure or obligation.

# COERCION OR COMPASSION?



The Bible presents a morality rooted in love, not merely rules. True compassion flows from deep connection and empathy (relationship), not from obligation or fear of breaking the Law. Yeshua acted out of heartfelt compassion—sharing in people's pain—not because He “should.”

Rules can restrain behavior, but **love transforms it.**

# TURNING SHOULD AROUND

Instead of “should,” use language that emphasizes **choice, possibility, and values**:

- “I would like...”
- “I will...”
- “I could...”
- “Next time, please...”
- “It helps me when...”

**Instead of:** “*You should have picked up your towel.*”

**Try:** “*Next time, please hang the towel to dry so the bathroom stays fresh.*”



# MAKING EFFECTIVE REQUESTS

- **Specific and Concrete** – “Would you be willing to call me when you’re running late?” instead of “Don’t keep me waiting.”
- **Positive** – Focus on what you do want, not what you don’t.
- **Present and Actionable** – Something that can be done here and now, not a vague future hope.
- **Mutual** – Open to negotiation, recognizing the other person’s needs too.

# EXPRESSING WITH HONESTY

- When we express with honesty, which requires vulnerability, we give others the gift of knowing our heart without them having to guess. This means:
- **Honestly expressing** nonjudgmental observations, your own feelings, and needs.
- Making clear, detailed requests rather than hinting, complaining, or assuming the other person “should just know.”



# LISTENING WITH EMPATHY



Providing empathy means listening in a way that draws the other person out and helps them connect with their own heart.

- **Presence** – staying focused on them without distraction.
- **Space** – resisting the urge to jump in with your own story or opinion or solution.
- **Verbal reflection** of feelings and needs: “Are you feeling...?” “Are you needing...?”

Avoiding the habits that shut down connection: Advising, Fixing, Consoling, Storytelling, Sympathizing, Analyzing, Explaining, Defending



Holy conversation is more than polite speech, it is a way of life shaped by humility, empathy, truth, and love.

It guards the “gates” of our words so that what passes through builds bridges, not walls. When we practice awareness, avoid premature judgments, own our emotions, identify the needs beneath them, and make gracious requests, we become humble Peacemakers.



# THE FOUR NVC STEPS IN ACTION

- **Observation:** *“When I hear (or see)...*
- **Feelings:** *I feel... because*
- **Needs:** *I need...*
- **Requests:** *Would you be willing to...?”*