

# NVC Feelings & Needs Guide

Nonviolent Communication (NVC) · Feelings, Faux Feelings & Universal Needs

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## What Are Faux Feelings?

In Nonviolent Communication, a *faux feeling* (also called a “faux emotion” or “evaluation masquerading as a feeling”) is a word that sounds like a feeling but actually describes an interpretation or judgment about what another person did. These words are easy to confuse with genuine emotions because they often follow “I feel...” — but they are not true feelings.

### THE CORE DISTINCTION

- ◆ A **real feeling** lives inside you — it describes your internal emotional state.
- ◆ A **faux feeling** describes what someone else did to you — it is a story, an accusation, or an interpretation.

### The Magic Test

Ask yourself: “Is this word describing *me* or describing *them*?” If it describes what the other person did → it’s a faux feeling. If it describes what’s happening inside your body and heart → it’s a real feeling.

### Why It Matters

A faux feeling sounds like an accusation, and the listener goes into defense mode. A real feeling is hard to argue with — it’s very hard to argue with someone’s pain. Real feelings open a door to connection.

### Instead of saying... try saying...

#### INSTEAD OF SAYING...

*“I feel ignored.”*

*“I feel manipulated.”*

*“I feel rejected.”*

*“I feel controlled.”*

*“I feel abandoned.”*

#### TRY SAYING...

*“I feel lonely and hurt.”*

*“I feel angry and distrustful.”*

*“I feel hurt and sad.”*

*“I feel frustrated and trapped.”*

*“I feel lonely and scared.”*

## Faux Feelings → Real Feelings Reference

The following table maps common faux feelings to the actual emotions underneath them.

FAUX FEELING	ACTUAL FEELINGS
<b>Abandoned</b>	lonely, frightened, hurt, anxious, sad, desperate
<b>Abused</b>	hurt, angry, humiliated, frightened, powerless, devastated
<b>Accused</b>	anxious, defensive, indignant, hurt, angry
<b>Attacked</b>	frightened, angry, hurt, defensive, panicked
<b>Belittled</b>	humiliated, angry, hurt, resentful, sad
<b>Betrayed</b>	hurt, angry, devastated, shocked, disillusioned
<b>Blamed</b>	angry, hurt, defensive, anxious, resentful
<b>Bullied</b>	frightened, angry, humiliated, powerless, sad
<b>Cheapened</b>	hurt, disgusted, resentful, sad
<b>Cheated</b>	angry, hurt, resentful, indignant
<b>Coerced</b>	angry, frightened, resentful, powerless, trapped
<b>Condemned</b>	hurt, angry, ashamed, hopeless, indignant
<b>Controlled</b>	angry, resentful, trapped, frustrated, anxious
<b>Cornered</b>	frightened, angry, desperate, panicked, trapped
<b>Criticized</b>	hurt, defensive, angry, ashamed, discouraged
<b>Devalued</b>	hurt, sad, angry, resentful, discouraged
<b>Diminished</b>	hurt, angry, sad, embarrassed, resentful
<b>Discredited</b>	angry, hurt, indignant, embarrassed, anxious
<b>Dismissed</b>	hurt, angry, sad, discouraged, frustrated
<b>Disparaged</b>	hurt, angry, humiliated, resentful, sad
<b>Disrespected</b>	angry, hurt, indignant, resentful, sad

*Faux Feelings → Real Feelings, continued*

<b>FAUX FEELING</b>	<b>ACTUAL FEELINGS</b>
<b>Distrusted</b>	hurt, sad, angry, anxious, discouraged
<b>Excluded</b>	lonely, hurt, sad, angry, embarrassed
<b>Harassed</b>	frightened, angry, overwhelmed, anxious, resentful
<b>Ignored</b>	lonely, hurt, sad, angry, invisible
<b>Insulted</b>	angry, hurt, humiliated, indignant, resentful
<b>Interrupted</b>	frustrated, annoyed, angry, hurt
<b>Intimidated</b>	frightened, anxious, powerless, angry
<b>Invalidated</b>	hurt, angry, frustrated, sad, discouraged
<b>Judged</b>	hurt, angry, ashamed, anxious, defensive
<b>Let down</b>	hurt, sad, disappointed, angry, discouraged
<b>Manipulated</b>	angry, betrayed, hurt, resentful, distrustful
<b>Micromanaged</b>	frustrated, resentful, anxious, angry, powerless
<b>Misunderstood</b>	frustrated, lonely, hurt, sad, discouraged
<b>Mistrusted</b>	hurt, sad, indignant, angry, discouraged
<b>Neglected</b>	lonely, hurt, sad, angry, anxious
<b>Offended</b>	angry, hurt, indignant, disgusted, sad
<b>Oppressed</b>	angry, powerless, resentful, hopeless, trapped
<b>Patronized</b>	angry, humiliated, resentful, frustrated, indignant
<b>Pressured</b>	anxious, resentful, overwhelmed, angry, trapped
<b>Provoked</b>	angry, frustrated, indignant, agitated, resentful
<b>Put down</b>	hurt, humiliated, angry, sad, resentful

*Faux Feelings → Real Feelings, continued*

<b>FAUX FEELING</b>	<b>ACTUAL FEELINGS</b>
<b>Rejected</b>	hurt, sad, lonely, angry, ashamed
<b>Ridiculed</b>	humiliated, angry, hurt, ashamed, sad
<b>Ripped off</b>	angry, indignant, resentful, frustrated, betrayed
<b>Scapegoated</b>	angry, hurt, indignant, powerless, resentful
<b>Shamed</b>	humiliated, devastated, angry, sad, exposed
<b>Taken for granted</b>	hurt, resentful, sad, angry, lonely
<b>Threatened</b>	frightened, angry, anxious, panicked, powerless
<b>Tricked</b>	angry, hurt, betrayed, humiliated, indignant
<b>Trivialized</b>	hurt, angry, sad, frustrated, resentful
<b>Unappreciated</b>	hurt, sad, resentful, discouraged, lonely
<b>Unheard</b>	frustrated, lonely, hurt, sad, angry
<b>Unloved</b>	lonely, sad, hurt, anxious, despairing
<b>Unseen</b>	lonely, sad, hurt, discouraged
<b>Unsupported</b>	lonely, anxious, hurt, sad, overwhelmed
<b>Unwanted</b>	lonely, sad, hurt, ashamed
<b>Used</b>	angry, hurt, resentful, betrayed, sad
<b>Victimized</b>	powerless, angry, hurt, frightened, hopeless
<b>Vilified</b>	hurt, angry, indignant, devastated, humiliated
<b>Violated</b>	angry, frightened, hurt, disgusted, powerless
<b>Wronged</b>	angry, hurt, indignant, resentful, sad

## Feelings When Needs Are Met

Expanding your emotional vocabulary deepens self-awareness and enhances how you connect with yourself and others.

CATEGORY	FEELINGS
<b>Affectionate</b>	compassionate, friendly, loving, open hearted, sympathetic, tender, warm
<b>Confident</b>	empowered, open, proud, safe, secure
<b>Engaged</b>	absorbed, alert, curious, enchanted, engrossed, entranced, fascinated, interested, intrigued, involved, spellbound, stimulated
<b>Excited</b>	amazed, animated, ardent, aroused, astonished, dazzled, eager, energetic, enthusiastic, giddy, invigorated, lively, passionate, surprised, vibrant
<b>Exhilarated</b>	blissful, ecstatic, elated, enthralled, exuberant, radiant, rapturous, thrilled
<b>Grateful</b>	appreciative, moved, thankful, touched
<b>Hopeful</b>	expectant, encouraged, optimistic
<b>Inspired</b>	amazed, awed, wonder
<b>Joyful</b>	amused, delighted, glad, happy, jubilant, pleased, tickled
<b>Peaceful</b>	calm, centered, clear headed, comfortable, content, equanimous, fulfilled, mellow, quiet, relaxed, relieved, satisfied, serene, still, tranquil, trusting
<b>Refreshed</b>	enlivened, rejuvenated, renewed, rested, restored, revived

## Feelings When Needs Are *Not* Met

Naming the harder feelings precisely helps you locate the unmet need beneath them.

CATEGORY	FEELINGS
<b>Afraid</b>	apprehensive, dread, foreboding, frightened, mistrustful, panicked, petrified, scared, suspicious, terrified, wary, worried
<b>Angry</b>	enraged, furious, incensed, indignant, irate, livid, outraged, resentful
<b>Annoyed</b>	aggravated, disgruntled, dismayed, displeased, exasperated, frustrated, impatient, irked, irritated
<b>Aversion</b>	animosity, appalled, contempt, disgusted, dislike, hate, horrified, hostile, repulsed
<b>Confused</b>	ambivalent, baffled, bewildered, dazed, hesitant, lost, mystified, perplexed, puzzled, torn
<b>Disconnected</b>	alienated, aloof, apathetic, bored, cold, detached, distant, distracted, indifferent, numb, removed, uninterested, withdrawn
<b>Disquiet</b>	agitated, alarmed, discombobulated, disconcerted, disturbed, perturbed, rattled, restless, shocked, startled, surprised, troubled, turbulent, uncomfortable, uneasy, unnerved, unsettled, upset
<b>Embarrassed</b>	ashamed, chagrined, flustered, guilty, mortified, self-conscious
<b>Fatigue</b>	beat, burnt out, depleted, exhausted, lethargic, listless, sleepy, tired, weary, worn out
<b>Pain</b>	agony, anguished, bereaved, devastated, grief, heartbroken, hurt, lonely, miserable, regretful, remorseful
<b>Sad</b>	dejected, depressed, despair, despondent, disappointed, discouraged, disheartened, forlorn, gloomy, heavy hearted, hopeless, melancholy, unhappy, wretched
<b>Tense</b>	anxious, cranky, distressed, distraught, edgy, fidgety, frazzled, irritable, jittery, nervous, overwhelmed, restless, stressed out
<b>Vulnerable</b>	fragile, guarded, helpless, insecure, leery, reserved, sensitive, shaky
<b>Yearning</b>	envious, jealous, longing, nostalgic, pining, wistful

# Universal Human Needs

Expressing our own needs and acknowledging the needs of others enables us to create common ground.

NEED CATEGORY	SPECIFIC NEEDS
<b>Autonomy</b>	authenticity, choice, freedom, honesty, independence, individuality, integrity, liberty, presence, self empowerment, solitude, space, spontaneity
<b>Celebration of Life</b>	aliveness, authenticity, communion, creativity, delight, dreams, excitement, growth, humor, integrity, intensity, meaning, mourning, passion, pleasure, purpose, self respect, self worth, stimulation, values, vision
<b>Connection</b>	acceptance, affection, appreciation, belonging, closeness, communication, community, companionship, compassion, consideration, consistency, cooperation, empathy, inclusion, intimacy, love, mutuality, nurturing, respect, safety, security, self respect, stability, support, to be known, to be seen, to be understood, trust, warmth
<b>Interdependence</b>	acceptance, affection, appreciation, being heard, being seen, belonging, closeness, communication, community, companionship, connection, consideration, consistency, contribution, cooperation, emotional freedom, emotional safety, empathy, equality, friendship, honesty, intimacy, love, predictability, reassurance, reliability, respect, sharing, stability, support, trust, understanding
<b>Meaning</b>	awareness, celebration of life, challenge, clarity, competence, consciousness, contribution, creativity, discovery, efficacy, effectiveness, growth, hope
<b>Mental</b>	clarity, comprehension, consciousness, discernment, information, reflection, stimulation, thinking, understanding
<b>Play</b>	adventure, fun, humor, joy, laughter, relaxation
<b>Peace</b>	beauty, communion, ease, equality, harmony, inspiration, order
<b>Physical Nurturance</b>	air, bonding, comfort, exercise, movement, nourishment, physical affection, rest, safety, sexual expression, shelter, sunlight, tenderness, touch, water
<b>Spiritual Communion</b>	awareness, beauty, giving, grace, gratitude, harmony, inspiration, mastery, order, peace, serving

Source: NVC Academy · NVC Library ([nvcacademy.com](http://nvcacademy.com) / [nvclibrary.com](http://nvclibrary.com)) — Based on the Nonviolent Communication framework developed by Marshall B. Rosenberg, Ph.D.