Nonviolent Communication Reading Guide
Created by Rose Bloomberg-Rissman, with permission of the publishers.


The methods taught in Nonviolent Communication can help you understand what other people mean when they speak to you. The methods can also help you learn how to communicate with others in a clear and effective manner. You may find it helpful to use this guide as you are reading the book to ensure that you are focusing on the sections we find essential to Real Diaper Circle leaders.

Chapter One: Giving From the Heart

How does the author define nonviolence?

What are the four components of the nonviolent communication process?

Chapter Two: Communication that Blocks Compassion

What is a moralistic judgment?

What is the difference between value judgments and moralistic judgments?

How have you seen the denial of responsibility effect a person’s decision to use (or not use) cloth diapers?

The author tells us that we cannot make people do anything. How does the knowledge that you cannot force people to use cloth diapers affect the way you discuss cloth diapering?

Chapter Three: Observing Without Evaluation

Please focus on pages 30 and 31.

Write two evaluations about yourself.

Write two observations about yourself.

Complete Exercise 1 on page 34.
Chapter Four: Identifying and Expressing Feelings

What is the difference between a feeling and a thought?

What are the advantages of expressing our feelings?

Which words on page 44 describe how you feel when you talk to others about cloth diapers?

Use these words to describe how you imagine you will feel when you are leading a Circle meeting? How do you want the people attending the meeting to feel? How will their feelings be different from their thoughts?

Complete Exercise 2 on page 47.

Chapter Five: Taking Responsibility for our Feelings

What are the four options one has when hearing a negative message?

How does the concept of giving from the heart versus motivating out of guilt show itself in helping others decide to use cloth diapers?

Give an example of motivating someone to use cloth diapers by using guilt, and explain why you do not want to motivate in that way.

What needs of yours, as described by the author on page 53, are going to be met by being a Real Diaper Circle Leader?

What are the stages that we pass through when moving towards emotional liberation?

Complete Exercise 3 on page 65.

Chapter Six: Requesting that which would Enrich Life

What is positive action language?

What is one problem with vague language?

On page 78, the author describes a situation where a group leader initiates a discussion that leads to unproductive conversation. How can you make sure that this doesn’t happen in your Circle?

How can you tell if a statement is a demand or a request?

The author says that when we speak to someone we are requesting something in return. What might you be requesting when you speak at a Circle meeting?
Please take the following sentences and rephrase them so that they use all four components of Nonviolent Communication.

I am quitting cloth diapering because prefolds are too hard to pin.

I wanted to try cloth diapers but my husband thinks it will be too hard.

Complete Exercise 4 on page 88

Chapter Seven: Receiving Empathically

How does the author define empathy?

What are the common behaviors that prevent us from connecting empathically? Which of these behaviors may be a habit for you?

When we use Nonviolent Communication techniques, what are we listening for?

Why would we need to rephrase during a Circle meeting? Give an example of a situation in which you would rephrase what a member has said.

In what situations in your Circle would you not want to rephrase?

Complete Exercise 5 on page 109.

Chapter 8: The Power of Empathy

How can we understand someone saying “No” without being hurt?

One important skill, how to interrupt a dead conversation, is discussed on page 122. How will you use this skill during Real Diaper Circle meetings? How can you revive a dead conversation in your Circle meeting?

Chapter Nine: Connecting Compassionately with Ourselves

In this chapter you consider how you speak to yourself when you make a mistake. What need is not being fulfilled in that moment?

Why does the author not support using the word “should”?

How do we change our perspective on something from “have to” to “choose to”?

Complete the activity on page 136.
Chapter Ten: Expressing Anger Fully

What are the four steps to expressing anger?

What is the difference between stimulus and cause?

What anger might you feel when acting as a Circle leader? How will you use Nonviolent Communication techniques to express that anger?

Chapter Eleven: The Protective Use of Force

What are the two kinds of use of force?

What are the two questions that show the limitations of punishment?

What kinds of punishment does the author identify, other than physical punishment?

Chapter Twelve: Liberating Ourselves and Counseling Others

How can you care for yourself using Nonviolent Communication?

How has your culture kept you from recognizing your own needs?

What judgments might you make when you are leading a Circle? What are your own needs that might lead you to these judgments?

Chapter Thirteen: Expressing Appreciation in Nonviolent Communication

How are compliments judgments?

What are the three components of appreciation?

Do you have a difficult time accepting appreciation? Why might that be, according to the author?

What appreciation could someone give you that would make you very happy? (based on the question posed on page 190)

Think of someone who has helped you to use cloth diapers. How can you thank him or her using Nonviolent Communication techniques?

Thank you for using this reading guide. It isn’t necessary to send your answers to your Circle liaison, but we hope that this has assisted your reading of Nonviolent Communication.

www.realdiaperassociation.org