

## **Rev. Cat**

*Sourced by Spirit – Practices for a Meaning Centered Life*

*Rev. Cathleen Diane Cox, M.A.T., M.Div.*

*Unitarian Universalist Spiritual Direction*

*Individuals – Life Partners – Communities*

*Community Minister, UU Church of Berkeley*

[revcat@revcat.net](mailto:revcat@revcat.net) 707.297.679 land 415.717.7177cell [www.uucb.org](http://www.uucb.org) [www.revcat.net](http://www.revcat.net)

# ***Better Than Before: Compassionate Conflict Resolution – Core Process***

## **OBSERVATION**

*Separate observation from interpretation*

Ask: What actions/words/patterns do I observe?  
What would a video camera record?

## **FEELINGS**

*Connect with your feelings as separate from your thoughts*

Ask: What emotions are arising in me now?

## **INTERPRETATION**

*Discover the interpretation you are making, the beliefs you are holding*

Ask: What inferences am I making about the meaning of what I observe?  
How do my feelings grow out of my interpretation/beliefs?  
What is the story/set of assumption underlying my interpretation/beliefs?

*Question the interpretation you are making*

Ask: Am I absolutely sure my interpretation is the *only* thing that could be true?  
Does this interpretation/belief lead me towards empowerment and non-anxiousness or away from those qualities?  
Who would I be without this belief?  
Turn it around: what else could be just as true or truer? Find 3 examples.

## **NEEDS**

*See everyone's behavior from the perspective of needs, not strategies*

Ask: What needs underlie my own and others' behavior?  
What core needs do I want to focus on?  
Are everyone's needs fully on the table and understood by all?

*Hold needs fully and move towards getting them met without attachment*

Ask: Can I absolutely know what the best possible outcome for all concerned?

## **STRATEGIES/REQUESTS**

*Remember: Connection first, issues second!*

Ask: Are connection needs sufficiently met to move to issues?

*Explore what other strategies might address more needs*

Ask: What impact are others' strategies having on my needs getting met?  
What impact are my strategies having on others' needs getting met?  
What strategies/ requests do I want to explore?  
Where can we find common ground to move forward with harmony?

# ***Compassionate Conflict Resolution Dialogue:***

## ***Phase One - Mutual Comprehension***

***Purpose: To establish and sense the current human connection between those involved.***

### ***PROCESS:***

#### ***Step 1.***

*Try to begin the dialogue process by asking the participant who appears to be the most uncomfortable.*

*Focus question for speaker: "What would you like (repeat identified listener's name) to know about how you are now in relation to the conflict event and its consequences?"*

*Mirroring and checking for understanding (can also make empathy guesses that translate judgments into needs)*

#### ***Step 2.***

*Focus question for listener: "What did you hear (name of speaker) say?"*

#### ***Step 3.***

*Focus questions for speaker: "Is that what you were saying? Is the reflection accurate?"*

*If the answer is no, ask the speaker to repeat his or her words that were not adequately reflected*

*If the answer is yes, then ask;*

*"Is there anything else you would like (repeat listener's name) to know?"*

*The facilitator continues this dialogue process until every party involved in the conflict event has been heard and comprehended.*

## ***Phase Two – Self-Responsibility***

*Purpose: To establish and share the needs each participant prompted in the other by their actions or reactions and to explore the impact of choices made on needs being met or not.*

### ***PROCESS:***

*This phase the same basic speaking/reflecting process is used as modeled in Phase One. The only change is in Step 1 as the focus questions;*

#### ***Step 1***

*Focus question for speaker: "What would you like (repeat name) to know about what you were looking for at the moment you chose to act?"*

*Mirroring and checking for understanding are repeated as described in Phase One.*

## Step 2

*Focus question for speaker: “What was the impact of the strategies you chose on both yourself and others? What needs were met and unmet by your choices?”*

*Mirroring and checking for understanding are repeated as described in Phase One.*

*The facilitator continues this dialogue process until every party involved in the conflict event has been heard and comprehended*

## **Phase Three – Agreed Action**

*Purpose: To establish and commit to one another by written form specific agreed upon actions each party will take next to restore a more harmonious relationship.*

### Step 1.

*Focus question for speaker: “What would you like to see happen now?”*

*Mirroring and checking for understanding are repeated as described in Phase One.*

### Step 2.

*Focus question for speaker: “What would you like to offer and to whom?”*

*Mirroring and checking for understanding are repeated as described in Phase One.*

### Step 3.

*Focus question for speaker: “What would you like to request and from whom?”*

*Mirroring and checking for understanding are repeated as described in Phase One.*

**Source: Restorative Justice Circles - Bay Area Non-Violent Communication – [www.BayNVC.org](http://www.BayNVC.org)**

*Adapted - Rev. Cathleen Cox*