



OFNR Distinctions

OBSERVATION VS. EVALUATION/JUDGMENT (PRESENT MOMENT):

Observation is sense perception, e.g. words we hear and actions we see from our subjective frame of reference. We can observe happenings outside of us and also our own evaluations, including moralistic judgments of right-wrong, good-bad. Example: *“I heard you say I’m inconsiderate, and I saw you roll your eyes,”* or *“I have the thought you don’t respect me,”* rather than *“You don’t respect me,”* or *“What you said was unkind and unfair.”*

FEELING VS. THINKING/“FAUX FEELINGS” (ACCEPTANCE):

Feelings are internal, bodily experience of sensations and emotions. Example: *“I feel tightness in my chest and a knot in my stomach,”* or *“I feel angry, sad and worried,”* rather than *“I feel like you don’t respect me,”* or *“I feel judged, disrespected and unappreciated.”* (faux feelings). Thinking, in this sense, is meaning and story we tell ourselves about who or what is causing our feelings.

NEED VS. ”STRATEGIES”/WANTS (NONATTACHMENT):

Needs are what all humans universally need to survive and thrive. Needs are not specific to a particular person, thing, action, place, or time. Example: *“The need I have around this is for understanding and appreciation for what I do,”* versus, *“I need you to understand and value what I do,”* or *“I need my partner to think what I do is worthwhile.”* All living beings in every moment are trying to meet needs. Needs connect us with life.

Relationship of thoughts, feelings, and actions to needs. Thoughts and evaluations express needs. Example: “You’re so selfish.” might be expressing a need for consideration. Feelings tell us about and connect us with needs. Example: “I feel angry and it’s about wanting respect.” Actions are trying to meet needs. Example: “When I ask you to be on time, the reason is consideration.”

REQUEST VS. DEMAND (WILLINGNESS):

Requests invite the freedom to say “no.” It is wanting the response to come from the desire to contribute and enjoy giving, rather than from fear of punishment, guilt, shame, obligation, or hope for reward.

SELF-EMPATHY WITH OFNR — EMPATHY FOR SELF AND OTHERS (FLOW):

The OFNR distinctions can be used to understand and connect with our own experience and also the experience of others, particularly those with whom we are in conflict or disconnection.