

Life guidance for our time

Lecture series for increased life
mastery and enjoyment of life

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Session 8: Developing Sensitivity and Empathy, and Living From the Heart



Heart Room Self-development School

hjerterommet.no

Developing Sensitivity

There is a difference between *feelings* and *emotions*.

Emotions

Strong emotional reactions when you are triggered by something.

- The emotional brain (the mammalian brain) and the survival brain (the reptile brain) take control of the psyche, unconsciously and automatically.
- For example: irritated, angry, jealous, frustrated, embarrassed, annoyed.

Feelings

More subtle feelings you can notice when you are not triggered.

- You are calm and safe so that one of the higher control centers is in charge: the “thinking brain,” the heart, the soul, the spirit.
- For example: happy, sad, tired, energized, longing for, etc.

Developing Sensitivity

Where
attention goes,
energy flows,
so it grows!

Techniques for getting in touch with feelings

Moving the body releases tension so that feelings can surface and be noticed consciously

- Go for a walk, calmly and relaxed, and let your thoughts wander freely
- Free dancing to rhythmic music
- Free movement to music, making sure to move all parts of the body, then sit down and listen inward

Conversations about personal matters

- What do I experience and feel? What may lie behind these feelings?
- What do *I really feel*?

Meditation and witnessing awareness – Mindfulness

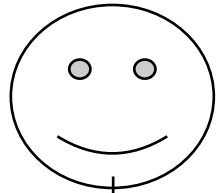
- *Feel*, feel, feel. What do I feel?
- Meditate and quiet the mind so you can notice the feelings
- Witnessing awareness so you can notice the most subtle feelings
- Ask questions and invite answers: What do you want, long for, and ask for? = what the heart and soul want
- Sleep on it. Retreat. Therapy.

What lies behind the words of others, and your own thoughts?

Method for raising awareness of emotional communication.

Where attention goes, energy flows, so it grows!

Head



Factual message – Thought

What do the words say factually, if we ignore all emotional content?

Heart

Heart message – Feelings

What feeling lies behind the words?
Anger, jealousy, envy, frustration...?
Joy, desire, longing, care...?

Gut

Gut message – Will

What is the real intention behind the message?
What do you read from the body language?
Is pressure applied to achieve something?

List of feelings

Feelings That Can Be Felt When Needs Are Met

Peaceful	Happy	Loving	Playful	Excited	Safe	Grateful	Hopeful
Relaxed	Cheerful	Accepting	Energetic	Enthusiastic	Confident	Moved	Optimistic
Free	Content	Tender	Enthusiastic	Delighted	Flexible	Tender	Alive
Calm	Merry	Affectionate	Eager	Overwhelmed	Spacious		Interested
Satisfied	Radiant	Warm	Lively	Proud	Powerful		
Fulfilled	Joyful	Touched	Curious	Engaged	Comfortable		
Harmonious	Happy	Friendly	Fascinated	Encouraged			
Relieved			Quick	Surprised			

Source: <https://www.ivk.no/laer-mer/>

List of feelings

Feelings That May Arise When Needs Are Not Met

Sad	Fearful	Angry	Tired	Frustrated	Confused
Lonely	Afraid	Irritated	Tired	Discouraged	Unstable
Hurt	Uneasy	Upset	Exhausted	Uncomfortable	Doubtful
Unhappy	Nervous	Bitter	Indifferent	Shy	Suspicious
Depressed	Anxious	Furious		Tense	Embarrassed
Desperate	Insecure	Mad		Dissatisfied	Amazed
Grieving	Unsafe	Enraged		Opposed	
Feeling down	Distrustful			Pessimistic	
Helpless	Fearful			Disgusted	
Low-spirited	Suspicious			Vulnerable	
Hopeless	Jealous			Reserved	
Disappointed				Jealous	
				Restless	
				Guilty	
				Worried	
				Impatient	

Kilde: <https://www.ivk.no/laer-mer/>

Developing Sensitivity Can Be Challenging

It is a challenging process because you must let go of some mental control.

- You may become more emotional
- You become more vulnerable because you feel more
- You are more often disappointed because people are ego-driven

➔ You must develop *inner protection* instead of outer protection and mask energy

Inner protection vs. outer protection

Outer protection

- Spend less time with the person who hurts you, or break contact
- Protection through mask energy
- Defend yourself. Attack back. Argue.
- Grit your teeth and endure it.

Inner protection against being hurt

- First take in what the other says and feel it
- Then accept that the other says and does what they do
 - *That is how they are, and it is livable*
- Then accept what the other says about you
 - If it is true, acknowledge it and forgive yourself
 - If it is not true, choose to tolerate and live with not being seen for who you are

Inner protection is simply standing on your own feet and not demand anything from others. You accept reality as it is, tolerate it, and live well with it.

Developing the Ability for Empathy and Attunement

Understanding the difference between sympathy and empathy

Sympathy

- Feeling sorry for someone and feeling *with* them.
- Sympathy is a parent-child communication.
- You are the “parent” (adult) feeling for “the poor child.”

Empathy

- You genuinely feel with the other.
- Empathy is an adult-adult communication.
- You relate to the other as someone capable of carrying their own feelings.

Empathy – How to Do It in Practice

Attunement

- Keep focus on the other, listen and notice
- Look the other in the eyes, an appropriate amount
- What is the person saying?
- What is the facial expression? Body language?
- Can you “read” any feelings from what you observe?
- What feelings and motivations lie behind? What is said “between the lines”?
- Try to put yourself in and feel the other’s situation (attunement)

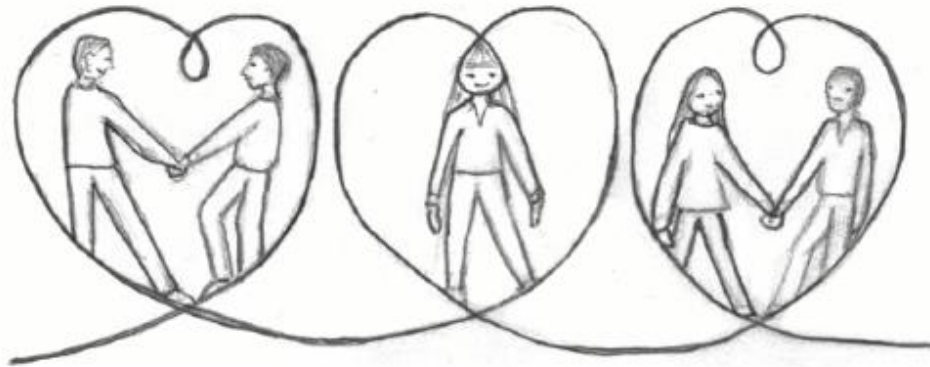
Empathy – Follow – Understand – Feel with

- Nod, make small sounds to show you hear and follow
- Ask follow-up questions of factual or emotional nature (not mental)
- Express compassion for the other’s situation, experience, and feelings (empathy)

Rule: *Adress the feeling first*, then you may address the issue.

- First adress the feeling — listening, showing empathy and compassion.
- Only afterwards can you address the issue, when the other is ready for it (That is: In the window of tolerance again).

Living From the Heart and Being a Fellow Human Being



Focus: Having good intentions and doing your best in all relationships.

Center of guidance: Heart-based considerations, heart feelings, goodwill, and high ethics.

Characteristics:

- Both-and thinking; trying to consider several things at once
- Both-and actions; caring for others *and* yourself
- Able to remain an independent individual despite close, mutual relationships
- Able to make good judgments, say wise things, and make good decisions

Heart Communication vs. Ordinary Conversation

Ordinary conversation is often fragmented and self-assertive

- People take the word, grab the word, even before others are finished.
- You must be *ON*, constantly saying something to stay in the game.
- What is said often does not follow up what the previous person said.
- If you don't speak for a while, you fall out of the conversation.
- For others, it is as if you are no longer there.
- The talk is about being included, being funny, being informed, etc.
 - Everyone asserts themselves in the competition for attention.
 - It is extremely rare that someone brings back those who have dropped out.

You can view ordinary conversation as a card game:

- Everyone has a stack of cards.
- Before too long, you must play a card — otherwise you're out.
- Playing a card = saying something.

Being a Fellow Human Being Who Creates Heart Connection



- Focus exclusively on feelings, not the issue
- Facts (the situation) are mentioned only as background
- Focus on the essential and the real
- Let the word be like a ball rolled gently back and forth
- Present what you say without pushing it
- The other picks it up and lets it sink in
- Then comes the other's response: a sound, a question, a few words...
- Every response follows up what the other said

This can be mutual or caregiving heart contact:

- **Mutual heart contact:** both speak from the adult part of the psyche
- **Caregiving heart contact:** one is overwhelmed and functions from the child part; the other gives care like a “parent”

Example of Heart-Based Communication

Jorunn: How are you? It's a pretty tough situation you're in now.

Magnus: Well, I guess I'm okay...

Jorunn: Yes, in a way you probably are. But how are you *really*?

Magnus: Really? Uh... well. Actually, I'm quite angry at Fredrik for pushing me out of the company.

Jorunn: Yes, that must have felt like a betrayal...?

Magnus: YES! It's terrible that someone can do something like that!

Jorunn: Do you also feel sadness that your friendship is over? You were childhood friends. You had so many great trips, parties, and other things together.

Now Jorunn has managed to get through Magnus's mask, and he begins to cry. Sadness is deeper than anger, and tears can release and heal what has happened inside Magnus, even if the outer situation cannot be repaired.

Bringing the Heart Into The Communication

Giraffe language is a method developed by psychologist Marshall B. Rosenberg, described in the book *Nonviolent Communication*.

See ivk.no .

Expressing needs

Facts	What is it that you hear, see, or experience?
Feelings	What do you feel in response to this?
Needs	What are your needs, wishes, or longings that you want to be met?
Request	Ask others for what you want.

Example of expressing needs

- This week you have hardly cleaned the kitchen (fact)
- I notice that I'm starting to get irritated (feeling)
- I need us to share the responsibility of keeping the kitchen tidy (need)
- Could you take a larger share of the cleaning, about half? (request)

To bring your heart into the communication

To live in (hear it – feel it)

Facts	What do you hear, see or experience in the other person?
Feelings	What do you think that person feels from this? (Asked as a question)
Needs	What do you think is the other person's underlying need, desire, or longing? (Asked as a question)

Example of empathic attunement

- I notice It seems to me that you are quite irritated.
Are you actually angry, or furious, at Kari?
... Wait for and take in the reaction:
- “Yes, I guess I *am* pretty angry at her!”
- Do you perhaps need and wish that she wouldn’t be so dominant?
- “Yes, she is/does xxx and yyy and it’s terrible!!!”
- Are you actually a bit sad that you can’t be more equal, good friends?
- “YES!”

List of Needs

Nourishment	Safety/Trust	Calm/Tranquility
Touch	Protection	Relaxation
Movement	Predictability	Balance
Exercise	Continuity	Simplicity
Rest	Order/Structure	Peace
Sleep	Reliability	Harmony
Recreation	Self-esteem	Self-care
Well-being	Confidence	Calm
	Stability	Beauty
	Support/Help	Silence
	Trust	Spirituality

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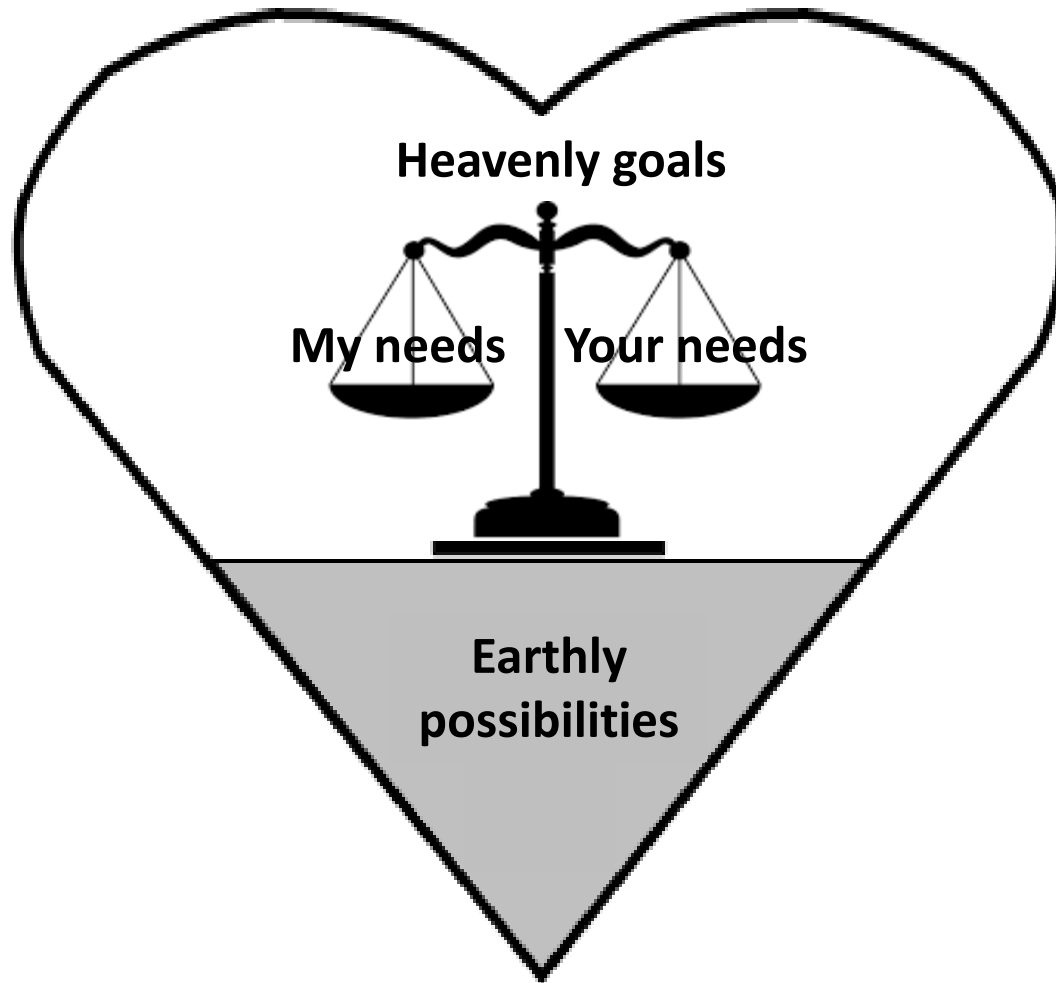
List of Needs

Freedom	Creativity	Me
Authenticity	Play	Efficiency
Autonomy	Renewal	Contributing
Agreement	Having fun	Celebrating
Integrity	Humor	Giving/Receiving
Power / Inner strength	Inspiration	Hope
Self-insight	Passion	Competence
Independence	Excitement	Learning
Spontaneity	Challenge	Goals
Openness	Exploration	Response
Honesty	Development	Result
		Coherence

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Creating Cooperation From the Heart

The Heart Solution Method



Example using The Heart Solution Method

A Couple Planning Their Summer Vacation

Their “**heavenly goal**” is to meet both partners’ needs as well as possible.

The wife’s needs:

- Get a real break from everyday life in rainy Bergen.
- Get a taste of “the sweet life”.

The husband’s needs:

- Not such an expensive vacation that it requires overtime or creates debt.
- Relax without having to visit many museums and attractions.

Their suggestions:

- Cabin vacation in Norway combined with restaurant visits and an exclusive spa experience.
- Trip to southern Europe early in the season when travel is cheaper, without too many excursions; the wife may take some excursions alone.
- Sensual “southern trip” with romantic meals in the apartment, a visit to a romantic restaurant, affection and swimming — no excursions.

Evaluation

Then they have a good and creative dialogue about what to choose.

Living From the Heart Is About Two Things

Love your neighbor as yourself! (Jesus)



Loving yourself

Desire, need, wish, and longing are the words the heart uses to speak to you. By listening to and following them, you live from the heart = *self-care and self-realization*.

Loving others

Å Being a good fellow human being means letting nature's demands and others' needs matter as much as your own, both in daily life and in difficult decisions.

If you focus on staying connected to and functioning from the heart in daily life, your heart will open more and more.

(Because what you give energy grows, and what you don't give energy diminishes.)

Where
attention goes,
energy flows,
so it grows!

Perception of Love at Different Cultural Stages

Kulturelt trinn	Oppfatning av kjærlighet
5. Spiritual Culture	Care for the whole, Serving effort
4. Heart Culture	Mutual listening and care + Loving the other
3. Democratic Culture	Fulfilling one's duty + good dialogue, good friendship and cooperation
2. «Medieval Culture»	Obedience
1. «Viking Culture»	Total loyality

To develop high ethics that make you walk the talk

The masculine side of living from the heart is having high ethics.

This ethic is about principles and behavior that prevent you from letting your emotions and lower reactions affect others.

- For example, if you are subjected to something unfair and unreasonable and become angry at those behind it, you do not let this anger take its toll on them.
- Instead, you seek inner peace and tranquility within yourself, so that you can calmly and objectively come to an appropriate response as a mature adult.

Communication in different ways and levels

Level	Fear = Worse Motivation from 1. and 2. level	Safety = Better Motivation from 3. and 4. level
5. Spiritual Culture	Being taken by fear, distrust and greed, and breathing this into the world.	Having courage, trust in the good, and goodwill, and breathing this into the world.
4. Heart Culture	Closed heart = Egoism. Forgetting to think of others. Wishing others harm.	Open heart = Equal weight on own and others' needs. Listening communication. Seeking heart-based solutions.
3. Democratic Culture	One-sidedness, irrationality, lies, distortion, exaggeration, minimization.	Calm and balanced conversation. Democratic decisions. Clear agreements and rules.
2. Medieval Culture	Emotional, overly intense communication; anger, scolding, condemning, ridiculing, alliance-building.	Balance of power. Respecting boundaries. Agreements and compromises everyone benefits from.
1. Viking Culture	Physical, psychological or economic violence and threats.	Cooperating to meet everyone's needs. Following agreements and rules

Going up, or down low as an emergency response

You are in the tolerance window inside you. But you do not tolerate what others do outside of you.

Going up:

Reaction on the spiritual level

Reactions on different levels

Ask for help.
Ask for a solution. Ask for guidance. Pray for others.

Reaction on the heart level

Follow the ethics.
Actively contribute to value-focused dialogue and problem-solving.

Normal mode and communication

Where we usually are and get others to cooperate through calm dialogue, encouragement, negotiation.

Democratic meeting leadership.
Actively contribute to clarity, calm, and balance in discussions.

Going down:

Motivation on 3. level, but you react on 2. or 1. level.

You respond in an emotional mode. You become sharp in your voice, raise your voice, demand, command.

Have / exercise power on behalf of agreements and rules when they are broken. Call for / demand obedience to agreements and common decency.

You respond on the physical level. Calmly and objectively, you give the child or person a logical, physical consequence.

Calm execution of consequences when agreements and rules are broken = physical power.

Becoming a Caring Fellow Human Being Who Lives From the Heart

This involves:

- ✓ Developing sensitivity and the ability for attunement and empathy.
You focus on feeling and becoming aware of what you actually feel.
You learn to be quiet, listen, notice, and feel what others feel.
- ✓ Developing high ethics so that you walk the talk.
Inside yourself you can feel everything, but you do not take negativity out on others. (possibly only as a symbolic expression)
- ✓ Deciding to live from the heart
Meaning you have as much care for others as for yourself —
all the time.

Where
attention goes,
energy flows,
so it grows!