

## **What inspired me to bring body awareness & movement practices into NVC?**

– Tracy Adams, lead organizer of the ‘NVC – Moving with Life’ retreats in Australia

Years ago when having counselling for severe PTSD I found I could only go so far with ‘talking’ therapies, had trouble accessing feelings and deep trauma. Then I stumbled across a weekend workshop which integrated aware movement practices with gestalt, and had big breakthroughs.

Later when I found NVC – and in all my 11 years of practicing and assisting at workshops – I’ve loved it but found myself restless & sometimes turning off, and feeling over full, mentally exhausted, and stiff in my body at the end of a workshop day – too much sitting and engaging with the content primarily through the mind. I noticed in myself and others in workshops and practice groups a tendency to get stuck in the story, in the mind, and/or in ‘core beliefs, despite efforts to focus on feelings and needs; and sometimes to get stuck in strong feelings generated by these stories and core beliefs. Always I was wanting to move more, and to be outside in nature – to be more in my body.

I found Robert Gonzales’s Living Compassion work made a big difference to me with its focus on embodiment, body sensations, subtle energies and the hearts longing. But still my body ached for movement, and I still tended to go primarily to the story instead of body, and often staying stuck in the old trauma and life-alienating core beliefs.

Over the years I’ve been looking for body awareness practices and aware movement practices to incorporate into NVC, and noted several contenders, including Contact Improvisation, Feldenkrais, Aikido, Chi Gung, Focusing, Body-Mind Centering, Authentic Movement etc. When I saw Robert & Sarah were offering workshops in Europe integrating NVC & Contact Improvisation (CI) I first thought I would go over there and train with them – but I really wanted to influence the way NVC is taught and practiced in Australia (& NZ).

I started integrating my NVC with Contact Improv practice last year, and experienced astounding clarity, ability to be with my inner experiencing (including being strongly triggered into negative/painful core beliefs), ability to be fully present, surrender, and an exhilarating sense of freedom with that surrendering into being fully present. I have found myself more able to just be with what is, and to embody NVC more – to connect deeply with whatever is arising & to be more authentic.

In the non-verbal presence and connection that comes with Contact Improv touch and movement with another person, everything except this moment, this sensation, this body, falls away; and what is there is a clear joy, a lightness, liberation.

In my experience, integrating Contact Improvisation with NVC profoundly deepens my integration & embodiment of NVC, and supports deep awareness of my inner life. As a result my ability to trust in myself, the unknown, and other people - things that have found very difficult in the past – has greatly expanded, as has my capacity for connection with myself and others. I would love others to have this benefit too.

I believe bringing more body awareness and aware movement practices into the way we teach, learn and practice NVC can profoundly deepen it, and make it easier for learners to integrate the practice.

For practitioners of CI, integrating NVC offers a way to profoundly deepen your CI practice, bringing greater levels of self-awareness, awareness of others, and increased capacity for presence, authenticity, empathy & connection.

My hope/vision with the retreats in Australia is to inspire NVC trainers/facilitators to integrate body awareness and aware movement practices (such as CI) into the way they teach & practice; to inspire CI practitioners to incorporate NVC into their practice; and to foster collaboration between Australia & NZ trainers of NVC and CI (and other aware movement practices)

Tracy – February 2017