

Realizing needs and a high quality of life in a degrowth society

Two Questions as a warm-up:

- Which need is currently the most important for you to feel well?
- In a Degrowth society, how would you meet this need?

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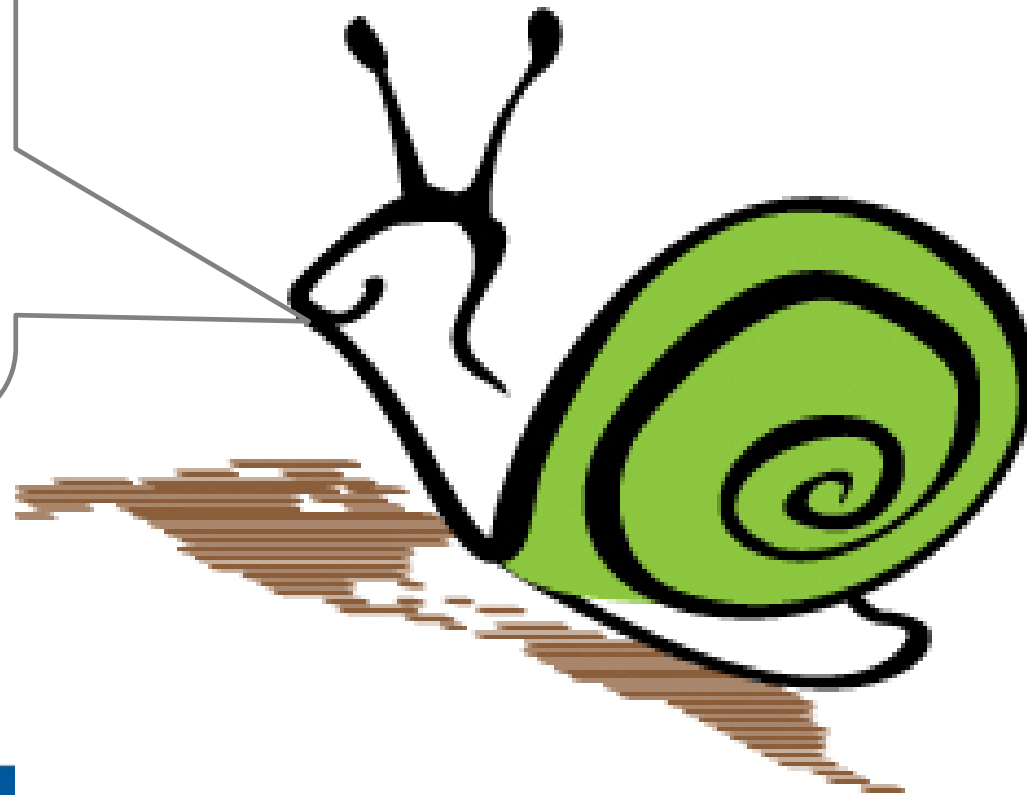
Felix Rauschmayer	Can Nonviolent Communication enhance Degrowth? Can Degrowth enhance Quality of Life?
Ines Omann	THANCS – a process to address tensions that emerge in/with a transition towards sustainable development
Mònica Guillen	Economic growth and human needs satisfaction across-socio economic groups in Peru. An illustration using the Human Scale Development Approach
Salina Centgraf	Human Scale Development – the case of energy cooperatives.
Everybody	Discussion

OBSERVATION

FEELING

NEEDS

REQUEST



Can Nonviolent Communication enhance Degrowth? Can Degrowth enhance Quality of Life?

Felix Rauschmayer

Emotions and degrowth

- Are you afraid when realizing the suffering caused by processes of economic shrinking (e.g. in Spain or Greece)?
- Do you know people who are afraid?
- Do you have the impression that such fear blocks creativity, courage, or community-building?

Fear blocks

This fear may block ...

- ... rational arguments that a degrowth society is possible and even desirable,
- ... belief in visioning processes and description of utopias,
- ... belief that an active decision for degrowth is better than a crash into multiple crises.

How do you deal with

- your fear and
- the others' fear?

What to do with the fear?

- Acknowledge it & don't judge the fearful person

Nonviolent communication (NVC) is a method that stipulates to do so

- More than 1 Mio participants in NVC courses
- Few empirical data on NVC; until now mostly for training of students or educators,
- One German study (Altmann 2010): longitudinal and cross-sectional evaluation of NVC trainings

4 Steps of NVC

OBSERVATION

- Non-judgmental, neutral observation

FEELING

- Own feelings without referring to others

NEEDS

- Abstract needs independent of persons and situations

REQUEST

- Concrete request that can be answered with a “no”

The core of NVC

- Concentrates on feelings and needs
- Differentiates needs from wants/strategies
- Highlights the commonalities among people
- Is based on introspection
- Aiming at a way of communication that is non-escalating/non-violent
- Background in humanistic psychology (Maslow → Carl Rogers)

The Art of Communicating

Communication in NVC is foremost a communication with oneself – in the sense of awareness of one's own ...

- ... feelings & needs, but also of one's own
- ... judgements, denials, demands and of their transformation into feelings and needs.

On this basis a bilateral communication is fruitful by

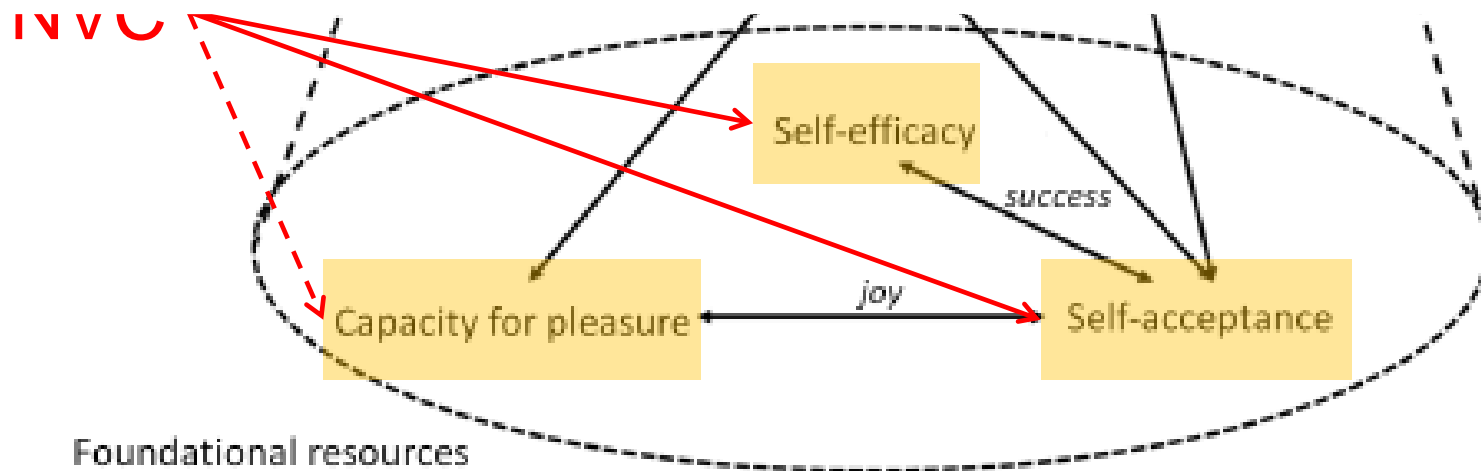
- Empathetic listening or
- Authentic expression of my feelings, needs, and requests

This kind of communication has to be practiced.

Using NVC for societal changes

- Interact with high-level decision makers
 - Listen empathically instead of fighting
 - Teach them NVC
- Interact with your environment
 - In your initiative (such as ecovillages, transition town initiatives, ...)
 - With friends, family, neighbours, ...
- Interact with yourself

NVC and mental resources for sustainability



Foundational resources

(Hunecke 2013:17)

Limitations of NVC as tool for degrowth

- Individualistic tool (\neq social practices)
- No idea of power, society, planetary boundaries, justice, ...
- Increasing self-awareness and change in communication / attitude uses a lot of energy

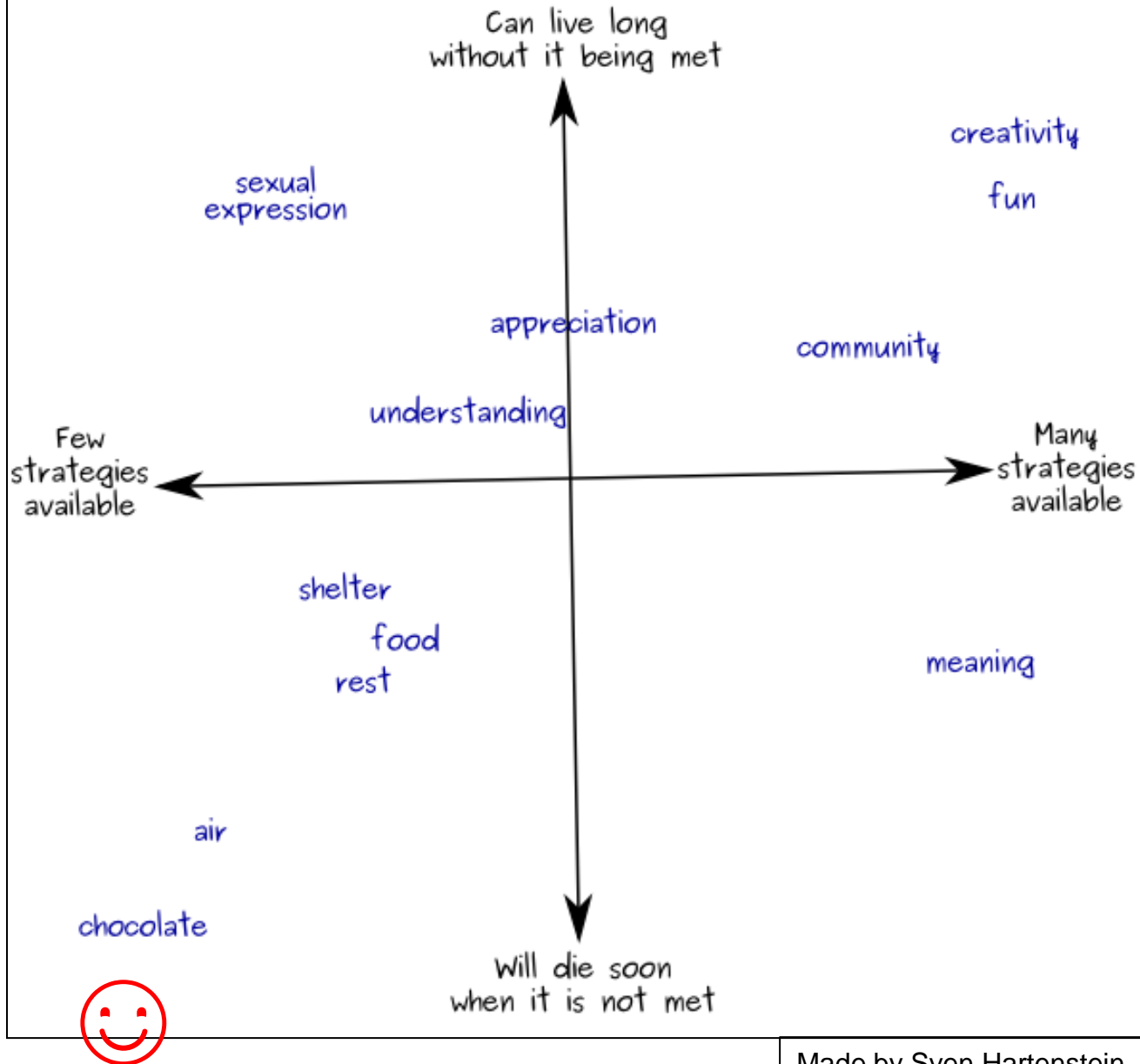
Can Nonviolent Communication enhance Degrowth? ✓

Can degrowth improve quality of life?

Yes, but not necessarily

- Quality of life depends on the ability to meet one's needs through self-selected strategies according to one's values
- Value changes should be self-determined / Value changes into a minority necessarily are self-determined
- Support for inner transformation work seems to be a necessary element of any degrowth policy that aims at a high quality of life for many people.

TAXONOMY OF BASIC NEEDS



Made by Sven Hartenstein