

# Self-empathy exercise (non-linear model)

**Yellow** 'What I Observed' box

Write here the exact words or actions that triggered you

**White** Cloud 'What I am telling myself...'

Write down any where in the white area your thoughts about what happened. Include your judgments, criticisms, blame, 'oughts tos', 'shoulds' etc. about the other person and/or yourself. No one needs to see this so be as honest and as brutal as you want hear – it will help you in the next stages. You might choose to circle one to five thoughts that have the most emotional impact on you.

**Pink** 'Feelings' circle

Write down how you feel *now* when you remember what happened and when you read what you are telling yourself about the event. For example, you could say to yourself 'when I tell myself that xxx is selfish, I feel...'

**Blue** 'The essence of what is important to me (my needs) circle

Take some time to think about what universal needs were unmet for you and write them here

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Take some time to be with those unmet needs – let yourself **mourn** that the weren't present for you in the way you wanted at that time. See if you can notice where the constriction of the unmet needs lies in your body (throat, chest, stomach, other?).  
Allow yourself to see the **beauty** of them... to contemplate that those needs connect us all; they are needs that all humans share. See if you can experience the needs as living qualities in your body (to do this, close your eyes and imagine a time when those needs *were* met, experience how that feels in your body).  
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**Green** 'Any actions or requests I have now that I am connected to my needs?' Box

Now that you are connected to your needs, write down any new requests that arise in you. This could be to yourself, the specific other or anyone else.

\* To be most effective, make your requests: specific; time-bound; doable; what you do want (rather than what you don't want); transparently connected to your needs and with a willingness to hear a 'no'.

**Acknowledgements:** Adapted from a practice by Catherine and Jesse of zenvc.org

What I observed...

*What I am telling myself...*



Any actions or requests I have now that I am connected to my needs?