FOUR CHOICES
WHEN HEARING A
MESSAGE “LESS THAN WONDERFUL”

Did you possibly hear something similar to:
“You should have done a better job! We were really
counting on you!”

Depending on the ears you are wearing, & the
thoughts in your head

➡️ Blame oneself:
“He’s right. I’m a loser. I should
have done a better job. I’m
not putting my weight in this
organization.”

➡️ Blame other:
“You’re impossible to
please. I did an
excellent job!”

➡️ Express
myself: “I’m feeling confused
because I’m
needing more
clarity about
what you
expected from
me. Would you
be willing to let
me know
specifically what
you would have
liked done
differently in
this
case?”

➡️ Receive other
with compassion:
“Are you
frustrated
because your
need for
competence
wasn’t met by
my
work?”

### Hear Blame: Judge or blame yourself

- **“It’s my fault.”**
- **“I am stupid, lazy, bad, etc….”**
- **“I should …”**
- **“I have no choice…”**
- **“I can’t…”**

Voice of Guilt, Shame and Depression

### Hear Blame: Judge or blame the other person

- **“It’s your fault.”**
- **“You should …”**
- **“You never”….”**
- **“You always…”, “You’re being… “You ought…”**

Voice of Anger

### Connect to your internal experience of feelings and needs and taking responsibility

**"I'm feeling_____ because I need/value______."**

Voice of Self-Empathy

### Connect to the feelings and needs of the other person

**"Are you feeling_____ because you're valuing/need/value_____?"**

Voice of Empathy

What might be some thoughts about yourself?

What might be some thoughts about the other?

What am I feeling?

What am I needing?

What might they be feeling?

What might they be needing?

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NOTE: In NVC, the “beloved” jackal is a symbol of thoughts or language that serve as our “teachers” but may not serve connection. The giraffe is the symbol of awareness of NEEDS which aids connection. Chart inspired by Jim and Jori Manske, radicalcompassion@gmail.com.

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