



Kundera, M. (1996). *The book of laughter and forgetting* (A. Asher, Trans.). Faber and Faber.

"Dominion over the world, as we know, is divided between angels and devils. The good of the world, however, implies not that the angels have the advantage over the devils (as I believed when I was a child) but that the powers of the two sides are nearly in equilibrium. If there were too much incontestable meaning in the world (the angels' power), man would succumb under its weight. If the world were to lose all its meaning (the devils' reign), we could not live either...

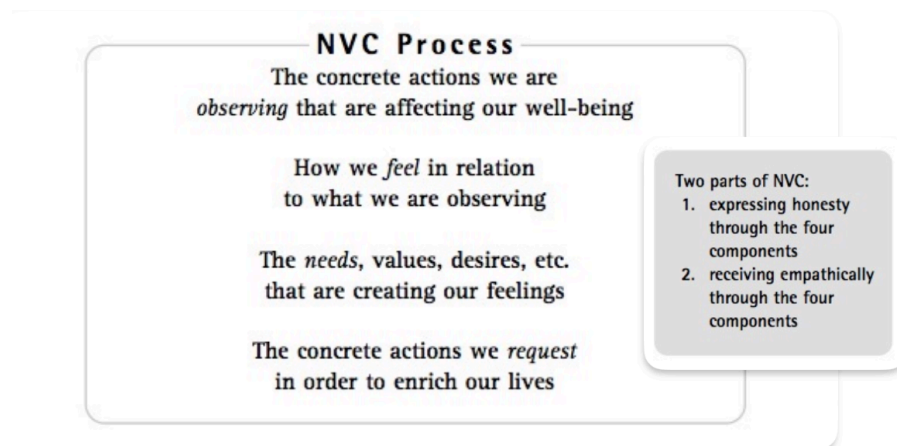
"The first time an angel heard the devil's laughter, he was dumbfounded. That happened at a feast in a crowded room, where the devil's laughter, which is terribly contagious, spread from one person to another. The angel clearly understood that such laughter was directed against God and against the dignity of his works. He knew that he must react swiftly somehow, but felt weak and defenseless. Unable to come up with anything of his own, he aped his adversary. Opening his mouth, he emitted broken, spasmodic sounds in the higher reaches of his vocal range (a bit like the sound made on the street of a seaside town by Michelle and Gabrielle), but giving them an opposite meaning: whereas the devil's laughter denoted the absurdity of things, the angel on the contrary meant to rejoice over how well ordered, wisely conceived, good, and meaningful everything here below was. Thus the angel and the devil faced each other and, mouths wide open, emitted nearly the same sounds, but each one's noise expressed the absolute opposite of the other's. And seeing the angel laugh, the devil laughed all the more, all the harder, and all the more blatantly, because the laughing angel was infinitely comical. Laughable laughter is disastrous. Even so, the angels have gained something from it. They have tricked us with a semantic imposture. Their imitation of laughter and (the devil's) original laughter are both called by the same name. Nowadays we don't even realize that the same external



display serves two absolutely opposed internal attitudes. There are two laughs, and we have no word to tell one from the other."

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Rosenberg, M. B. (2003). *Nonviolent communication a language of life*. PuddleDancer Press.



"Empathy, on the other hand, requires focusing full attention on the other person's message. We give to others the time and space they need to express themselves fully and to feel understood...In fact, such intellectual understanding of a problem blocks the kind of presence that empathy requires. When we are thinking about people's words, listening to how they connect to our theories, we are looking at people—we are not with them. The key ingredient of empathy is presence: we are wholly present with the other party and what they are experiencing. This quality of presence distinguishes empathy from either mental understanding or sympathy. While we may choose at times to sympathize with others by feeling their feelings, it's helpful to be aware that during the moment we are offering sympathy, we are not empathizing."