

THE DAILY TEMPERATURE READING (DTR)



APPRECIATIONS

NEW INFORMATION



PUZZLES

CLEARING



WISHES, HOPES AND
DREAMS

How the DTR works

The DTR is divided into five sections; **appreciations**, **new information**, **puzzles**, **clearing** and **wishes, hopes and dreams**.

Every member of the group has the opportunity to share in each section and the others in the group listen without interrupting, responding or commenting, before moving on to the next section. The only section in which the listener might respond is the puzzles section.



We are all different; we have different histories, cultures, experiences, values and more. And we also have so much that connects us, so much in common. The DTR provides an opportunity to share about ourselves and to learn about others in the group. It can help build strong, level relationships. By sharing and listening in this way we can develop deeper connections; respecting and valuing our differences and recognising and welcoming our commonality.

The concept of the Daily Temperature Reading was originally developed by Virginia Satir (1916-1988), a pioneer in the field of humanistic psychology. Often called the “mother of family therapy,” Virginia Satir started her professional life as an educator. Satir introduced the DTR in the seventies. Since then, it’s been refined, adapted and shared as part of a programme called PAIRS (www.pairs.com)



APPRECIATIONS

We all need to be recognised, seen and valued, and nobody is better equipped to do this than the people we are in important relationships with. Whatever you appreciate and enjoy about someone, let that person know. We hear so much about what is wrong with us – the world tells us, and we often tell ourselves - so when you see something in another that you appreciate, how might it be to express it? Regular appreciation is an important element in our self-esteem. Feeling appreciated and accepted by the people who know us well is a fundamental human need.

We tend to feel more fully recognised and affirmed by an appreciation which acknowledges a *specific action or behaviour*. An appreciation that is specific and based in fact is easier to receive and integrate. When we are appreciated for more general qualities such as being brave, generous, honest, funny, kind etc., this can have the opposite effect to a specific appreciation rooted in behaviour. We brush it off, telling ourselves "If only you really knew me, you'd know I'm not always honest, kind or brave..." Because of course none of us is those things all of the time. So finding one specific behaviour which is an example of these qualities in action makes it much more likely that we will be able to receive and integrate it.

For example, "I appreciate you [name] for calling me after the last group to see how I was feeling, thank you for reaching out." or "I appreciate you [name] for talking about the details of your conflict with your partner when you told us about your relationship last week, it helped me understand you better."

An appreciation can be for something small or for something more significant. For example, "I appreciate you [name] for giving me such a warm smile when I walked into the room this morning " or "I appreciate you [name] for listening to me yesterday when I needed to vent". No matter how well or how little you know each other, you can find something to genuinely appreciate another person for. You might appreciate them for something they said, something they did or the way they behaved.

The DTR offers us the opportunity to grow our ability to receive appreciative comments and take them in. Many of us have been conditioned to brush off compliments with comments like 'Oh, this old thing' or 'It was nothing'. When we reject an appreciation we are respecting neither ourselves nor the person offering the appreciation.

And perhaps the most important part of appreciating another is the effect it has on us. Appreciating the people we are with evokes our goodwill; it helps us feel more open to others and creates a foundation of goodwill for sharing and hearing others' information. This is why we do appreciations at the beginning of the DTR. It sets the tone for the information which follows.



NEW INFORMATION

When things don't go well in relationships, it can sometimes be because we have not been given the information we need to understand what's going on for the other person. Not knowing relevant contextual information leaves too much room for assumptions. Good relationships thrive when each person knows what is going on in the other's life. It may be related to work, family, our fears, our interests, our struggles and dilemmas - anything and everything, trivial and important, that helps you keep others up to date about your state of mind, mood and generally what is going on in your life.

This section in the DTR provides an opportunity to share information about ourselves with each other. This might be a time for you to talk about your experience of being in the group, about something significant that is going on in your life, or something about yourself, or your history.

Sharing about ourselves, including allowing others to hear our stories, to know what we're thinking about and how we're feeling, is vital to building relationships.



PUZZLES

What are you wondering about that's connected to the other people in the group? What would you like to know about them? What assumptions might you be making that you haven't checked out that could be affecting your attitude, beliefs or actions?

It can be helpful to share our puzzles with each other, to deepen our knowledge and understanding of each other and to make sure we're not making and acting on inaccurate assumptions. Assumptions are 'the termites of relationships' (Henry Winkler) slowly eating away at intimacy and trust. It can be reassuring to ask for and receive information, this helps build understanding, intimacy and trust. And it can be affirming to know that people are interested in us and curious to know us better.

The puzzles section is an opportunity to ask questions about anything you're wondering or curious about. Sharing our curiosities about each other can be one way of creating a closer connection.

Here are some examples, starting with, I have a puzzle... "You have been frowning since you arrived, is there something on your mind?" or "When I sat next to you in the dining room last time, you didn't talk to me, are you annoyed with me?" or "I am curious about your job, would you tell me a bit more about what you do?", "How long have you been living with your boyfriend?", "Would you like to come to lunch with me today?"

After you share a puzzle, the listener can respond with information to answer or shed additional light on your puzzle. They don't have to, it is their choice. They can let you know that they will give your puzzle some thought and would like to talk about it at a later date (and let you know when that will be, maybe at the next DTR), or can simply thank you for asking and leave it at that.

Asking questions doesn't require the listener to answer, but it does offer them the opportunity to do so and it tells them that you are interested in them.

Before you share a puzzle with another member of the group, check in with yourself, do you feel a charge in relation to this puzzle? Are you frustrated, hurt, upset, or worried (angry, sad, afraid)? If you are then your puzzle belongs as part of a clearing rather than in this section.



CLEARING

Differences, conflict and uncomfortable feelings are a natural part of every relationship, very much influenced by our individual perspectives, personal history, and life experiences, as well as our physical, mental, and emotional well-being at any given moment. Rarely is conflict itself destructive to relationships; frequently, however, the ways in which we handle the conflict *can* be destructive.

Our responses and reactions to a person's behaviour give us a lot of information about ourselves as well as giving them information about the impact they can have on someone else.

If we are willing to focus on ourselves first, being compassionate with ourselves about our feelings and reactions and cultivating curiosity and kindness, then we are likely to be more in charge of how we experience our relationships. From this place of compassion and empathy with ourselves, we can work through the conflict we have with the other person and find compassion and empathy for them too. We can recognise our own part in the dynamic and we can make a request of the other, letting them know what we would like or want from them. In requesting change, we are not making a demand, we ask, in the knowledge that we may or may not get what we are asking for.

This clearing model, which is based on Marshall Rosenberg's Non-Violent Communication, is helpful for working through anything that is getting in the way of a relationship. It can be a way to build a bridge, to reconnect with the other person, working through any resentments, misunderstandings or anger, hurt or irritation that is getting in the way of a closer and more meaningful connection.

Clearing is an opportunity to practice listening to each other and talking about ourselves. When you are being cleared with, remind yourself that whatever someone is saying is as much about them, as it is about you. The speaker is not necessarily right or wrong and neither are you. This is about what they feel, think and want and the impact you have had on them. It is all good information.

This is not a conversation and there is no resolution or solution to be agreed upon or arrived at. The aim is for people to listen to and understand more about each other, and the outcome can be a closer and more intimate connection.

A clearing is divided into sections:

INVITATION

When clearing with someone, first start by asking them if they are willing to hear your clearing. Using your own words you can say something like "There is something I'd like to clear with you, are you willing to hear it?"

INTENTION

Next, let them know what your intention is for clearing with them. Why are you choosing to clear? How will clearing help? What outcome are you looking for?

When we want to vent or blame, clearing is not the appropriate tool. The primary intention of clearing is to communicate any feelings or thoughts that are getting in the way of you being able to relate to and work with another member of the group, with respect and goodwill.

Another intention of a clearing is to get to know ourselves and others better and to understand our responses and reactions to others' behaviours and actions. By talking through our experience with the other person we can better understand ourselves and how we are in relationship.

You may wish or need to vent with a support person *before* clearing with a member of the group so that you can let off steam or reduce the intensity of your emotions. This will then allow you to approach the clearing with goodwill and a genuine desire to connect.

DATA

Be specific about the behaviour or situation that you want to clear about, stick to the facts. Describe what you saw or heard. What would a camera have recorded? At this point you are only describing what happened, you are not adding anything else.

Here are some examples:

Example 1

"Yesterday I heard you inviting three other members of the group out for a drink after the training". **(Data)**

Example 2

"In the group last week I saw you tapping your foot and looking out of the window when I was sharing my new information in the DTR" **(Data)**

EMOTIONS & STORIES

Share the **emotion** (or **feeling**) that their behaviour stirred up in you. How did you feel about what the listener did or said? When sharing about how you feel you might find it helpful to refer to the table below. See if you can find the nuance in your emotion, if you can describe the subtlety or passion of your feelings.

ANGRY

Frustrated
Irritated
Annoyed
Furious
Enraged
Livid
Resentful
Impatient

SAD

Miserable
Unhappy
Hopeless
Despondent
Upset
Despairing
Heart broken
Hurt

HAPPY

Excited
Delighted
Cheerful
Upbeat
Pleased
Peaceful
Content
Satisfied

AFRAID

Worried
Scared
Anxious
Nervous
Embarrassed
Terrified
Shocked
Uneasy

When we say "I feel that you..." we are expressing an opinion rather than an emotion. Saying "I feel that you hurt me" or "I feel that it's not right" or "I feel like you're being mean" or "I feel like you're excluding me" we are not expressing how we feel, we are expressing a judgement or opinion. We are diagnosing the other rather than expressing our feelings and taking responsibility for our experience.

No one *makes* us feel our emotions. We are responsible for and have a right to feel what we feel. So rather than saying "You made me feel..." simply say "I feel... or I felt..."

The Stories

There are often two stories running at the same time. The Story we are telling ourselves about what this person's behaviour means and says about us and about them. And The Backstory, the history that sits behind our story, the story that lies in the shadows and which determines or influences the lens through which we interpret the data.

The Story is what we tell ourselves about the other person's behaviour. Our opinion about it. Our thoughts or beliefs about it. Our judgements. We interpret their behaviour and make meaning out of what people do and say. This section of the clearing is an opportunity to share our story with the other person and to acknowledge to ourselves the reaction we have had to their behaviour. By calling it a story we are sharing our own experience of the event without assuming that it is the truth. Being invested in being right is a block to connection. Telling our story and owning it as that, rather than as *the* truth, is an opportunity to take responsibility for our reactions and maybe recognise patterns in our lives. It is also an opportunity for the listener to recognise the impact their behaviour can have on others, even if it was not their intention and to be honest with themselves about their behaviours and motivations.

The Backstory

The backstory is the history and background that sits behind your story. This can take the form of transference, introjects or projections or even a combination of all 3. Understanding our backstory is how we begin to see that in so many cases our reactions, feelings and stories are a product of our lived experience. We can begin to recognise how we filter other people's actions and behaviour through the lens of past relationships. Then backstory is often unconscious, living in the shadows. Doing a clearing offers the possibility of bringing these stories into our awareness so that we can see how they can get in the way of connection with ourselves and others.

Transference - To recognise transference you can ask yourself the following questions: Who is standing behind this person you are clearing with? Who do they remind you of from your history? Who behaved like them? When in your life did you first come across this kind of behaviour towards you?

Introjects - Do you have rules or shoulds/shouldn'ts about the way this person has behaved? Have they done something that you would never do or allow yourself to do? Have they behaved in a way that you believe to be 'wrong'? Maybe they have done something that you would secretly like to allow yourself to do but you would not dare or would never let yourself? Do you work hard not to behave the way they have? And do you sometimes behave that way anyway, by mistake? How are you judging this person for not living in accordance with the (perhaps unexamined) rules you have introjected about how you should live in the world?

Projections - Are *you* the one feeling or thinking the things that you imagine the other is thinking or feeling? If you think they are angry with you, are *you* perhaps angry with yourself? Are you perhaps angry with *them*? If you imagine that they blame you for something or think that you are not good enough, or dismiss you or ignore you, are these judgements that you have of yourself? Do you perhaps dismiss or ignore your own wants and needs? How might you be projecting your feelings and thoughts about yourself onto the other?

Example 1

"Yesterday I heard you inviting three other members of the group out for a drink after the training". **(Data)**

"I felt hurt (sad/angry) and embarrassed (afraid)" **(Emotion)**

"The story I told myself was that you don't like me, that you don't think I'm interesting and that I'm not good enough" **(The Story)**

"I recognise some transference, in this situation you become all my classmates from secondary school who excluded and ignored me. I also know that I don't believe that I am likable or wanted and I project that onto you, that you don't like me or want to spend time with me." **(The Backstory)**

Example 2

"In the group last week I saw you tapping your foot and looking out of the window when I was sharing my new information in the DTR" **(Data)**

"I felt upset (sad/angry) and annoyed (angry)" **(Emotion)**

"The story I told myself was that you found me boring, that you weren't interested in what I was saying, that you don't care about me" **(The Story)**

"I recognise that in that moment I reacted to you like I used to react to my father. He never paid attention when I wanted to talk to him, he wouldn't look up from his paper and always seemed bored and uninterested in what I had to say. So now I make myself small and wrong and then I feel furious with you. I also know I live with an introject that I shouldn't take up too much time or want attention. Whatever I say is unimportant and I imagine that's what you think about me too." **(The Backstory)**

RECOMMENDATION & REQUEST

A recommendation to ourselves. Once we become aware of our needs, responses and reactions, we are in a position to make a recommendation to ourselves for change. We are acknowledging that the fact that the other person's behaviour has evoked a strong response in us may be as much about our old wounds as it is about their behaviour. And we are responsible for finding healing for our old wounds. We do this with kindness and patience, knowing that change can take time, and without judging ourselves. By exploring the possible transference, introjects and projections that might be at play in this relationship, we can embrace, grow and transform the parts of ourselves that get in the way of having a meaningful and satisfying connection with others.

A request for the other person. Being willing to ask for what we want is an important part of valuing ourselves and creating the conditions for self-worth. We make the request, knowing that we may not get what we ask for. We are not demanding or expecting, we are letting the other person know what we would like from them. The difference between a request and a demand is in how we respond to not getting what we ask for. When we blame, punish or reject the other when they don't give us what we ask for, we are making a demand. When we expect people do what we ask, even if they don't really want to, because we think we are right or justified and they are wrong or unjustified or because we think they *should* do it, or we deserve what we are asking for, we are seeking to control others and making demands. The request in this section is made in the form of a change of behaviour from the other person, expressed in a positive context. So, rather than asking them not to do something we let them know what we want them to do. We ask for a change in behaviour that we can see and experience clearly, not a change in attitude, feeling or thought. By being willing to make a request of another we are telling them what contributes to us thriving in our lives. We are telling them about ourselves and we are acknowledging and sharing our deepest needs, allowing ourselves to be vulnerable and open to connection.

You might also choose to add a recognition of **your deepest need**. What is the deeper need behind your recommendation and request? Safety, sustenance, companionship, love, compassion, care, respect, understanding, belonging, autonomy, meaning...? Within the framework of NVC, when we have a strong reaction to someone's actions or words, driving our response is often a fundamental need which is not being met in the present or was not sufficiently met in the past. Recognising this and being able to verbalise it can be insightful and empowering.

Example 1

"Yesterday I heard you inviting three other members of the group out for a drink after the training". **(Data)**

"I felt hurt (sad/angry) and embarrassed (afraid)" **(Emotion)**

"The story I told myself was that you don't like me, that you don't think I'm interesting and that I'm not good enough" **(Story)**

"I recognise some transference, in this situation you become all my classmates from secondary school who excluded and ignored me. I also know that I don't believe that I am likable or wanted and I project that onto you, that you don't like me or want to spend time with me." **(The Backstory)**

"My recommendation to myself is that I could take a risk and ask to be included next time. I will also do some more work on my feelings about being excluded and bullied at school. I want to be able to remind myself that you are not my 13 year old classmates and that I am not powerless in this room." **(Recommendation)**

"My request to you is that I'd really love it if you'd invite me next time you arrange a social get-together" **(Request)**

"I can see that this is about my need to belong" **(Deepest need)**

Example 2

"In the group last week I saw you tapping your foot and looking out of the window when I was sharing my new information in the DTR" **(Data)**

"I felt upset (sad/angry) and annoyed (angry)" **(Emotion)**

"The story I told myself was that you found me boring, that you weren't interested in what I was saying, that you don't care about me" **(Story)**

"I recognise that in that moment I reacted to you like I used to react to my father. He never paid attention when I wanted to talk to him, he wouldn't look up from his paper and always seemed bored and uninterested in what I had to say. So now I make myself small and wrong and then I feel furious with you. I also know I live with an introject that I shouldn't take up too much time or want attention. Whatever I say is unimportant and I imagine that's what you think about me too." **(The Backstory)**

"My recommendation to myself is that next time this happens, I check in with you to see if you are interested in what I'm saying. I will do some more exploration of my relationship with my father and in particular how he used to ignore me and how I have introjected a belief that I am inherently boring and that people will be annoyed when I speak in the group". **(Recommendation)**

"My request is, that you show me that you are listening when I share in the group sometimes, by looking at me. " **(Request)**

"I can see that this is about my need for connection and understanding" **(Deepest need)**



WISHES, HOPES & DREAMS

Our wishes, hopes and dreams are the deepest part of our being; they form our lives and reality, yet they are often the very things that have been ignored, ridiculed or suppressed – both by ourselves and others. So often as we were growing up we were laughed at or put down for expressing our wishes, hopes and dreams. We may have been met with derision, with the realities of life, with all the reasons why we were being unreasonable or unrealistic. For fear of seeing us disappointed or as a result of their own disappointments, the adults around us could not welcome and celebrate our expansiveness.

There's a popular myth that says, when you really want something, you should close your eyes, make a wish, and not tell anyone. So for many of us, sharing our wishes, hopes and dreams can be a very demanding part of the Daily Temperature Reading, the part where we feel very exposed and vulnerable.

In this section, we have the opportunity to share things that we may tell ourselves are silly, maybe something that we have never shared with another or which are still in their formative stage. Our wishes, hopes and dreams are particular to us and don't make us noble and right and others ignoble or wrong. They show how miraculously different we can all be with our inexhaustibly different aspirations. In sharing our wishes, hopes and dreams we expand the possibilities and futures for ourselves and extend our sense of confidence, excitement and goodwill to others.

So, the more we bring our wishes, hopes and dreams into our awareness, and then share them, the greater the possibility that we will relate to and connect with others more powerfully.

We may have rules that say we shouldn't allow ourselves to acknowledge what we hope, wish or dream for, we may lack confidence in voicing these things. The DTR offers an opportunity to begin sharing our innermost thought with others, creating closer, more intimate and more meaningful relationships.

Our wishes, hopes and dreams are integral, vital parts of who and what we are. If we don't share these very important parts of ourselves we are depriving others of an essential part of ourselves.

You will not be held to account. The other people in the group will not, at any time in the future, hold you to doing what you said you wanted to do or point out or blame or shame you for not getting what you wanted. And the members of the group will not make it their responsibility to make any of your hopes, dreams or wishes come true.