

Inner Sage Leadership Group

“Judgments are the most expensive way to think. They are valuable as signals, but costly as conclusions. Let them point you toward curiosity, not become the place where your thinking ends.”

Dr. Joan Flora



I grew up in a tense household where conflict was avoided. When conflict surfaced, it was intense.

As a leader, I followed the conflict playbook I had been taught: explain, justify, defend. It projected competence, but that strategy left me depleted.

Over four decades in education, as a teacher, literacy specialist, school leader, and now an Ed.D. and ICF-credentialed PCC coach, I began to see a different pattern.

Conflict wasn't the problem. Getting emotionally hooked was.

Through Inner Sage Leadership Group, I help leaders navigate conflict without getting hooked. Listening is not a personality trait; it's a nervous-system skill that develops over time.

Hard conversations don't have to drain us. They can build capacity, creativity, and contribution.

Her most requested workshops include:

1. [Raising the Quality of Conflict](#)
2. [The Empathy & Attunement Studio](#)
3. [Boundaries That Build Trust](#)
4. Resolving Emotional Reactivity, returning Fall 2026
5. The Art of Emotional Wisdom, returning Winter 2027

Learn more and contact Joan at www.InnerSageCoach.com or [Linkedin](#)

Body Intelligence

Temperature

/Heat

Hot
Flushed
Warm
Cool/Cold/Icy
Cold Hands & Feet
Chills
Sweaty

Cardiovascular

Pounding
Heart racing
Rush
Energetic
Vitality
Fluttery

Pain &

Tenderness

Tender
Sensitive
Bruised
Achy
Sore
Raw
Gnawing in the belly
Stomach knots
Queasy

Head/Cognition

Dizzy / Spinner
Scattered / Spacey
Urgency
Flood of thoughts

Nerve/

Electrical

Tingling
Electric
Prickly
Needling
Twitchy
Radiating
Buzzy
Itchy

Breath

Breathless
Suffocating
Dry Throat
Dry mouth
Tight Chest
Congested

Movement

Shaky
Trembling
Wobbly
Jittery
Restless
Shivers

Density

Heavy
Dense
Thick
Contracted
Constricted
Constriction
Clenched
Knotted
Tense
Stiff
Blocked
Closed
Shrinking
Cramped

Disconnection

Empty
Hollow
Disconnected
Numb
Weak
Drained

Expansion

Calm
Relaxed
Smooth
Open
Expansive
Spacious
Airy
Alive

Emotions & Feelings

● High Energy + Low pleasant Angry, Anxious, Apprehensive, Concerned, Enraged, Frightened, Frustrated, Fuming, Furious, Irritated, Jittery*, Livid, Nervous, Outraged, Overwhelmed, Panicked, Tense*, Troubled, Uneasy, Worried <i>What boundary or value feels crossed? What need is signaling for attention?</i>	● High Energy + High Pleasant Blissful, Cheerful, Ecstatic, Elated, Energized*, Engaged, Enthusiastic, Excited, Exhilarated, Festive, Happy, Hopeful, Hyper*, Inspired, Joyful, Lively*, Moved, Pleasant, Playful, Pleased, Surprised, Thrilled, Upbeat*
● Low Energy + Low pleasant Bored*, Depressed, Desolate, Despairing, Despondent, Disappointed, Discouraged, Disheartened, Distressed, Down, Drained*, Exhausted*, Fatigued*, Glum, Lonely, Miserable, Morose, Sad, Spent*, Sullen, Tired* <i>What comfort, connection, or restoration is needed?</i>	● Low Energy + High Pleasant At Ease*, Balanced, Calm*, Carefree, Comfortable, Content, Cozy*, Easygoing*, Fulfilled, Grateful, Loving, Peaceful, Relaxed*, Restful*, Satisfied, Secure, Serene, Sleepy*, Thoughtful, Touched, Tranquil*

*Felt states within the body

Adapted from Marshall Rosenberg's "Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life. Mood Meter adapted from Marc Brackett's Mood Meter

Emotions signal whether our needs are being met. Ease (pleasant) often means alignment. Activation (unpleasant) often means something important needs attention.

There are approximately 2,000 English words that describe emotions.

- About 1,400 (70%) describe unpleasant emotions.
- About 300 (15%) describe pleasant emotions.
- The remaining 300 (15%) describe neutral emotions.

-Marc Brackett, Permission to Feel (2019)

Universal Needs

“At the heart of every behavior is the desire to meet a precious need.”

Dr. Marshall Rosenberg

Physical Well-Being: Air · Exercise · Food · Movement · Nature · Rest · Safety
Sensuality · Shelter · Sleep · Sunlight · Touch · Water

Autonomy: Agency · Choice · Choosing/planning one's dreams, goals, values · Freedom
Honesty · Impact · Independence · Self-Determination · Self-expression · Space ·
Spontaneity

Relating: Acceptance · Affection · Appreciation · Belonging · Being seen/heard
Closeness · Communication · Community · Compassion · Companionship · Connection
Consideration · Contribution · Cooperation · Empathy · Feedback · Inclusion
Interdependence · Intimacy · Love · Mutuality · Participation · Respect · Sexuality ·
Shared reality · Sharing · Support · Transparency · Trust · Understanding

Self-Connection: Authenticity · Awareness · Celebration · Clarity · Competence ·
Consciousness · Creativity · Growth · Integrity · Meaning · Mourning · Presence
Purpose · Self-acceptance · Self-expression · Self-realization · Self-respect · Spirituality

Joy of Life: Adventure · Beauty · Comfort · Diversity · Ease · Hope · Humor · Inspiration
Joy · Play · Well-being

Connection with the World: Challenge · Clarity · Coherence · Consistency · Exploration
Flexibility · Harmony · Learning · Meaning · Order/predictability · Peace · Stability
Stimulation · Understanding

Empathy Guess Prompts:

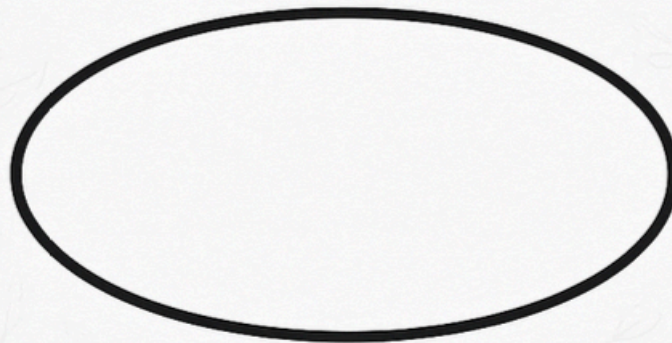
- “Was the need for _____ met for you?” / “Did that experience give you _____?”
- “Do you feel _____ because you (need, value, what’s important) _____?”
- “Sounds like you’re wanting _____ (guess a need). Is that right?”

Adapted from Marshall Rosenberg's “Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life. Compiled and formatted by Dr. Joan Flora.

Book	Author	Approach	Strengths	Considerations
Boundary Boss (2021)	Terri Cole	Rule-based boundaries	Accessible, practical, and confidence-building for people who are new to boundary work. Offers concrete language and strategies for setting limits. Focuses on women.	Emphasizes boundary rules and behaviors more than the underlying emotional or relational processes.
Set Boundaries, Find Peace (2021)	Nedra Glover Tawwab	Situational boundaries with some attention to needs	Highly practical, relatable examples across work, family, and relationships. Helps readers identify where boundaries are needed.	References needs but primarily focuses on specific situations and communication strategies rather than a comprehensive needs-based framework.
Life-Serving Boundaries (2025)	Eila Lowe-Charde	Needs-based boundaries	Centers boundaries as expressions of values, needs, and connection. Encourages self-awareness, discernment, and relational integrity. Aligns with compassionate communication and sustainable relationships.	More reflective and developmental than prescriptive; readers looking for scripts may find it less immediately tactical.

Mapping your relationship to what you perceive as a threatening difference

Something that triggers reactivity for you



*Signs of reactivity: thoughts, beliefs, impulses,
sensations, feelings, behavior, images, words*



The needs you want to protect or care for

