

# Center for Compassionate Communication

What's going on in the story?

<p>WHO are they?</p>	 <p>15-year-old, sick child</p>	 <p>Loving father, attorney</p>	 <p>Loving mother, actress</p>	 <p>Young, caring doctor</p>
<p>Describe their behavior</p>	<p>Sitting quietly in a wheelchair in the corner of the utility closet</p>	<p>Angry Aggressive</p>	<p>Desperate Crying</p>	<p>Matter of fact Blunt</p>
<p>WHAT are their goals?</p>	<p>Run away Bring peace in her family</p>	<p>Protect Evonne</p>	<p>Fear of loss – I want her to be normal! I'm confused and scared.</p>	<p>Make sure they get it.</p>
<p>WHY do they care?</p>	<p>I feel guilty I hate this I want to feel normal again I'm scared I have no control I want to go back to what I knew before</p>	<p>I feel like I have failed I'm overwhelmed It's not what I know how to do. I'm out of control here.</p>	<p>I want her to have this joy that you have given me. I feel like we are all threatened. I'm terrified It's her belly!</p>	<p>I'm out of choices I have failed here... I don't want her to live with an ostomy bag Risk is high! Maybe we waited too long... I'm scared of what lies ahead</p>

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### Take the 30,000-foot view

Our workshop has introduced a quick process to listen more mindfully. WHO, WHAT and WHY are three simple prompts that can help you step back from judgment and recognize the complexity of another person's story. Taking the time to listen impacts our ability to communicate with greater compassion. As a thought experiment, give it a try this week. Whether you are observing a conflict with others, or preparing for a complicated conversation, take a moment to step back. Ask yourself: WHAT is the other person's goal? WHAT is my goal? Is there conflict there? You might have to listen to what they are *not saying* as much as what they are saying. And then – WHY does this issue matter so much to each of us right now? See how those two questions impact what you choose to say and how you say it. If you are stuck, dig more deeply. There might be an unconscious bias standing in your way.