



# TOUCHSTONES

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## Nonviolence



### Introduction to the Theme

While Unitarian Universalism is not a peace church like the Church of the Brethren, the Quakers, or the Mennonites, there has been an abiding appreciation of the importance of nonviolent resistance. This goes back to Henry David Thoreau on our Unitarian side and the Rev. Adin Ballou on our Universalist side.

An admonition against violence was summed up in 1950 in *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi* by author Louis Fischer, who wrote: "Satyagraha is the exact opposite of the policy of an-eye-for-an-eye-for-an-eye-for-an-eye which ends in making everybody blind." Gandhi, influenced by Thoreau and by Leo Tolstoy, who had been influenced by Ballou, developed his philosophy of nonviolent re-

sistance based on the concept of *Satyagraha*, or "soul force." Soul force is the force of love, the force of truth, and the force of courage as one engages with the oppressor who uses violence. Gandhi said, "*Satyagraha* is a weapon of the strong; it admits of no violence under any circumstance whatsoever; and it ever insists upon truth." But he also wrote, "I do believe that, where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence...." Ever the realist, Gandhi knew that violence often prevailed over logic. His commitment to nonviolence was based on his belief that strength was not a function of physical capacity, but indomitable will.

Gandhi's success in driving the British from India using nonviolent civil disobedience was an inspiration to the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. From the Montgomery bus boycott forward, King referred to Gandhi as "the guiding light of our technique of nonviolent social change." King was ordained at the

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## Wisdom Story

### Adin Ballou & Nonviolence

Elisa Davy Pearmain (adapted)

Adin Ballou was born over two hundred years ago. He grew up to be a peacemaker and a Universalist minister, but he didn't start out wanting to be either.

When Adin was seven years old, he went with his family to watch a company of militia out for a parade. They wore colorful uniforms, with swords and guns at the ready. Adin told his dad that when he was older, if there was a call to war, he would join the militia in a heartbeat.



Adin was ten years old when a new minister moved into his town and convinced his whole family to become religious Christians. After that, Adin began to read and study the Bible more than most children his age. One story in the Bible made Adin think about how people treat one another. It was a story where Jesus says if someone slaps you, you should turn peacefully, and offer them your other cheek. That would let them know you would not hurt them, and did not feel angry. Jesus also said if someone steals your coat, you should offer them your shirt, too.

Adin was pretty confused by that lesson in the Bible. "When someone hurts me, I might feel like hurting them back," he thought. "And if someone steals something, I have been taught that they should be punished." But these words of Jesus stayed deep in his heart.

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### Nonviolence & Repairing the World

It should be obvious that violence can never repair the world. At the extreme, we have war. Notably, *Just War theory* does not argue that war is good. A "just" war is "permissible" only because it's a lesser evil, but it's still an evil. And evil is always destructive. The problem is that there is so much violence: bullying, domestic violence, child abuse, gun violence, suicide and self-harm, date rape, racism, and more. Even poverty and homelessness are forms of violence. So, nonviolence is a tool to inform how we repair the world. It requires compassion, a commitment to justice, creating movements to oppose the violence, employing power in creative ways, having a vision of what could be, and perseverance.

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## Repairing the World

## Only Way to Peace

(Continued from page 1) **Wisdom Story**

When he was a teenager, Adin had a strange dream. In the dream, his older brother Cyrus, who had died, told Adin he must be a minister. When Adin woke up, he felt very nervous about getting up in front of people and preaching a sermon. But he took that dream seriously.

And it just so happened that the little church in town had no minister during the summer and the people in the congregation took turns preaching. Adin worked up his courage and remembered his dream. One Sunday he stood up, and although his knees were shaking, he announced he would preach the following week.

So he did. The people at his church liked his sermon a lot. After that, Adin began to work as a Christian minister. Becoming a soldier was forgotten.

As Adin grew up, he started to notice some things that forever ended his plan to be a soldier. He noticed when people fought with each other to solve an argument, that didn't help them to be peaceful. He saw when people were punished for fighting, punishment didn't make them more peaceful. Adin decided any solution that used violence was not for him. He started to believe that if we really want peace, we must do as Jesus said and love our enemies.

Adin lived during the time when slavery was still allowed in this country. He thought slavery was wrong, and he preached about it. Some of his friends hated slavery, too, but they didn't all love peace as much as Adin did. Sometimes his friends got into fights with people who wanted to keep slavery. One of Adin's friends was killed in a fight with people who supported slavery. This upset Adin. He decided to start a new way of living, called "Christian nonresistance." Christian nonresistance meant people would promise never to be violent to others, even to defend themselves.

Many people thought he was crazy, but he felt very sure that this was what Jesus taught. Adin knew that nonviolence was the only way to peace. Source: <http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/journeys/session12/132624.shtml> See page 6 for more.

## Transforming Politics

### The Power of Nonviolence

*Karuna Mantena*

No political action seems to enjoy greater moral authority than the nonviolent methods Mahatma Gandhi inaugurated more than a century ago. ...For decades, pro-democracy movements in Africa, Latin America, and Eastern Europe have conspicuously embraced nonviolent politics to express mass dissent and topple authoritarian governments.

...Plenty of activists and observers have doubted the effectiveness of nonviolent politics. Suspicions of naiveté and weakness, in particular, have shadowed the history of nonviolence from its very inception. Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr, the leading figures of nonviolent politics, both faced criticism along these lines. Skeptics viewed nonviolent methods as timid and sluggish, at best, capable of winning only small reforms. Gandhi and King's moral commitment to nonviolence was seen to hinder the hard choices necessary for radical change.

...For both Gandhi and King, transformative politics was a difficult road—full of disappointments and reversals. Lasting change required patience and determination, and nonviolence was the most potent and reliable means for achieving it. Far from ...acquiescence, nonviolence was a resolutely active politics. It required the cultivation of disciplined fearlessness and moral courage to face the demands of political action.

...Gandhi's Salt March (or Salt *Satyagraha*) of 1930 and King's 1963 Birmingham campaign are two of the most celebrated events in the history of nonviolence. Both campaigns used the power of suffering to dramatic effect. Nonviolent protestors were subjected to brutal police responses. Iconic images and accounts of the violence circulated throughout the world. Suffering exposed the violence of the state and shifted public opinion against it. Though usually unstated, this kind of confrontation, and the sympathy it produces, is often the goal of nonviolent protest politics.

...Source: <https://aeon.co/essays/nonviolence-has-returned-from-obscurity-to-become-a-new-force>

## A Dream Denied?

### King's Message of Nonviolence Has Been Distorted

*Dara T. Mathis*

In 1956 ...journalist William Worthly nearly sat down on a loaded gun in an armchair in Martin Luther King Jr.'s house during the Montgomery Bus Boycott.... King believed in nonviolence, but he did not start there; his moral suasion helped change the way we perceive nonviolent protest, but he [seemed to] abandon... it in the end.

...King's ...concept of ...nonviolence has been distorted and flattened. ... His nonviolent resistance never meant private abandonment of self-defense or even complete conversion to pacifism.

...King saw nonviolent direct action as a means of protesters presenting their bodies as an appeal to the conscience of the larger community, in an effort to create a beloved community. Alongside the theater of protest, King's rhetoric performed the role of narration and monologue that heightened the drama between oppressed and oppressor. He was adamant that his nonviolence did not constitute passivity or mollification, but a militant commitment to change

...Toward the end of King's 13-year career, his waning popularity coincided with his shift from challenging de jure segregation in the South to challenging de facto segregation in the North. King famously said in his *Letter from Birmingham Jail*, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere," but his allies in the North would have preferred that his protests remained below the Mason-Dixon Line. Summarily abandoned by white moderates who had supported him financially, a mere 22 days before his assassination, he seemed resigned that "It may be true that the law can't make a man love me, but it can restrain him from lynching me, and I think that's pretty important also." In this excoriating speech [April 4, 1967], ...*The Other America*, he mentioned the word love twice and never once referred to his dream.

Source: <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2018/04/kings-message-of-nonviolence-has-been-distorted/557021/>

# Readings from the Common Bowl

## Day 1:

"Nonviolence, which is the quality of the heart, cannot come by an appeal to the brain." Mahatma Gandhi



**Day 2:** "At the center of nonviolence stands the principle of love."

Martin Luther King, Jr.

**Day 3:** "If I am greedy, envious, violent, merely having an ideal of nonviolence, of non-greed, is of little value. The understanding of what you are, whatever it is—ugly or beautiful, wicked or mischievous—... is the beginning of virtue." Jiddu Krishnamurti

**Day 4:** "Nonviolence is not inaction. It is not discussion. It is not for the timid or weak.... Nonviolence is hard work." César Chávez

**Day 5:** "The word 'jihad' has nowhere been used in the *Qur'an* to mean war.... It is used ...to mean 'struggle.' The action most consistently called for in the *Qur'an* is ...patience." Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

**Day 6:** "If we divide reality into two camps—the violent and the nonviolent—and stand in one camp while attacking the other, the world will never have peace." Thích Nhất Hạnh

**Day 7:** "I have nothing new to teach the world. Truth and nonviolence are as old as the hills." Mahatma Gandhi

**Day 8:** "Nonviolence aims at doing no harm to living beings. Compassion aims at doing good to all beings." Amit Ray

**Day 9:** "There is no such thing as defeat in nonviolence." César Chávez

**Day 10:** "It never helps to draw a line and dismiss some people as enemies, even those who act violently. We have to approach them with love in our hearts and do our best to help them move in a direction of nonviolence." Thích Nhất Hạnh

**Day 11:** "The nonviolent resistor not only avoids external, physical violence, but he avoids internal violence of spirit. He ... refuses to shoot his opponent, ...he refuses to hate him." Martin Luther King Jr.

**Day 12:** "Peace is a deeper reality than violence." Stanley Hauerwas

**Day 13:** "Peace cannot be built on exclusivism, absolutism, and intolerance. But neither can it be built on vague liberal slogans and pious programs.... There can be no peace on earth without ...inner change...." Thomas Merton

**Day 14:** "The nonviolence practiced by Gandhi and King ...must always be the North Star that guides us on our journey." Barack Obama

**Day 15:** "When I feel angry, I want to say something mean, or yell, or hit. But feeling like I want to is not the same as doing it. Feeling can't hurt anyone or get me into trouble, but doing can." Cornelia Spelman

**Day 16:** "Nelson Mandela sat in a South African prison for 27 years. He was nonviolent. He negotiated his way out of jail. His honor and suffering of 27 years in a South African prison is really ultimately what brought about the freedom of South Africa. That is nonviolence." Coretta Scott King

**Day 17:** "I consider nonviolence to be compassion in action.... It is to act without violence, motivated by compassion, recognizing the rights of others." Dalai Lama XIV

**Day 18:** "His headstone said / FREE AT LAST, FREE AT LAST / But death is a slave's freedom. / We seek the freedom of free men / And the construction of a world / Where Martin Luther King could have lived and / preached nonviolence." Nikki Giovanni

**Day 19:** "Love and Nonviolence cannot heal the wounds which corruption and injustice have caused." Ashutosh Naliapara

**Day 20:** "Human Rights ...calls for performance of duties such as practicing nonviolence, solving conflicts with ...dialogue, respect for the other individual or ...nation, respect for human rights...." Henrietta Newton Martin

**Day 21:** "As long as ...war is always

an ...option, we will not ...imagine any alternative." Stanley Hauerwas

**Day 22:** "Nonviolence means dialogue.... Dialogue means compromise; respecting each other's rights.... There is no 100% winner, no 100% loser—not that way, but half-and-half. That is the ...only way." Dalai Lama XIV

**Day 23:** "But the hard facts were that fifty years of nonviolence had brought the African people nothing but more and more repressive legislation, and fewer and fewer rights." Nelson Mandela

**Day 24:** "...Jesus did not advocate nonviolence merely as a technique for outwitting the enemy, but as a just means... open [to] the possibility of the enemy's becoming just as well." Walter Wink

**Day 25:** "The most visible form of Jesus's not-of-this-world kingdom is the radical, head-turning love of one's enemies...." Preston Sprinkle

**Day 26:** "I believe that Gandhi's views were the most enlightened.... We

should strive to do things in his spirit: not to use violence in fighting for our cause, but by non-participation in anything you believe is evil." Albert Einstein

**Day 27:** "The first principal of nonviolent action is that of non-cooperation with everything humiliating." Mahatma Gandhi

**Day 28:** "When it gets down to having to use violence, then you are playing the system's game. ...The only thing they don't know how to handle is nonviolence and humor." John Lennon

**Day 29:** "The ultimate potent weapon—Non Violence!!!!" Mukesh Kwatra

**Day 30:** "Nonviolence became a cultural ideal ...for a civilization that ...suffered from chronic and terminal violence. ... Hindu sages dreamed of nonviolence." Wendy Doniger

**Day 31:** "Nonviolence is a good policy when conditions permit." Nelson Mandela





## Faith and Theology

### An Experiment in Love

In 1958, Martin Luther King Jr.'s essay, *An Experiment in Love*, was published. Therein, he outlined six principles regarding his philosophy of nonviolence.

**One.** This first principle is especially important since so many assume that nonviolence is passive. King wrote, "It must be emphasized that nonviolent resistance is not a method for cowards; it does resist. If one uses this method because he is afraid or merely because he lacks the instruments of violence, he is not truly nonviolent. This is why Gandhi often said that if cowardice is the only alternative to violence, it is better to fight... The way of nonviolent resistance ... is ultimately the way of the strong man. It is not a method of stagnant passivity... For while the nonviolent resister is passive in the sense that he is not physically aggressive toward his opponent, his mind and his emotions are always active, constantly seeking to persuade his opponent that he is wrong. The method is passive physically but strongly active spiritually. It is not passive non-resistance to evil; it is active nonviolent resistance to evil.

**Two.** For King, nonviolent resistance was intended to be a win-win strategy. As he wrote, "Nonviolence ... does not seek to defeat or humiliate the opponent, but to win his friendship and understanding. The nonviolent resister must often express his protest through noncooperation or boycotts, but he realizes that these are not ends themselves; they are merely means to awaken a sense of moral shame in the opponent. The end is redemption and reconciliation. The aftermath of nonviolence is the creation of the beloved community, while the aftermath of violence is tragic bitterness."

**Three:** Nonviolent resistance makes a distinction between being and doing. It condemns the action, but not the person. In this way it honors our first principle: "The inherent worth and dignity of every person." King wrote, "The attack is directed against forces of evil rather

than against persons who happen to be doing the evil. It is the evil that the non-violent resister seeks to defeat, not the persons victimized by the evil. If he is opposing racial injustice, the nonviolent resister has the vision to see that the basic tension is not between the races.... The tension is, at bottom, between justice and injustice, between the forces of light and the forces of darkness.... We are out to defeat injustice and not white persons who may be unjust."

**Four:** Perhaps the most controversial principle was King's assertion that the nonviolent resister must bear violence and accept suffering without committing violence in return as happened on Bloody Sunday in Selma, Alabama on the Edmund Pettis bridge when the marchers were violently attacked by State troopers and county possemen with billy clubs and tear gas. King asserted that, "Nonviolent resistance [requires] a willingness to accept suffering without retaliation, to accept blows from the opponent without striking back.... The nonviolent resister is willing to accept violence, if necessary, but never to inflict it. He does not seek to dodge jail. If going to jail is necessary, he enters it "as a bridegroom enters the bride's chamber."

**Five:** For King, nonviolent resistance was both a spiritual discipline and a moral stance based upon the ethic of love. As he wrote, "Nonviolent resistance ... avoids not only external physical violence but also internal violence of spirit. The nonviolent resister not only refuses to shoot his opponent but he also refuses to hate him. ... Along the way of life, someone must have sense ... and morality enough to cut off the chain of hate. This can only be done by projecting the ethic of love to the center of our lives."

**Six:** King understood that "the arc of the moral universe is long" and believed that "it bends toward justice." Building on this he wrote, "Nonviolent resistance ... is based on the conviction that the universe is on the side of justice. Consequently, the believer in nonviolence has deep faith in the future. This faith is another reason why the nonviolent resister

can accept suffering without retaliation. For he knows that in his struggle for justice he has cosmic companionship."

Relative to his 4<sup>th</sup> principle, King went to jail 29 times. Memorable among these was his arrest along with Ralph Abernathy in Birmingham on Good Friday, April 12, 1963 by Police Commissioner Eugene "Bull" Connor for demonstrating without a permit. The Birmingham Campaign was already in full swing with mass meetings, direct actions, lunch counter sit-ins, marches on City Hall, and

a boycott of downtown merchants in the run-up to Easter, which featured a significant amount of shopping. King was profoundly disappointed by a statement by eight Birmingham clergymen published in the Birmingham News



condemning the protests. While in jail for 8 days, King wrote a 10-page response that is known as the *Letter from Birmingham Jail*. In it, King famously said, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly." Of note was his lament regarding the clergymen's condemnation. King wrote, "More and more I feel that the people of ill will have used time much more effectively than have the people of good will. We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people." But King went further, writing, "So often the contemporary church is a weak, ineffectual voice with an uncertain sound. So often it is an arch defender of the status quo. Far from being disturbed by the presence of the church, the power structure of the average community is consoled by the church's silent—and often even vocal—sanction of things as they are." Perhaps recalling words by Frederick Douglass, King wrote, "We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed." King also wrote, "We must come to see, with one of our distinguished jurists, that 'justice too long delayed is justice denied.'" The Birmingham Campaign was the turning point in the Civil Rights Movement.

Source: Touchstones

## Family Matters

### Nonviolence for Toddlers

Ken Butigan

Colman McCarthy ... [said]: "I had a student ... who wrote a 13-word paper that has stayed with me: 'Question: Why are we violent but not illiterate? Answer: Because we are taught to read.'"

...We are as much in need of nonviolence education today as we were of literacy training a century ago.

...Chicago ...is studded with hundreds of parks with hundred-year-old field houses that, no matter the weather, are crowded every morning with innumerable toddlers and their parents.

Most of the children, it seems, have not been schooled in the mechanics of group conflict yet. When conflict happens (someone takes another child's toy or one child pushes another) there's a kind of awkwardness to the vignette, as if the script of conflict is unpracticed, tentative, uncertain.

...The toddler nonviolence formation program ...there is built largely by the children themselves, with just enough guidance and cues from the teacher ...to give them space to make this super-charged serenity a reality.

...I began to notice the posters....  
*Getting Along* ...[had] a colorful spray of sayings: Listen carefully; Think first; Respect everyone; Take turns; Be honest; Help others; Do your best.

...The *Take Ten* poster [by Anne Parry] ...was ...emblazoned with the words, *Violence Free Zone*: Talk it out! Walk it out! Wait it out! *Take TEN* ...Deep Breaths (before you say something that hurts). ...Steps Back (before getting involved in a fight). ...Seconds (before using something as a weapon). Violence has had its turn... and it isn't working. Take Ten... it's time!

...Nonviolence literacy may start at two years old, but it will flourish only if we read the world in a new and transformative way.

Source: <http://wagingnonviolence.org/feature/listen-carefully-think-first-respect-everyone/>



### Raising A Nonviolent Child

Elizabeth Park

If we want our children to be nonviolent, we cannot use violence to discipline them. ...The ultimate goal of discipline is to teach our children self-discipline so that they can make good choices about how to behave.

1. Point out a way to be helpful—instead of scolding. You can redirect a child's energy by giving him a job—such as holding something at the store, or asking ...[her] to turn off the television.
2. Express disapproval without attacking the child personally. ...Let a child know your feelings without name calling.
3. State your expectations ahead of time. Your child needs to know ahead of time what you expect. ...
4. Show your child how to make amends. We can model ...how to apologize, and we can help them apologize when they have hurt someone.
5. Give choices. Instead of telling children what not to do, you can give them choices about what they are allowed to do. Instead of saying, "No running!" you can say, "These are the kinds of things you can do in the house: play games, draw, work on puzzles."
6. Take action.

Source: <https://www.udel.edu/academics/colleges/canr/cooperative-extension/fact-sheets/raising-a-non-violent-child/>

### Family Activity: Jackal & Giraffe

In nonviolent communication (NVC), jackal language is violent and consists of blame and criticism, while giraffe language is compassionate and speaks in the language of feelings and needs. Brainstorm with your children words and phrases that represent jackal language and giraffe language. Then discuss how the two languages make each of you feel and why.

**Good Resource:** *The Heart of Parenting: NVC in Action* by Marion Badenoch Rose at [http://www.nonviolentcommunication.com/pdf\\_files/parenting\\_communication\\_mrose.pdf](http://www.nonviolentcommunication.com/pdf_files/parenting_communication_mrose.pdf)

## Power Over or With?

### Misusing Our Power

G. Peter Fleck

In an issue of a woman's journal dedicated to family violence an article appeared by a young woman who had ...let ...her husband teach her how to drive. When for the third time she made the same error in the manual handling of the gearshift, he ...slapped her hand. "I reacted instantaneously and violently," she wrote, "slamming on the brakes, screaming at him, and threatening never to drive with him again. He was speechless.... But I was not overreacting. ...I had been physically violated...."

When a few years later she became a parent, she also became a hand slapper and worse. ...She wondered: "how could the slapped so easily become a slapper?" ...She quotes the old story of husband hitting wife who hits the child who hits the younger child who hits the dog. She wonders: When does physical abuse become physical violence? The first time she spanked her child, she writes, "I realized ...it is anger, it is a desire for deterrence, it is a desire to be a good parent, it is a desire to have power over someone. *A desire to have power over someone*. There it is. The old sin. The use of power over another human being to one's own satisfaction. With admirable honesty, she writes: "I know that the seeds of violence are within me." The desire to have power over someone else violates the other's self-esteem, the other's dignity, yes, the other's sacredness, regardless of whether the other is one's spouse, ...child, ...friend, or ...enemy.

...Del Martin, in her book *Battered Wives*, tells us about a former highway patrol officer: "When he first went on patrol and saw his fellow officers roughing up suspects he would flinch. But after a while he became so calloused that the sight no longer bothered him. At that point he knew it was time to quit. It is my guess," she concludes, "that he got out just in time. Someone who is immune to the pain of others is, in my estimation, most dangerous."

Source: *The Blessings of Imperfection* by G. Peter Fleck

## Gandhi and King

(Continued from page 1) **Introduction**

Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta in February 1948 just a few weeks after Gandhi was assassinated at a prayer meeting in the grounds of Birla House, New Delhi. While attending Crozer Theological Seminary (1948-1951), King was inspired by the sermons of Dr. A.J. Muste and Dr. Mordecai Johnson about the life and teachings of Gandhi. In 1959 King traveled in India for five weeks to learn more about the teachings and influence of Gandhi. In a radio broadcast during his last evening in India, King said, "Since being in India, I am more convinced than ever before that the method of nonviolent resistance is the most potent weapon available to oppressed people in their struggle for justice and human dignity."

As Gandhi and King knew, nonviolent resistance is at root a spiritual practice before it is an inter-personal tactic or a political strategy. The purpose of the spiritual practice is to first help us meditate on the role of violence in our life. What role has violence played in shaping who we are? What harm has been done to us as a result of violence? How have we harmed others because of how we have been shaped by violence, either consciously or unconsciously? What triggers in us either feelings of violence or acting violently? The way to nonviolence is a thorough-going exploration of inner and interpersonal violence.

Violence is a continuum that is influenced by power, stress, anger, will, fear, conditioning, and more. That is a lot to unpack and much of it is part of our emotional field. And it takes cultivation of an awareness of self and other, and of compassion, empathy, courage, non-judgment, the ability to choose, and authentic self-empowerment as opposed to a default to passive aggression, which is yet one more form of violence.

The second level of the spiritual practice of nonviolence is to meditate on the meaning and power of compassion. Nonviolence is a negative construct, the absence of violence. It is not enough to confront inner and interpersonal violence. We must move from violence as a default

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## Ballou's Nonviolent Resistance

### The Rest of the Story

Henry David Thoreau stopped paying his poll tax in 1843 to protest slavery. In July 1846, his friend, Sam Staples, who was the local tax collector, attempted to cajole Thoreau into paying the tax. He offered to reduce the tax and even offered to pay it for him. Thoreau refused and Staples had to arrest him. Thoreau spent the night in jail, but was released the next day against his will because he saw his imprisonment as a way to also protest the Mexican-American War. The experience (which he recounted in part in the chapter entitled *The Village in Walden*) resulted in a lecture in 1846 titled *The Rights and Duties of the Individual in relation to Government*. It was then published as an essay in 1849 with the title *Resistance to Civil Government*. When it was republished in 1866 after Thoreau's death, it was called *Civil Disobedience*.

The essay is considered to be one of the most influential political tracts ever written by an American. Its reach, however, was much wider. In 1894, the Russian author, social reformer, and Christian pacifist Leo Tolstoy read an article on Thoreau written by John Trevor. This prompted him to order a copy of *Civil Disobedience*. He thought that the work was so important that he arranged for its translation into Russian in 1898 for publication in the journal, *Free Word*.

In 1890, Henry Salt published Thoreau's political essays, including *Civil Disobedience*. Gandhi read it in 1906 while working as a lawyer in South Africa where he was protesting that government's treatment of immigrant workers from India. He told Webb Miller, "[Thoreau's] ideas influenced me greatly. I adopted some of them and recommended the study of Thoreau to all of my friends who were helping me in the cause of Indian Independence. Why, I actually took the name of my movement from Thoreau's essay."

Tolstoy's ideas of nonviolent resistance were included in his 1894 book, *The Kingdom of God is within You*. Gandhi was also transformed by Tolstoy's book. It greatly influenced his thinking

about nonviolence. Of it Gandhi later wrote, "Its reading cured me of my skepticism and made me a firm believer in *ahimsa* [nonviolence]."

The connection between Thoreau and Gandhi is well known. The connection between Thoreau and Tolstoy is not. **But this is only part of the story.**

The Rev. Adin Ballou (1803-1890), a Universalist minister and later a Unitarian minister, was an important representative of the Universalist social conscience. As a social reformer, he was active in the temperance and abolitionist movements. He was also a proponent of nonviolent resistance.

Thoreau was aware of Ballou's ideas. In fact, he and his brother, John, debated Ballou at the Concord Lyceum in January 1841. The question under consideration was, "Is it ever proper to offer forcible resistance?" Thoreau and his brother argued for forcible resistance, while Ballou defended nonviolent resistance.

Ballou's social ideals prompted him to start the utopian Hopedale Community in 1841 in Milford, Massachusetts. In 1846, he published his book *Christian Non-Resistance in All Its Important Bearings, illustrated and defended*. Leo Tolstoy was profoundly moved by Ballou's book and his ideas about nonviolent resistance and included many of those ideas in his own book, *The Kingdom of God is within You*. Tolstoy wrote, "one would have thought Ballou's work would have been well known, and the ideas expressed by him would have been either accepted or refuted; but such has not been the case."

The trajectory of Ballou's influence, through Tolstoy and, thus, through Gandhi, would eventually shape the thinking and actions of Martin Luther King, Jr.

**Now you know the rest of the story.**

Source: Touchstones



## Nonviolence Wins

### Violence versus Nonviolence

In February 2019, Michelle Nicholasen interviewed Erica Chenoweth, who co-authored with Maria J. Stephan the 2011 book, *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*.

Their research and analysis compares violent and nonviolent outcomes in different periods and geographical contexts from 1900 to 2006. Among their conclusions is the fact that violent insurgency is rarely justifiable on strategic grounds because campaigns of nonviolent resistance were more than twice as effective as their violent counterparts in achieving their stated goals.

Nicholasen asked, "...What are the key elements necessary for a successful non-violent campaign?"

Chenoweth responded, "The first is a large and diverse participation that's sustained.

"The second thing is that [the movement] needs to elicit loyalty shifts among security forces in particular, but also other elites. Security forces are important because they ultimately are the agents of repression, and their actions largely decide how violent the confrontation with—and reaction to—the nonviolent campaign is going to be in the end. But there are other security elites, economic and business elites, state media. There are lots of different pillars that support the status quo, and if they can be disrupted or coerced into noncooperation, then that's a decisive factor.

"The third thing is that the campaigns need to be able to have more than just protests; there needs to be a lot of variation in the methods they use.

"The fourth thing is that when campaigns are repressed—...they don't either descend into chaos or opt for using violence themselves. If campaigns allow ...repression to throw the movement into total disarray or they use it as a pretext to militarize their campaign, then they're essentially co-signing what the regime wants.... And they're probably going to get totally crushed."

Source: <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2019/02/why-nonviolent-resistance-beats-violent-force-in-effecting-social-political-change/>

## Our Calling is Love

### Love Against Violence

*Rev. Dr. Rebecca Ann Parker*

Love is the active, creative force that repairs life's injuries and brings new possibilities into being. Love speaks out in the face of injustice and oppression, calling leaders to account when policies and practices are injuring people. Love tends the wounds created by injustice and evil and offers compassion in the presence of life's suffering. Love builds communities of inclusion and friendship that break through the boundaries of prejudice and enmity. ...And in the deepest night, when our hearts are breaking, it is the discovery of a love that chooses unshakeable fidelity to our common humanity that renews us and redirects us to a life of generosity.

...In this time... when violence is a rising tide, our calling is to love.

...[These] events ...call us to make a religious response—publicly, proactively, and persistently. What we do in this time must be done out of ecstatic love for life—because we have seen life's beauty and goodness and know this world must be embraced with unshakeable loyalty.

...Theologies of redemptive violence too easily obscure the saving message of the world's best spiritual wisdom. In the presence of the theology of war that sacrifices the poor to benefit the privileged and offers false consolation to the bereaved, our calling is to speak and act theologically. We are to proclaim what is moral,

what is just, what reverences life, what gives hope in the face of violence,

what restores life when it has been fractured by human cruelty, what is worthy of our ultimate loyalty, what sustains us in the long night of pain, what connects us in right relationship to our neighbor, what saves the world.

Source: <http://www.uuworld.org/articles/against-vengeance>



## How do you Connect?

### Nonviolent Communication

*Marshall Rosenberg*

I think it is important that people see that spirituality is at the base of Nonviolent Communication (NVC), and that they learn the mechanics of the process with that in mind. It's really a spiritual practice that I am trying to show as a way of life. Even though we don't mention this, people get seduced by the practice. Even if they practice this as a mechanical technique, they start to experience things between themselves and other people they weren't able to experience before. So eventually they come to the spirituality of the process. They begin to see that it's more than a communication process and realize it's really an attempt to manifest a certain spirituality. So I have tried to integrate the spirituality into the training in a way that meets my need not to destroy the beauty of it through abstract philosophizing. ...

I recommend ...that people take time to ask themselves this question, "How do I choose to connect with other human beings?" and to be as conscious as they can about that. To make sure it's their choice and not the way they've been programmed to choose. ...

Gratitude ...plays a big role for me. If I express gratitude when I am conscious of the human act that I want to express it for, consciousness of how I feel when the act occurs, whether it's my act or someone else's, and what needs of mine it

fulfills, then expressing gratitude fills me with consciousness of the power that we human beings have to enrich lives.

The spiritual basis for me is that I'm trying to connect with the Divine Energy in others and connect them with

the Divine in me, because I believe that when we are really connected with that Divinity within each other and ourselves, that people enjoy contributing to one another's well-being more than anything else. ...In this place, violence is impossible.

Source: <http://streetgiraffe.com/spiritual-basis-of-nvc/>

# Small Group Discussion Guide

## Theme for Discussion Nonviolence

**Preparation prior to Gathering:** (Read this issue of the journal and *Living the Questions* in the next column.)

**Business:** Deal with any housekeeping items (e.g., scheduling the next gathering).

**Opening Words:** “It never helps to draw a line and dismiss some people as enemies, even those who act violently. We have to approach them with love in our hearts and do our best to help them move in a direction of nonviolence. If we work for peace out of anger, we will never succeed. Peace is not an end. It can never come about through non-peaceful means.”

*Thích Nhất Hạnh*

**Chalice Lighting** (James Vila Blake) (adapted) (In unison) *Love is the spirit of this church, and service is its law. This is our covenant: to dwell together in peace, to seek the truth in love, to serve human need, and to help one another.*

**Check-In:** How is it with your spirit? What do you need to leave behind in order to be fully present here and now? (2-3 sentences)

**Claim Time for Deeper Listening:** This comes at the end of the gathering where you can be listened to uninterrupted for more time if needed. You are encouraged to claim time ranging between 3-5 minutes, and to honor the limit of the time that you claim.

**Read the Wisdom Story:** Take turns reading aloud parts of the story on page 1.

**Readings from the Common Bowl:** Group members read selections from *Readings from the Common Bowl* (page 3). Leave a few moments of silence after each to invite reflection on the meaning of the words.

**Sitting In Silence:** Sit in silence together, allowing the *Readings from the Common Bowl* to resonate. Cultivate a sense of calm and attention to the readings and the discussion that follows (*Living the Questions*).

**Reading:** “The heart of democracy is the understanding that every person is important. To live by this principle in the face of tragedy is a very difficult thing, but it is exactly the right thing to do. If, even in

our terror and our anger, we can continue to uphold the value of life, then the terror has not defeated us.”

*Rev. Sean Parker Dennison*

**Living the Questions:** Explore as many of these questions as time allows. Fully explore one question before moving on.

1. As you think about growing up, how were the seeds of violence planted in you and those around you? The seeds of nonviolence?
2. What are examples of everyday violence and nonviolence that you have experienced?
3. To what extent do you believe conflict and violence are caused by human nature and human physiology and to what extent are they socially created? Regardless of nature or nurture, what motivates people to pursue nonviolence and to engage violence with compassion?
4. What emotions and values reinforce the use of violence? What emotions and values reinforce a commitment to nonviolence?
5. In a complex and often dangerous world, what are the limits of nonviolence? Why?
6. How can we cultivate nonviolence in ourselves and in others?

The facilitator or group members are invited to propose additional questions that they would like to explore.

**Deeper Listening:** If time was claimed by individuals, the group listens without interruption to each person who claimed time.

**Checking-Out:** One sentence about where you are now as a result of the time spent together exploring the theme.

### Extinguishing Chalice

(Elizabeth Selle Jones) (In unison)

*We extinguish this flame but not the light of truth, the warmth of community, or the fire of commitment. These we carry in our hearts until we are together again.*

### Closing Words

Rev. Philip R. Giles

(In unison) *May the quality of our lives be our benediction and a blessing to all we touch.*

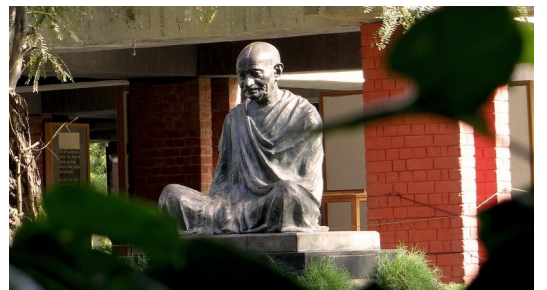
# Words and Deeds

(Continued from page 6) **Introduction**

to compassion. This is why nonviolent communication (NVC), a process developed by Marshall Rosenberg, is often called compassionate communication. Perhaps nonviolent communication becomes compassionate communication as we develop communication skills and as those skills change us.

Compassion is relational. It is part of a continuum that begins with sympathy — feeling pity for — and moves to empathy — feeling with. We are born with a disposition toward compassion, with what Ram Dass called “natural compassion.” For most of us this disposition must be cultivated and deepened as Karen Armstrong asserts in her book, *Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life*.

Ultimately, compassion asks more of us. This more is articulated in our second source: *Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love*. This is what Gandhi and King knew: nonviolence informed by compassion moves from an interpersonal level to become a vehicle for social change whether it involves LGBTQ rights, immigration, Black Lives Matter, domestic violence, gun violence, or peaceful Muslims who know that their religious values support their political allegiance to their adopted country. Nonviolence cannot change everything overnight, but it changes us in remarkable ways.



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