Nonviolence 101:
What, Why & How

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“Nonviolence is the greatest force at the disposal of [hu]mankind.” -Gandhi
Today’s Agenda

Arrive! + Introductions

What is nonviolence?

Why nonviolence?

How? - Roadmap overview

Conflict escalation curve & De-escalation

Resources
Honoring our teachers
Foundation for Nonviolence

Presence

Cultivate **calm** (and self-awareness) daily

Actively, generously **listen**

Practice using **I-statements**, nonviolent/compassionate communication

Build **relationships** and **community**

**Be constructive** in your actions when possible
Questions to consider

How can we be a unifying presence and engage in inclusive and respectful conversations?

How can we contribute in healing of our nation?

How do we stay from divisive language that blames “the other”?
Peace Professor, Army Wife

“Take ‘the other side’ to lunch”
What has been helpful to me

Spiritual practice

  Mindfulness/meditation - helps me to be less reactive, more compassionate

  14 mindfulness trainings: nonattachment to view, openness, and freedom of thought

Coming from a place of genuine curiosity, mutual respect, and love

Asking for a break when needed
“We have to start believing the best in each other instead of expecting the worse.”

“I realized what they’re saying is, ‘Our community is in trouble. Our community is in pain.’ Well, I understand that. I get that. And that we can unite on.”

-Glenn Beck,
On Being with Krista Tippett
Civil Conversations Project
“In our work we must always seek to unite all that is divided.”

-The Activist’s Tao Te Ching, translated by William Martin
“We are all healers of the world. And that story opens a sense of possibility. It’s not about healing the world by making a huge difference. **It’s about healing the world that touches you,** that’s around you.”

-Rachel Naomi Remen, On Being Interview
Introductions

Please share your name and briefly what inspired you to be here today.
Metta Center for Nonviolence

Help people to **practice nonviolence safely and effectively** through providing educational resources.

Encourage people in all walks of life to discover their **innate capacity for nonviolence** and to use its power **strategically** for the **long-term transformation of themselves and the world**.

It’s not about putting the right person in power, it’s about awakening the right power in people.
What is nonviolence?

Five words/definition
What is nonviolence?

- From the original Sanskrit, *ahimsa* अहिंसा
  
  $a = \text{non}$
  
  *himsa* = the *desire* to harm
  
  *ahimsa* = the *absence of the desire to harm*
  
  positive = *love-in-action*
“Nonviolence means avoiding not only the external physical violence, but also the internal violence of the spirit. You not only refuse to shoot a man, but you refuse to hate him.”

–MLK Jr.
How do we deal with the desire to harm?

“We may never be strong enough to be entirely nonviolent in thought, word and deed. But we must keep nonviolence as our goal and make strong progress towards it.” - Gandhi
Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.

(Viktor E. Frankl)
Nonviolence Is Power

“As a constructive power, it’s unleashed when potentially destructive drives like fear or anger are converted into creative equivalents like love and compassion.”
- Metta Center

Person Power - the power within each one of us

People Power - our collective power when we stand together
Nonviolence is Power

1. Threat power: “You will do what I want, or I will hurt you.”

2. Exchange power: “I’ll give you this if you give me that.”

3. Integrative power: “I will be authentic, and it will bring us closer together.”

From Kenneth Boulding’s *Three Faces of Power*
Other important points re:nv

It has a rich and vast history! (even before Gandhi)

It can be learned (Gandhi: a violent person, but not a coward)

It’s more than just protest!

Sharp’s 198 methods - persuasion, social, economic & political noncooperation, intervention

Pillars of support

We need to move the mind and heart
Why nonviolence?
Why nonviolence?

**Principled (moral) argument** - because it’s the right thing to do

**Ends = means**

**Strategic argument**

It works! - Chenoweth & Stephan

Don’t fight your opponent where they’re
Study on all major violent & nonviolent campaigns to overthrow a government since 1900

Nonviolent campaigns were more than 2x as likely to succeed

Trend has been increasing over time - in last 50 years, nonviolent campaigns are becoming more successful & common

No campaigns failed that achieved active & sustained participation of 3.5% of the population

NV campaigns were larger & more inclusive, more likely to result in democratic institutions
Nonviolence takes time

“People try nonviolence for a week, and when it doesn’t ‘work’ they go back to violence, which hasn’t worked for centuries.” - Theodore Roszak

(← Not Roszak)
Unlock the power of the person. Start anytime to embody the world we want to help us avoid burnout and the need to compromise our key values, and make us more effective at bringing that world about. Here are 5 things we can do to clear our minds of the violence and low human image that stalks the commercial mass media:

- Distance ourselves from the violence and vulgarity of the commercial mass media (which may mean all of it).
- Learn everything we can about nonviolence.
- Get a spiritual practice if we don’t already have one.
- Be personal when we interact with others; look for relationships of trust and service.
- Find your passion and tell the ‘new story.’

Person Power

Constructive Program

Nonviolent Resistance (Satyagraha)

Peace

Democracy and Social Justice

Vibrant and Need-based Economies

Climate Protection

Environment

New Story Creation
Key principles of Roadmap

Peace starts from within, expands outward

Be constructive where possible (it’s always possible!), obstructive when necessary
Person Power - In, Out...

Discovering the innate and immense power within each one of us

Take charge of your own inner culture

Learn about the (nonviolent) future

Commit to spiritual practice/develop your own inner strength

Be personal - take pleasure in personal relationships

Be the new story - find your passion
Person Power

**Homework:** brainstorm ideas about how you might practice each one, then choose one to commit to practicing (if you feel so inspired!)
Active listening exercise - being personal

What is active listening?
Active listening

Find a partner

Partner A will share about “Something that is helping me to cultivate inner strength/inspiration/hope right now is….”
Partner B will just listen (2 min)

Switch!

Debrief
“There is a pervasive form of contemporary violence to which the idealist most easily succumbs: activism and overwork. The rush and pressure of modern life are a form, perhaps the most common form, of its innate violence. To allow oneself to be carried away by a multitude of conflicting concerns, to surrender to too many demands, to commit oneself to too many projects, to want to help everyone in everything, is to succumb to violence. The frenzy of our activism neutralizes our work for peace. It destroys our own inner capacity for peace. It destroys the fruitfulness of our own work, because it kills the root of inner wisdom which makes work fruitful.”

-Thomas Merton
The Great Vow for Mindful Activists

“Aware of suffering and injustice, I, ____________, am working to create a more just, peaceful, and sustainable world. I promise, for the benefit of all, to practice self-care, mindfulness, healing, and joy. I vow to not burn out.”

Developed by Mushim Ikeda
Finding your passion

“If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you.

If you do not bring forth what is within you, what you do not bring forth will destroy you.”

-Gospel of Thomas
Constructive Program

“YOU NEVER CHANGE THINGS BY FIGHTING THE EXISTING REALITY. TO CHANGE SOMETHING, BUILD A NEW MODEL THAT MAKES THE EXISTING MODEL OBSOLETE.”

- BUCKMINSTER FULLER
Constructive Program

• Build new institutions

• Supply our own needs - concrete, practical

• Everyone can contribute, every day

• Win over the public
"The sickness and weakness of our society has become clear to us. The pomp, opulence and arrogance we see displayed are undermined by injustice, poverty and discontent. The foundations are crumbling...Our task is not to destroy society, for it is dying on its own. We must offer healing and the tools to build a world on new foundations.”

From *The Activist’s Tao Te Ching*
Nonviolent Resistance (Satyagraha, NV Direct Action)

• We are trained and prepared
• Resist at appropriate kind and degree
• Resist at key leverage points
Conflicts Escalation Curve

From *Search for a Nonviolent Future* (Nagler, 2004, p. 108)
Conflict Escalation

- **Conflict Resolution**
  - **Negotiate**
  - **Resist**
  - «**Do or Die**»

- **Violence**
- **Dehumanization**
Conflict Escalation

- **Conflict Resolution**
  - Ultimate Sacrifice

- Steps:
  - **Negotiate**
  - **Resist**
  - «Do or Die»

- Tools:
  - Satyagraha

- Axis:
  - Violence
  - Dehumanization
Conflict Escalation

- Negotiate
- Resist
- «Do or Die»

(Violence)

(Ultimate) Sacrifice

(Violence)

Dehumanization
Conflict Escalation

VIOLENCE

DEHUMANIZATION

NEGOTIATE

RESIST

«DO OR DIE»

Constructive Program
Conflict Escalation

- Negotiate: Conflict Resolution
- Resist: Satyagraha
- «Do or Die»: (Ultimate) Sacrifice

Constructive Program

Axes:
- Violence
- Dehumanization
Resolution

Negotiation
Mediation
Nonviolent communication
Council (circle process, talking piece)
Dialogue
Legal channels
Phase 2 - Resist

Gene Sharp’s 198 Methods - persuasion, noncooperation, intervention, ie:

Protest

Boycott

Divestment

Noncooperation - remove the pillars of support

Concentration vs. dispersion
If I can't dance, I don't want to be part of your revolution

~ Emma Goldman
Phase 3 - Ultimate Sacrifice

Law of suffering

Putting your life on the line
Conflict De-escalation – CLARA

Calm and center

Listen

Affirm common ground

Respond

Add

Repeat...

See handout from Quaker center.
Other tips for de-escalation


(But don’t tell someone else to calm down ;)

Third-party intervention

Eye contact (in a non-threatening way)

Be respectful

Empathize - Antoinette Tuff example
Nonviolent Peacekeeping

=> If you are organizing a protest, ideally a) train people in nonviolence beforehand, b) have a peacekeeping team, c) make nonviolence explicit in your invites

The Interrupters - PBS documentary & TED talk (Gary Slutkin)

Nonviolent Peaceforce, Peace Brigades International
(Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping)

Christian Peacemaker Teams
MLK’s 6 steps of nonviolence

1. Information gathering
2. Education (of self and others, including opposition)
3. Personal commitment to nonviolence
4. Discussion/negotiation
5. Direct action
6. Reconciliation
Stealth & Keystone issues

Keystone issue is winnable and well-aimed enough that succeeding at it will weaken the entire system.

Stealth issue is an issue whose significance will be underestimated by the opposition until it’s too late (e.g. Salt Satyagraha).
Other Key Gandhian Concepts

Nonembarassment - never humiliate your opponent

No fresh issue - don’t bring new things to the table when you have the “upper hand”

Oppose the system or action, NOT the person

Law of suffering: willingness to undergo suffering to awaken the opponent’s humanity (tapyasa)
New Story Creation

Peace

Democracy & Social Justice

Environment

Climate Protection

Vibrant & Sound Economy
What is the key?
New Story Creation

• Emerging from wisdom traditions + new science
• Replaces false worldview and human image
New Story Creation
New story animation - the Story of Us
We need a “new” story...

We are interconnected - we *inter-are* (and modern science confirms this)

We are mind, body and spirit

Happiness comes from within, from relationships, and from service, not from material goods and consumerism

Cooperation is more powerful than competition

Security is found through relationships, not through punishment and force

....?
Your new story elevator speech

Try to summarize the work that you do/are passionate about in the context of the new story.

“I work in restorative justice because I believe that real security comes through relationships and community. Restorative justice acknowledges our interconnectedness and makes communities safer by repairing harm and building community.”

“I work in peace education because peace can be taught and learned, and I believe the world will be more peaceful if we teach for the world we want to see.”
Roadmap wedges

1. Find yourself in the roadmap

2. Get together with others from your shared area of interest.

3. Consider:
   a. Who do you need to connect with to make an impact? Who could help make your strategy more robust?
   b. Articulate the “new story” central to your issue.
   c. Is your current work obstructive, constructive or both? What might you need to do more or less of?
Resources on Dialogue Across Difference

Public Conversations Project/What Is Essential

Living Room Conversations

On Being - Civil Conversations
Read

*Nonviolence Handbook & Search for a Nonviolent Future* by Michael Nagler

*This is an Uprising* by Mark Engler and Paul Engler

Gene Sharp (especially 198 Methods, From *Dictatorship to Democracy*)

Paul K. Chappell - Peaceful Revolution (or anything else; also look him up on Youtube)

Colman McCarthy’s Class on Nonviolence Reader

*The Art of Protest* - Tina Rosenberg, NYT

*People are Protesting Donald Trump - but when does protest actually work?* - Erica Chenoweth, Washington Post

*The King Philosophy* - The King Center

Metta Center Nonviolence Bibliography
Hope

Joanna Macy - *Active Hope*

Rebecca Solnit - *Hope in the Dark*
Watch

Bringing Down a Dictator (Otpor! Movement, Serbia)

Pray the Devil Back to Hell (Women’s peace movement, Liberia)

This Changes Everything - based on Naomi Klein’s book on climate change

How to Start a Revolution

A Force More Powerful - PBS series

Erica Chenoweth TED talk

Gary Slutkin TED talk
Organizations/Resources

Beautiful Trouble - A Toolbox for Revolution

Metta Center

Campaign Nonviolence/Pace e Bene

ICNC (International Center for Nonviolent Conflict)

CANVAS - http://canvasopedia.org/

Global Nonviolent Action Database
James Lawson monthly teaching in LA

Saturday, May 20th 9am-noon
Location: Holman United Methodist Church, 3320 W. Adams Blvd, LA 90018

This is a free event. RSVP not required. We have room for you!

Refreshments will be served.

Contact: Walter Johnson  wlj619@gmail.com  310-570-3776
Quick Tips/Overview

Practicing presence

Cultivate calm (and self-awareness) daily

Actively, generously listen

Practice using I-statements, nonviolent/compassionate communication

Build relationships and community

Be constructive in your actions when possible
Future Training Suggestions

Beautiful Trouble

Nonviolent/Compassionate Communication

Council (Ojai Foundation)

Peacekeeper training

Paul Chappell - Peace Leadership (Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, Santa Barbara)

Restorative Practices
Thank you!

Email: education@mettacenter.org

Web site: www.mettacenter.org
References
