

Gandhi-King Season for Non-Violence

~ 64 Days to Practice Weaving Love & Wise Action Into Daily Life ~

The Season for Nonviolence, January 30 - April 4, is a national 64-day educational and grassroots campaign dedicated to the strategic and spiritual legacy of Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi believed in the *power of truth* and *possibility* - that a person of conscience, could awaken others by refusing to go along with existing *injustice* and by pointing out more *just and workable alternatives*. Dr. Martin Luther King applied Gandhian principles, and helped lead a successful movement for civil rights in the U.S. Framed by the memorial anniversaries of these two great leaders, this annual cross-cultural event creates a focused time to explore how shared values and common goodness can support people of all faiths and political parties moving toward a more just and sustainable future.

Join us in the annual *Gandhi-King Season for Nonviolence (SNV)* to learn about the powerful teachings of these two great humanitarians and the virtues and practices that bring greater meaning to life, relationships and our shared world. The *SNV* (64 days/nine weeks) is divided into three arenas of practice: **I. Self**, (Mind-Body-Spirit); **II. Others** (Communication-Relationship); **III. Earth** (Eco-Social). Together these three practice arenas comprise an integrated focus of humanity's movements toward greater health: personal, social and environmental. For further readings, community events or ways to participate – including a compilation of Daily Practices, visit the *Holistic Health Learning Center*, HSS 329, or try us online at: www.sfsu.edu/~holistic/seasonofnonviolence.html

What is Nonviolence?

Nonviolence is a powerful method to harmonize relationships among people (and all living things) for the establishment of justice and the ultimate well-being of all parties. It draws power from awareness of the profound truth to which the wisdom traditions of all cultures, science and common experience bear witness: that all life is one.

Nonviolence is a relatively new word in the English language, having been introduced in the 1920's. Many dictionaries still do not list it. In current usage the hyphen is not usually used; and when it is, it often signifies the mere absence of physical violence, in contrast to “principled nonviolence” - the presence of concern for the opponent as a person. “Nonviolence” is a rough translation of the Sanskrit term *ahimsa*, which means something like: “the power that comes into effect when the desire to harm is eliminated”. Today, people use the term “nonviolence” in three different ways:

(1) *The mere absence of violence*. In this usage, allowing oneself to be abused can be called “nonviolence”, while Gandhi and others have considered this a form of violence. This definition leads to a lot of confusion and is not what is meant by Gandhi and those practicing principled NV.

(2) *The avoidance of recourse to physical violence as a strategy*, without reference to a philosophical or spiritual foundation for that avoidance. Often this form of NV is conditional. (“If it doesn't work we can go back to violence.”) This passive approach defines “nonviolent” as “not using violence”.

(3) *Principled nonviolence (PNV)* - a positive desire for the well-being of others even when opposing their actions or policies. Just as peace is more than the absence of war, it is more than the refusal to use physical violence. PNV is peaceful action that can awaken public conscience about an ongoing injustice and steps toward creative change. Gandhi, King, Chavez and others used PNV to highlight injustice for all to see - without blaming anyone. In PNV all violence (not just physical) is held to violate the essential interconnectedness of all beings, and that connectedness also guarantees the eventual success of principled nonviolent action: “pursuit of peace by peaceful means” (J. Galtung).

Mohandas K Gandhi (1869 -1948)

You must be the change you want to see in the world. – Mahatma Gandhi

Known to hundreds of millions of Indians and westerners as the "Mahatma" or "Great Soul", his skillful strategy of nonviolence (practice of the law of love) combined with a humanitarian vision, brought about the emancipation of India in the 1940's. Gandhi's strategy of clarifying and expressing "truth and moral power" emphasized love and integrity as a relational path to real social reform.

Martin Luther King Jr. (1929 -1968)

The aftermath of violence is tragic bitterness, while the aftermath of nonviolence is the beloved community. - ML King

One of Gandhi's greatest disciples was the acclaimed leader of the U.S. civil rights movement, Dr. Martin Luther King. Dr. King inspired and organized an EXPLICITLY nonviolent mass movement to awaken social conscience - challenging racial discrimination, violence, injustice and militarism in America. King's Principles of Nonviolence:

1. Nonviolence seeks to defeat injustice, not people.
2. Nonviolence chooses love instead of hate.
3. Nonviolence seeks to win friendship and understanding.
4. Nonviolence holds that suffering for a cause can educate and transform.
5. Nonviolence is a way of life for courageous people.
6. Nonviolence holds that the universe is on the side of justice and that right will eventually prevail.

Gandhian Principles of Non-Violence

The only devils in the world are those running around in our own hearts; that is where the battle should be fought. My life is my message. – M. K. Gandhi

1. Oneness
All life is one/interconnected. Our oneness calls us to work for the well-being of all.
2. Satyagraha (force of truth/Soul Force)
NV is the pursuit of truth - living with integrity and willingness to confront untruth.
3. Ahimsa (non-injury)
Nonviolence as practice of ahimsa is the development of love and selfless service - helping others, especially adversaries to avoid suffering - essence of all religions.
4. Absorbing Suffering
NV takes on without complaint any suffering that results from my confrontation with untruth and accepts that all forms of violence cannot be totally eliminated.
5. Trust/Release of Fear
NV living is a trust in life and the journey of becoming increasingly free from fear.

Seven Social Evils – M. Gandhi

- Wealth Without Work - Pleasure Without Conscience
- Knowledge Without Character - Commerce Without Morality
- Science Without Humanity - Worship Without Sacrifice
- Politics Without Principles