

Working Assumptions of Nonviolence

**The means must be consistent with
the end**

Respect all life.

Relate to all individuals in as human a way as possible, despite disagreements or anger. Value and respect non-human forms.

**Transform opposition rather than
destroy it.**

When there is a basic respect for the other individual in any confrontational situation, it's possible to work towards changing, rather than "destroying an opponent". It's not only the other person who needs to change; we must be willing to listen and undergo change or hardship ourselves. Use humor, creativity, respect, and love.

Aim for underlying changes. Change may take longer this way, but it will produce more enduring, higher quality change. Sexism or militarism can be subtle or blatant; change the attitude behind a behavior and you can get rid of the behavior too.

Power lies in social dynamics. Power does not "belong" only to certain people or groups; it lies in how we act and react.

Nonviolence is active.

We must always be aware and observant, so that we can help guide the situation to a win-win ending. Good will not happen by just sitting back and hoping things will be OK.

Nonviolence Agreement

Our attitude will be one of openness, friendliness, and respect towards all people we encounter.

We will use no violence, verbal or physical, towards any person.

We will not damage any property.

We will not bring or use alcohol or other drugs, other than for medical purposes.

We will not run.

We will carry no weapons.

These guidelines are a valuable beginning, but they are no substitute for sensitivity to a particular situation or a sense of what kind of positive acts can be used.

Whole Earth Festival

Nonviolence Conflict Resolution

As a Chaos Controller (or Karma Patroller) for the Whole Earth Festival, you set the tone for the festival and for the interactions with which you are faced during the weekend of celebration. We hope to pass on to you some specific information and skills, and stimulate you to think about the power of your attitude. In order to make conscious decisions in life, it is important that you act responsively.

Responsiveness is one of the key elements incorporated within a Chaos Controller's role at the Festival. We are here to help give a healthy attitude to the participants, performers, speakers, craftspeople, staffers, and mainly to each other. When individual Chaos Controllers are mutually responsive, unity is felt as Chaos Control responds to the world of the Whole Earth Festival. This workshop is an important way to learn about your fellow CCers & KPers and yourself.

Nonviolent Response to Personal Violence

Nonviolence focuses on communication:

Be clear about your objectives. Your objectives must be reasonable. You must believe you are fair, and you must communicate this to the other person.

Don't let fright control you. It may affect clear thinking. Maintain as much eye contact as possible.

Be mindful of your actions. Make no abrupt gestures. Move slowly. When practical, tell the other person what you are going to do before you do it ("I'm going to get a snack from my jacket"). Avoid sounding threatening, critical, or hostile.

You can state the obvious. Simply say "you're hurting my arm", or "you're shouting at me".

Be strong-minded and determined. Someone in the process of committing an act of violence may have strong expectations as to how his/her "victim" may behave. If you manage to behave differently - in a

non-threatening manner - you can interrupt the flow of escalating events that would have culminated in an act of violence. Assert a scenario that is new to the other person.

Seek to befriend the other person's better nature. Even the most brutal and brutalized among us have some spark of decency, which the nonviolent defender may reach.

You are empowered to act, even under the threat of physical violence. You have to be totally aware, and be ready to react according to the situation. The best guide is to resist as firmly as you can without escalating the anger or violence. Try varying approaches, and keep trying to alter the other's view of the situation.

Keep talking. Keep listening. Get the other person involved at a level apart from the physical. Encourage him/her to talk about what s/he believes, wishes, fears. Don't argue. Keep the talk going and keep it calm. The listening is more important than what you say. Listening is one of the most important things in life. Don't rush it.

Resources

about nonviolence and personal action for change

- Cooney, Robert, and Helen Michalowski. The Power of the People: Active Nonviolence in the United States. Culver City, CA: Peace Press, 1997. [A subsequent edition exists from a different publisher.]
- Emergency Response Network. BASTA! No Mandate for War: a Pledge of Resistance Handbook. Ed. Ken Butigan, Terry Messman-Rucker, and Marie Pastrick. Philadelphia, PA: New Society Publishers, 1986. [UCD Shields call # JC 328.3'E45'1986]
- Hampton, Henry and Steve Fayer with Sarah Flynn. Voices of Freedom: An Oral History of the Civil Rights Movement from the 1950s through the 1980s. New York: Bantam Books, 1990. ["Companion to the acclaimed television series Eyes On The Prize.]
- Coover, Virginia, Ellen Deacon, Charles Esser, and Christopher Moore. Resource Manual for A Living Revolution. Philadelphia, PA: New Society Publishers, 1981. [Several editions exist, but they're all good; UCD Shields call # HN 65'R47'1981]
- Gandhi, Modhandas K. Non-Violence in Peace and War. Ahmedabad, India: Garland Publ., 1948.
- Sharp, Gene. [Run a search for his name and the subject "nonviolence" or some variant that interests you. You should find something interesting.]