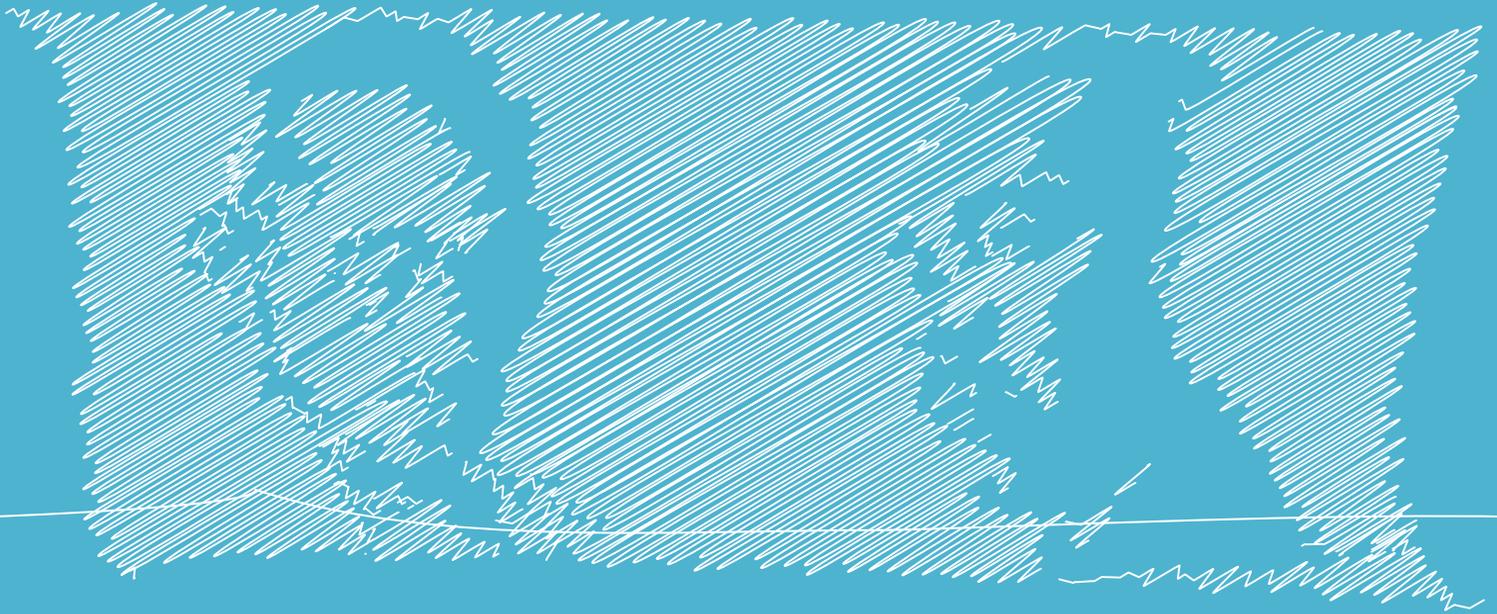
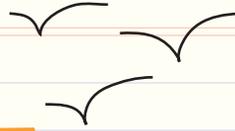


# Nonviolence

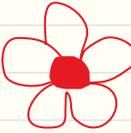
What it means and how to use it



# Definition of Nonviolence



Nonviolence is avoiding harm by our actions, our speech, & by our thoughts.



Nonviolence is loving through our actions, our speech and through our thoughts.





✓  
We know what violence is. It is when someone hits us, insults us or intends to embarrass us. But what is NONVIOLENCE?

The definition of nonviolence has two parts, and though we practice them everyday, often we do not understand them completely.

First, we must avoid harm. We must have respect for all life. Just as it pains us when someone hurts us, it pains others when we hurt them. So in our daily lives, we must not kill, injure or abuse others, even if we have the power to do so.

Second, we must love others. By love we mean compassion, caring, sharing and sacrificing for others. Many people do not realize that this is also part of nonviolence.

How does one harm or love another? We interact with the world in three ways:

- our actions (hitting or hugging)
- our speech (insulting or praising)
- our thoughts (intentions to disgrace or intentions to be helpful).



# The Ladder of Nonviolence

Nonviolence by Thought,  
Speech, and Action

Love with Actions

Love with Speech

Love by Thoughts

Avoid Harm by Thoughts

Do Not Harm by Speech

Do Not Harm by Actions

## Nonviolence is like a Ladder.

The first three steps remind us not to harm anyone; the next three steps remind us to love others. Though we can hop from rung to rung – knowing the steps in order helps us remember and practice the six steps to the Ladder of Nonviolence in our daily lives.

The first step is avoiding harm by our actions, because physically injuring someone is most painful. Second step is not using our speech, things we say, as a means to hurt others. Third step is reducing or eliminating our thoughts of harming or being deceitful towards others, because intentions are often the root cause of what we say and what we do.

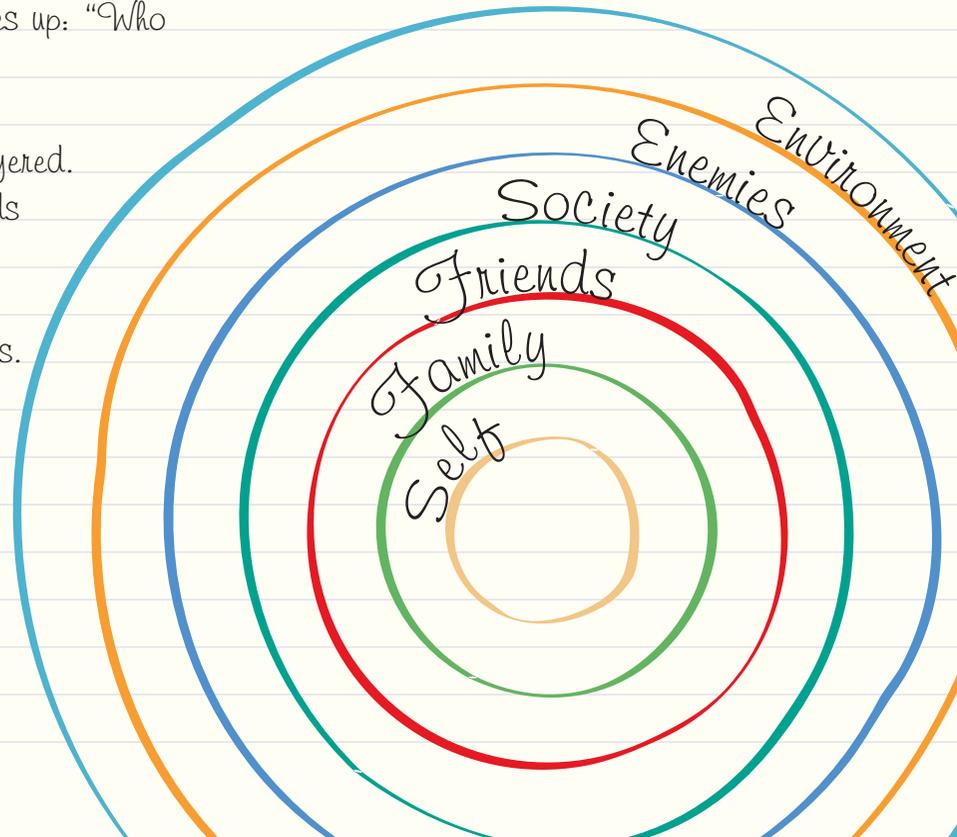
The next three steps are that we love others. The fourth step is developing thoughts of compassion and sacrifice for others. Fifth step is talking in a loving manner, like complementing and praising others. Finally, the sixth step is taking action or doing acts of kindness and selflessness.

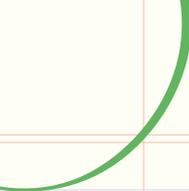
The Ladder of Nonviolence is an easy way to reflect on what we think, say, and do everyday to see if we are being as nonviolent as possible. By taking these steps we can move towards total nonviolence in our lives.

# Circle of Nonviolence

Most people agree that it is important to lead a life of nonviolence, but then the question comes up: "Who should we be nonviolent towards?"

The Circle of Nonviolence is multi-layered. We begin with being nonviolent towards the self. This means that we do not harm ourselves physically by smoking, excessive drinking or using illicit drugs. Also, it means that we do not harm ourselves mentally by stress, self-criticism, or negative thoughts.





The next layer of nonviolence is Family. Our families are the foundations of our lives, we should avoid fighting, arguing or getting angry. Rather, we must care, share, and sacrifice for each other.



The third layer of nonviolence is our Friends. Friends are the pillars of our lives. They support us through good and bad times. We should not cheat them or gossip about them; rather we should show courtesy and compassion towards them.

The fourth layer of nonviolence is Society. Society is like a roof that covers a house. Society shelters us. We should not steal or insult, rather we must volunteer and provide

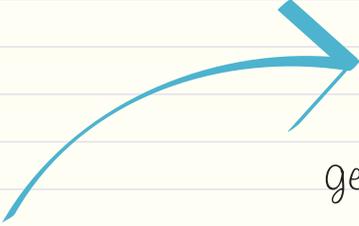
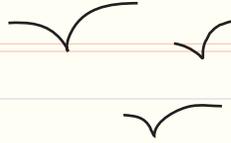
charity. We must also speak up when there is inequality and injustice.

The fifth layer is difficult to do, yet in the Circle of Nonviolence it is critical. It is easy to be nonviolent towards friends, but we need to be nonviolent towards our enemies also. We should deal with our enemies and opponents with respect, restrain and without retaliation. This practice not only minimizes the number of enemies that one has, but often it converts them into friends.

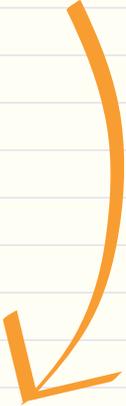


The final layer in the Circle of Nonviolence is the environment. We must respect nature and show compassion and kindness towards plants and animals. Live and let live.

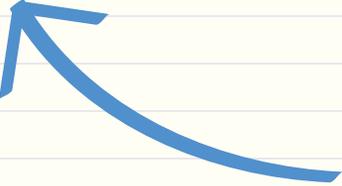
# Cycle of Violence



1. The boss or teacher gets excessively angry at us



2. We get upset at our parents, spouse or children



3. The family fights and kicks the dog





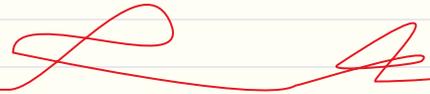
Violence is not static, rather it is a dynamic cycle. Violence is infectious. Violence perpetuates further violence just as a stone which is thrown in calm water creates ripples.

As a simple example, if our friend, boss or teacher shows excessive anger, this leads us to be upset with the family. The family then dissipates the anger to each other, and the cycle continues.

The same is true with nations. When one builds a nuclear weapon the other builds a larger weapon and the cycle continues.

For peace and happiness in our lives, the cycle of violence has to be interrupted. It can simply be done by an act of nonviolence such as forgiveness. When someone vents their anger at you, respond with genuine listening and understanding.

When one nation shows aggression, then the other should show tolerance and use diplomacy rather than violent retaliation.



# Cycle of Nonviolence



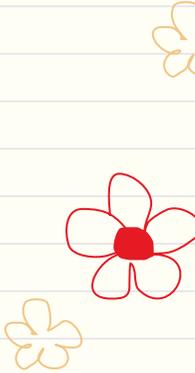
1. We help our neighbor  
fix their roof



2. They teach us  
how to bake a cake



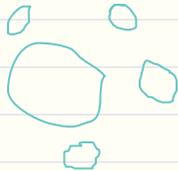
3. We jointly do a  
community service project



Just as there is a Cycle of Violence with retaliation and escalation of violence, there is a Cycle of Nonviolence. If we practice kindness and sharing, we notice that others reciprocate.

As a simple example, if we help our neighbors, then they help us and jointly we can help the community. In the Cycle of Nonviolence all benefit.

Negative elements such as arrogance and deception can disrupt the Cycle of Nonviolence. We must be mindful of our thoughts, speech, and action. As a nation, the cycle of nonviolence is disrupted by corruption and selfish interests.



# Transformation

- Thought

Anger → Forgiveness  
Hatred → Understanding

- Speech

Gossip → Praise  
Curse → Compliments

- Actions

Hurting → Healing  
Discrimination → Practice Equality

So how should we behave in this world? What should we say? How should we think?

Be nonviolent (we now know the definition of nonviolence); say nonviolent things and think nonviolent thoughts.

However, when violent thoughts, speech and actions occur, transform them to nonviolent thoughts, speech, and actions.

So if you are angry and have thoughts of hatred, transform these angry thoughts into forgiveness and understanding.

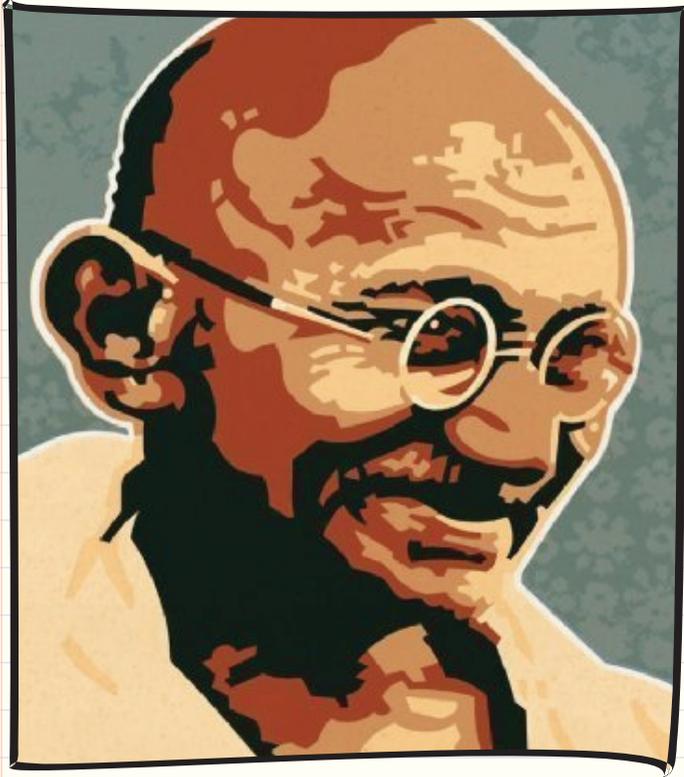
If you are about to gossip or curse, restrain yourself and respond by praise and compliment.

If you are hurting others or practicing discrimination then try healing and equality.

Lastly, we must train ourselves to be vigilant and mindful of our thoughts, speech, and action.

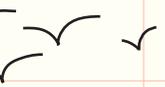
Being nonviolent is far easier than we think. Let's just try it. Let's live it. Let it become our nature. Nonviolence is the ultimate transformation necessary to solve all personal, local, and global conflicts as well as a path for lasting peace and happiness for all.

# Who is Mahatma Gandhi?



Born in India on October 2, 1869, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was a leader and friend to all. He did not live an easy life, dedicating it to fostering the philosophy of nonviolent action against all odds. Given the name 'Mahatma', meaning 'great soul', he struggled to seek freedom for his countrymen and to spread his belief in nonviolent resistance across the globe.





It was in South Africa that Gandhi first experienced racial discrimination. There he began his fight to end prejudice and achieve equality for people of all races. During this time he began studying the Bhagavad Gita, the Bible, and the writings of Thoreau, Ruskin, and Tolstoy. He decided to forgo wealth and finery and focus instead on self-improvement. He used marches, letters, articles, community meetings and boycotts, to protest against unjust, inequality and imperialism. These protests often led to his arrest at the same time helped awaken the masses.

After 21 years in South Africa, Gandhi returned to India to fight for independence from the British Empire. In addition to the methods he used in South Africa, Gandhi would add fasting and prayer to his system of nonviolence. His legacy includes many books and writings, but most importantly, it is his indomitable spirit that lives on even today.



# What is the M.K. Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence?



The M.K. Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence was founded in 1991 by the grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, Gandhi, and his wife Sunanda. Many of the Institute's educational programs are aimed at conflict prevention, anger management, diversity training, and relationship- and community-building. Every year in October, the Gandhi Institute presents the 'Gandhian Conference on Nonviolence', where international experts, both academics and activists, gather to share ideas on how to bring nonviolence into our personal, political and social lives.

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