

Non-Violence Workshop

Background

Violence today has become insidious and trivialized such that human beings don't appreciate the negative impact it has within their psyche as well as in all relationships with nature, animals and fellow human beings. There are consequences for the world at large too.

The more we become aware of our thoughts and feelings, the more we can transform violence in all its forms.

This transformation of the full range of violence is one of the great challenges facing those who decide to adopt a spiritual path and choose to assimilate non-violence according to their capacities.

One of the most effective contributions we can make to reduce CO₂ emissions is to become a vegetarian. This diet not only shows an attitude of non-violence towards animals but also one that cares for the planet and human beings. If humanity was entirely vegetarian, there would be more resources available to produce food for everyone.

Food for Thought

- *At the centre of non-violence stands the principle of love. Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability* — Martin Luther King Jr
- *Anger is the enemy of non-violence and pride is a monster that swallows it up* — Mohandas Gandhi
- *Non-violence leads to the highest ethics, which is the goal of all evolution. Until we stop harming all other living beings, we are still savages* — Thomas A. Edison

Workshop 1: (70 mins duration)

Note: This workshop requires three facilitators, one for each group

1. Introduction (5 mins) – refer to background text above.
2. The participants may be divided into three groups and the facilitator of each group can read one of the three quotes (cited above) out loud. The participants can be asked to remember a story where they had a similar personal experience in their lives. (10 mins)
3. Then they could share their stories in pairs. (15 mins)
4. They could then be asked organized themselves in groups of four (i.e. 2 pairs) and choose a rapporteur. Then ask them to reflect in silence on the different impact of their stories as they relate to non-violence had in their personal lives. Ask them to share with each other listening to each other in turn. Ask each group to draw conclusions (15 mins).
5. The result of the group discussions could then be shared in the plenary by the designated rapporteur for each group. (15 mins)
6. Conclusion. (5 mins)

Workshop 2: (55 mins duration)

1. Introduction (5 mins)
2. Seat the participants in a relaxed manner with background music playing while the facilitator slowly reads these four questions to them and asks them to write their answers on a piece of paper (10 mins)
 - a. *In silence I look back at the world today...In how many ways is human violence affecting nature and people? List 3–5 ways.*
 - b. *In which way is violence affecting your life? List 3–5 ways.*
 - c. *What types of violence do you feel you sometimes manifest yourself?*

d. How could all this energy of violence be transformed into positive energy, at the level of the world, your life, within yourself?

3. Divide the people into groups of four; ask them to choose a rapporteur within each group and ask each participant to share their thoughts on the questions asked by expressing themselves in turn on each question. (20 mins)
4. Whilst each group is sharing, the facilitator can join each group and ask them how they are doing and request that they prepare their answers to one of the questions (one per group i.e. so group 1 could take question a, group 2 question b etc.) so that the rapporteur can share the outcome of each question in the plenary. (5 mins more to prepare the rapporteur's intervention in the plenary within the small groups)
5. Let the groups share their discussions that way in the plenary. (15 mins)
6. List on the board the main findings/outcome of each group.
7. As only one group has shared about d), ask all the other groups to share on question d) and write on the board.
8. In conclusion, the facilitator could share from his or her own experience about how violence can be transformed, how non-violence brings a different quality to life, relationships and the mind.
9. Create a visualization (see following sample) where the identified inner violence is transformed into positive energy and describe how it impacts on actions and life in general.

Visualisation about non-violence

The facilitator can ask the participants to sit in a relax manner and play soft ambient music and start speaking in a soft (but audible) voice.

...We can all seat peacefully and allow our mind to rest and send also to our body cool and soft vibrations.

In silence, I visualize in front of me our beautiful blue planet and I go deep within and experience my own potential of peace. From this inner experience of peace, I become aware of my capacity to extend this peace towards our planet and all its habitants as well as matter. I become aware of my inner world as well and with the power of my inner love and peace I can brush away the darkness of pain and sorrow from within myself...The violence of fear and relationships can be transformed by the deep beauty of love and the strong, softness of peace. Light overpowers darkness, just like the sun illuminates with its light. So, for one more minute, in silence, I use the powerful images of my own inner world to dissolve the darkness and ugliness of violence...Like a new born baby.

