

The Power Within

Reaching our highest potential through the practice of nonviolence

This workbook gives you the information and skills (when you practice them) to help you reach your highest potential in both your mind and your body.



Chapter 1: **Vision**

- Find the values in your life
- Create a positive vision
- Show gratitude
- Set daily intentions



Chapter 3: **Train the Senses**

- Mindful, healthy eating
- Food and relationships
- Get your body active
- Ingredients for healthy living



Chapter 2: **Concentration**

- Improve your concentration
- One-pointed attention
- Learn active listening
- Slow down your thoughts




Chapter 4: **Nonviolence**

- Three faces of power
- What is nonviolence
- Forgiveness challenge
- Make a positive impact



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through the practice of nonviolence

Developed by the
 Metta Center for Nonviolence
for Xcel University, a foundation



Youth Violence Prevention Series

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for
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Introduction




You have a mind

What if someone said to you, “You have a mind.” You’d probably say, “Well, of course.” But as a matter of fact, in our modern world we make so many decisions as though our mind doesn’t matter: using a cell phone while driving means you’re *four times* more likely to have an accident, but scientists went back to see if it mattered whether your phone was “hands on.” It didn’t, of course: it’s “minds on” that matters when you’re driving... *and at all other times!*


One of the most important, yet often neglected things we can do to not only avoid accidents but improve our health, enjoy better relationships, and be more effective at sports, studies, and just about anything we want to do is to pay more attention to the “care and feeding” of our minds, just as we do our bodies.

The food we eat goes on to make up the state of our bodies; and the thoughts we think become the state of our mind. When we think negatively about ourselves and we feel insecure, we tend to think negatively about others, and even treat them in negative ways. But when we feel positively about ourselves and cultivate self-confidence, we tend to treat others with more respect. Think about it!

We can train our minds to a remarkable degree to actively choose our state of mind. The relatively easy way to make our



Does it matter if I’m talking on the phone while driving? Even hands-free?



It doesn’t matter if it’s hands-free or not — you are still four times more likely to have an accident. It’s your mind that matters.



minds into the fine, powerful inner instruments they can be is by being careful about what we put our attention on.

We can control the images in our minds

When the Buddha said, “Everything we are is the result of what we have thought,” he uses the term “thought” to include just about everything that goes on in our minds: thoughts, desires, feelings, and images.

A Greek philosopher, Epictetus [say: E-PIK-TEE-TUS], added this important observation: “The only thing we can really control, and should, is the imagery in our own minds.”

Modern scientists, too, have found through their own methods what a huge influence over our lives our mental images have, particularly around the question of violence. Today we see so many violent scenes in both our “entertainment” and what the media selects to share with us in the form of “news.” Psychologists working all over the world have shown what a harmful effect these scenes can have on how we see life, what we think we are — and eventually how we act.

Unfortunately, these discoveries have not been recognized much by lawmakers or the media itself, which puts the ball in our court to take better care of this all-important part of our lives – the ways in which we ‘feed’ imagery to our minds. Watching a well-played game where players play their hardest, particularly if they have respect for the other team throughout, can be thrilling and inspiring. Watching people treat each other with cruelty and disregard is demoralizing, and makes us unhappier. Even seeing violence in war, it turns out, brings us down to an extent (which may be why so many of our men and women in arms are taking their own lives).

The only thing we can really control is the imagery in our own minds.

Try it!

Monitor carefully how you feel right after seeing a bad scene and how you feel after a good one, where people treat each other with respect.

Later on we’ll be sharing with you some well-tested activities to make this a real experiment. Remember: our mind is not just the mental environment we live in — it affects those around us, too. Scientists have even discovered very recently

that we all have “mirror neurons” that reflect very strongly the actions, intentions, and feelings of those around us. We can turn all this to good as soon as we recognize its importance. We’ll have something to say in a minute about how to do this.

Nonviolence and mental health

Nonviolence happens when you have the well-being of the other person in mind, even if you have to resist something that they’re saying or doing. It can be organized into a whole campaign to win freedoms, of which the best example may be the Civil Rights movement in our own country; or it can also simply be played out in one-on-one interactions in daily life. In a sense, it can even be played out in our own minds when we take care to focus on positive, constructive things as opposed to dwelling on destructive and demoralizing ones.

One of the things people who learn nonviolence and act it out in one of these settings or another is that even if there are dangers and hardships involved, or sometimes even physical suffering they have to take on, they often feel that it was worth the sacrifice and that it helps them to grow.

Recently in Iraq, one man told an American activist, “Yes, if we do this by nonviolence it will be hard, it will take longer [*actually, it doesn’t*], but we won’t lose our humanity in the process.” Evidently, there is something essentially human about being nonviolent, about resisting injustice and oppression without oppressing others. Gandhi said so, and he had more experience with the systematic practice of nonviolence than anyone else.

Ask any athlete: there’s nothing like being “on” so that you can sink a shot, catch a pass or return a serve perfectly, you’re almost invincible. Well, this is exactly what it feels like to rise above the anger or fear that is stirred up by a danger. For example, a threatening, angry person can calmly resist their anger without giving in to it. It’s the same kind of “peak moment.” It’s a great way to be and to live, and it’s very healthy.

Nonviolence happens when you have the well-being of the other person in mind.



Nonviolence is what happens to negative drives like anger, fear, or greed when, because of a higher vision, we resist those drives.



What is nonviolence?

Gandhi called nonviolence “the greatest power humanity has been endowed with.”

Though this power has been around forever, it’s as natural as gravity, we have not always been very aware of it. In recent years, while the manifestations of this power have been growing steadily around the world, we’ve been so conditioned to keep our eyes glued to violence and hatred that we’ve been slow to catch on. We’ve been too disoriented to ask, “What’s happening? What is nonviolence, anyway?”

Nonviolence is what happens to negative drives like anger, fear, or greed when, because of a higher vision, we resist those drives. **Martin Luther King, Jr.** put it best when someone accused him of rousing anger with his movement: “We led to no outbursts of anger; we expressed anger under discipline for maximum effect.” In that process, anger, which can otherwise be so dangerous, actually becomes a positive force that “can shake the world gently,” as Gandhi put it. **Leymah Gbowee** used this force to start a women’s movement that ended a civil war in Liberia. She was angry, but she channeled her anger into constructive, nonviolent action, and she won the Nobel Prize for Peace for it, too.

While that’s a tall order, nonviolence is not just for Nobel Prize winners, it is for everyone. It can help us to overcome and transform the thousand and one quarrels and disruptions in our daily relationships. Just as fans are thrilled to watch a perfect catch, or a perfect shot dropping through the hoop, people instinctively thrill to a perfect act of nonviolence that brings out our humanity, the way the world thrilled to former South African President **Nelson Mandela**’s noble generosity when he told his archenemy, the segregationist F. W. de Klerk, “I am proud to hold your hand. Let us go forward together as friends.”

There is much more to nonviolence, but if we understand this basic dynamic of “person power,” namely, that by resisting the forces like anger and fear that can arise inside us and having respect even for those who are against us, resisting their actions but not harming them as persons, we have the perfect foundation for learning how to use this great power.



Nelson Mandela

We can practice nonviolence in any situation

Since the nonviolent response arises in our mind, we can practice it anywhere! When we're being threatened, when we face any kind of challenge in any situation, we can gain our own inner poise the way an athlete is trained to do, and that positions us to "harness anger (or any other emotion) under discipline for maximum effect." We'll be on our way to becoming masters of our own life, no matter what the challenge others may pose to us. No matter how someone else reacts, we always have the choice to offer dignity to ourselves without taking away the dignity of another. It's our choice and it can be hard. Just as we train ourselves in violence, we must also train and prepare ourselves to be nonviolent.

A great athlete — or any athlete for that matter — doesn't just trot out on the court and begin sinking shots. She or he has to *train*, and an important part of her or his training is to be able to summon that peak state of mind at will whenever needed. It's exactly the same with all of us: we have to take care of our mind, practice thinking selflessly, avoid the images that make us disrespect others — or ourselves!

Then we will find that there is no situation where we cannot find a way, **constructive** or **obstructive**, to influence our world significantly for good. We can always practice being nonviolent athletes for peace.

Michael Nagler

*Professor Emeritus, University of California, Berkeley
and founder of the Metta Center for Nonviolence*





In this workbook you will learn skills that will enable you to use nonviolence in many situations.

Here are some examples:



Family disagreements



When we are being threatened



Animals



Relationship to the earth



Children



Sports



Friends



Challenging situations



Driving

About this workbook

This workbook accompanies a series of videos with professional basketball player **Metta World Peace**. The topics covered in this book are very important to Metta, and through the videos, he will talk about why these topics are important to him and how he practices in his daily life, on and off the court.



Think of this workbook like a basketball playbook. It is full of tips and practices to help you out on the court of life. A basketball playbook has many differ-

ent strategies for succeeding in different situations, and plans that can help the team excel. Like a playbook, this workbook will help you to develop tools and skills that you can apply so that your mind is ready for anything that comes your way.

Just like basketball players train everyday, this workbook is designed to explore the topics of nonviolence and mental health and well-being, and give you training that you can practice daily to be on top of your game.

Some of the exercises are meant to be done on your own, much like you might practice layups or free point throws or dribbling. Other exercises might be best with a partner or a team. The most important thing is to *practice, practice, practice!*

Think of it like this: a basketball player doesn't just practice free throws for one day and then expect to be ready to sink the ball in a game. A good player will practice free throws everyday so that they continue to refine their skills and keep their

Pro basketball
player
Metta World Peace

I want to share this information with you. Just as I need my body to be strong on the court, I need my mind to be healthy and strong.

I am featured in a series of short videos accompanying this workbook, created by my friends at the Metta Center for Nonviolence and found at www.mettacenter.org.



mind and muscles trained. Like this, many of the exercises in this book can't really help you if you only do them once. **They require repeated — if not daily — practice in order to make a difference in your life.**

Basketball players train their reflexes so they can respond to a quick pass. They train in speed so they can run fast up and down the court. They train in stamina because they need to be able to last through at least an hour-long game. And they train in concentration, so they can focus and be ready to make a play.

This workbook will help you to train one of the most important muscles in your body — your mind. Through training the mind, we will improve mental well being. This basic training will consist of four key points:

1. Vision
2. Concentration
3. Sense Training
4. Nonviolence

In each chapter, we'll work on ways to develop these skills.... and make them a part of our daily lives.



Vision



A positive future vision helps us to unlock our potential and the potential of others

What is a vision?

A vision is *a goal or an objective that describes the highest and best possible outcome toward which we will direct our efforts*. We all have a vision of ourselves and of the future: some are positive and some are negative. Our goal is to identify what vision we hold, understand what might have influenced our visions, and consciously recreate them in a way that challenges us to uphold a high image of the potential of others and ourselves toward positive ends. Anyone who has played on a team knows that we must see our vision not only for our own good, but we see that our highest vision includes everyone. We must think to ourselves, “I will challenge myself to my highest vision because I *empower* others to do the same when they see me at my best.”

Without a conscious vision we cannot direct our efforts effectively toward our goals. Imagine, for instance, what it would be like for a basketball player to be on the court at the beginning of a season without a vision of what she is working toward. Without a vision she might give up mid-way through the season and take a less demanding job. When she has a vision she will know why the struggle—all of the practice, all of the games, all of the missed shots and improvements—is worth it.

A negative vision can also drag us down. When we hold a negative vision, we tend to see everything in the world through that vision and focus only on the bad things in life, which can lead us to a downward spiral of negativity. Holding

I will challenge myself to achieve my highest vision because I empower others to do the same when they see me at my best.





“When I dare to be powerful, to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid.”

—Audre Lorde,
writer and activist



“The dreamers are the saviors of the world.”

—James Allen, writer

“Only he who can see the invisible can do the impossible.”

—Frank Gaines,
mayor, Berkeley, California,
1939–1943



a positive vision doesn't mean we need to look at the world through “rose-colored glasses” and ignore the negativity in the world. Instead, a positive vision helps us to move forward in an uplifting, healthy way. A negative vision can be like a heavy weight holding us down; a positive vision can be like a springboard, allowing us to focus on the positive changes we can make in ourselves and our communities.

A word on “being realistic”: A positive vision of oneself and the future should always be realistic and achievable. There are ways to bring positive reality into focus in one's life and tools to help us to achieve our deepest desires when we apply our very best to those efforts. Too often we hear people reproduce visions of the themselves and of the world that take the possible to be only what already exists. A ‘visionary’ however is a person who can see what is yet to be and through that vision helps to make it into a reality.

Brainstorm: What is a visionary?



When you hear the word visionary:

1. Who are some people that come to mind?
2. What makes them a visionary?
3. What are their characteristics?
4. What are their habits?

Martin Luther King, Jr. is an example of one of history's greatest visionaries. We can still see the impact of his vision in our society today. In his famous "I have a dream" speech, he explained his vision:



I say to you today, my friends, so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

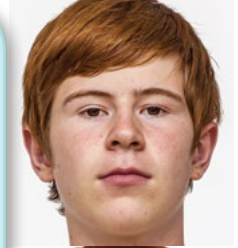
I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today.



One of the keystones of King's vision was the idea of brotherhood, or what he called "beloved community" which he describes in the quotes above. King understood that everyone's well-being and happiness is tied together, and that one person's suffering or happiness would impact the suffering or happiness of everyone. He also realized that not only was our happiness interconnected, but we can't realize our fullest potential if everyone is not able to realize their fullest potential.





*“Whatever affects one directly,
affects all indirectly. I can
never be what I ought to be until
you are what you ought to be.
This is the interrelated
structure of reality.”*

—Martin Luther King, Jr.

Dr. King's Vision



Let's review King's vision according to the criteria for an effective vision:

1. Did King's vision meet the criteria for an effective vision?

2. Why or why not?

3. Do you think King's dream has become a reality?

4. Why or why not?

5. If not, what still needs to happen in order for his dream to be achieved?

An effective vision should:

- be created with a high ideal in mind
- be both challenging and achievable
- be positive
- include the good of all and the good for oneself

Self-reflection



Before setting your own vision, it's helpful to think about the vision that you have about yourself. Take a moment to write or draw about the following questions:

1. When others think about you, what words do you think come to their mind? When you think about yourself, what words come to mind?
2. Do these words make you happy or would you like to see some changes? What would these changes be?
3. If you do not want any changes made in your life, what characteristics or qualities do you want to keep strong?
4. Are there parts of our lives we cannot change? What might some of those parts be?
5. How do we become the type of person we want to be?



Daily practices for creating a positive vision

Setting daily intentions

There are a few ways we can try to create a positive vision each day. One way is to set an intention everyday for how we want to live.



1. In the morning, set your intention or goal for the day. It can be simple and specific. Make the intention positive, such as “I will try to listen carefully today,” or “I will be kind to my family.” You may want to write your intention down to help remind you.



2. At the end of the day, reflect on how your intention went. Ask yourself:
 - a. When did I follow my intention?
 - b. When didn't I follow my intention?
 - c. How can I improve?
3. Based on your experiences, either refine your intention so you can continually improve — or, create a new one.

Gratitude Journal

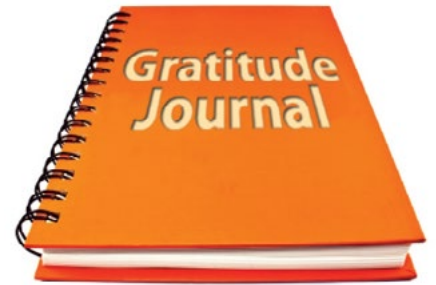


Another way we can stay positive and hopeful is to remember the things we are thankful for each day. In the United States, we celebrate Thanksgiving Day, but every day can be Thanksgiving if we remind ourselves how grateful we are!

Practicing thankfulness every day helps us to be positive, and recognizing all the things that are right in the present moment can help us to envision a positive future.

One way to practice thankfulness is to create a gratitude journal—to write a list of things you are thankful for each day. Let's try it right now.

1. Notice how you feel after you make your list.
2. Try to do this every night before you go to bed for one week.



5 things I am thankful for today:




1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____



Chapter Title

“The first thing you have to learn about history is that because something has not taken place in the past, that does not mean it cannot take place in the future.”

— Mahatma Gandhi

Activity: Be the change

What kind of change do you want to be?

Watch the video by MC Yogi for his song “Be the Change.”

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n_gQxVomod0

This song is about Mahatma Gandhi, and is based on a famous quote that is often attributed to Gandhi:

“If we could change ourselves, the tendencies in the world would also change. As a man changes his own nature, so does the attitude of the world change towards him. ...

We need not wait to see what others do.”





Then reflect on the following questions:

1. What kind of change do you wish to see in the world?
2. How can you be the change?
3. What do you need to change about yourself and the way you are living your life right now in order to be that change?
4. What would this change mean for your community?

Be the change.

Exercise: **Creating a positive vision of the future**

This activity can be done individually or in small groups. If you do the activity individually, you can write in a journal, draw, or express your vision in any way—just be sure to follow the steps. If you do it in small groups, you can draw on chart paper or make a presentation at the end.



Step 1: My current vision of the world

Describe the world/your community as you see it now. What does it look like?

Step 2: In 50 years with no change

If we continue living in “business as usual,” what will the world/your community look like in 50 years?

Step 3: In 50 years with improvement

Now imagine the world as you would like to see it.
How do you want the world to look in 50 years?

Step 4: What you can do now

Make an action plan consisting of small, tangible steps that can contribute to your ideal vision of the world and to make it a reality.





Step 5: Create a vision statement

A vision statement is a sentence or two that shares your inspiration and the world you want to help create. As the final stage of this exercise, try to create your very own vision statement—a short statement that answers the question, “Where do I want to go?” A vision statement shares your dreams and hopes and passions for yourself and the world. The student examples on the next page will give you some ideas.

Vision statements



Here are some examples written by students.

I want to continuously promote and foster a cooperative environment wherever I go.

I want to make everyone feel welcome in my presence, and yet retain my strength and individuality.

I will use my talents as a communicator to teach others.

I will use my social skills to bring people closer together.

I will be inspired by the smallest of challenges.

I will live in awe of my good fortune in life.



I will contribute to my family by offering support.

I want to contribute to society through a social justice organization.

I will raise my children to embrace other cultures and not fear differences in people.

I believe in treating others with kindness.

I do not make excuses for myself.

I will be humble and serve others.

I will look for strengths in others, and the good in every situation.

I will ensure that I do what I can to create a learning environment everywhere I go.

I will live with an attitude of gratitude.

I will repay every kindness shown to me.

I will live, work, and play with renewed spirit.





My Vision Statement

I am a kind, caring person.

I will promote peace.

After you have created your vision statement, post it somewhere you will see it—your bathroom mirror, for example. Try to look at it each day and use it to guide your actions.



End of section questions

1. What did you learn in this section?
2. What is your vision? Did it change at all after doing the exercises?
3. Why is having a positive vision important?

Concentration



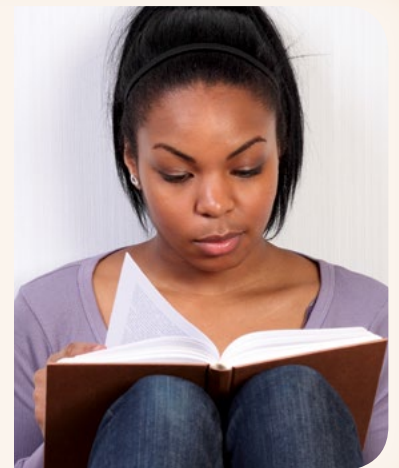
Imagine a basketball player on the court who cannot concentrate: he is watching the ball being passed, looks away for a moment and misses his chance for the ball to catch the crucial pass. Or, he sets himself up for a perfect basket and in the middle of setting up, is pulled off the court for a glass of water instead. Or imagine he is blocking a player of the challenging team and suddenly begins sending text messages instead of ensuring that the player has adequate coverage. The scenarios can go on, but the point is clear: without concentration he has lost!

Concentration is not something we have to “learn” but it is our natural state. It is our ability to focus our attention and to care about what is in front of us.

The benefits of concentration

They are many, and include:

- Being able to study and learn better
- Being a better listener (and as a result, a better student, friend, family member, etc.)
- Having a stronger focus helps us to achieve goals
- Having greater peace of mind (when you are concentrating and focused, there isn't room for anxiety, nervousness, or negative thinking!)



You can improve your concentration by training

The mind is a muscle. Training in concentration is to the mind as lifting weights is to the body.



Even though concentration is natural, it can be greatly improved by training. It is precious because it is necessary for positive mental well-being, self-esteem and healthy relationships, but it is not easy because it is something that we have to work hard at to do well, especially in a culture where everything is working against the mind's ability to concentrate! Training in concentration is to the mind as lifting weights is to the body: the mind is a muscle and it requires as much discipline and training to carry out its functions as a body requires of healthy and strong muscles to perform at its peak of health.

Concentration is our ability to apply all of our mental efforts onto one thing in particular without allowing the mind to be distracted by anything else in our environment.



Concentration can be understood as either unified or divided

Our goal should be to recognize when our concentration is being divided and make the necessary adjustments in our environment or in our minds to unify it. When our concentration is unified, we call this **one-pointed attention**.

Let's look at our basketball player on the court again. He is lined up and ready to make a 3-pointer. There is a lot of noise around him in the stadium. Maybe he is also thinking about someone else on the court. When he goes to make the basket, he must ignore all of the distractions, like the noise or the person on the court, and put all of his attention, even for a brief moment, onto putting the ball through the hoop.

How does concentration relate to nonviolence?

Nonviolence is unity, and concentration is an expression of nonviolence through unifying our minds on an object. However, not all objects of concentration are created equally, so **it is important that we concentrate on acts of nonviolence, virtues, human potential, and uplifting images**. Concentration on acts of nonviolence makes our minds healthy. Violence, on the other hand, is a fundamental distraction because it is the expression itself of dis-unity.



4. Try to track your attention for one day and just notice the answers to the above questions.
 - a. What keeps you from concentrating?
 - b. What distracts you?
 - c. Make a list of times when it is difficult to concentrate, and what makes it hard.
 - d. How often in the course of a day do you think that you can concentrate?
 - e. How long do you allow yourself to concentrate on what is important to you without any other distractions?
5. Now try to make a *strategy* for how you can enhance your concentration. For example:
 - a. I study best in the morning, so I will try to get up early to study before school.
 - b. I concentrate best without distractions around me, so I will do my homework in a quiet space away from the TV and music.

Tools for concentration: A 3-pointer!

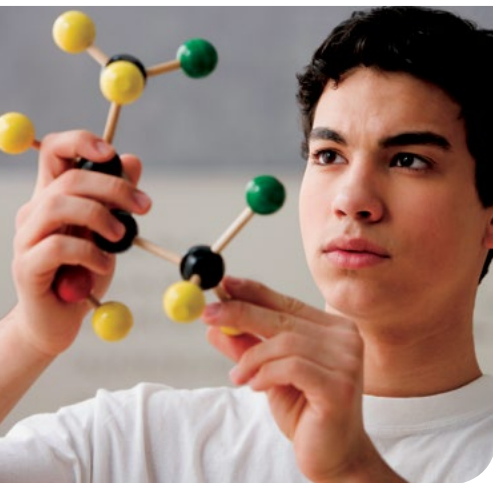
Tool 1: One-pointed attention



When we direct our concentration toward someone or something this is called “attention.” We have the power to put our attention where we want it, instead of allowing it to go anywhere and do anything it wishes. When our attention is pointed at several things at once, our attention is divided. When we put our attention onto one thing, it is one-pointed. Our goal is to learn to train our attention to move from being divided to becoming more and more one-pointed.

What are some of the benefits of one-pointed attention?

- we are more effective at our work
- we learn more
- we feel better about ourselves
- we are refreshed.



When our attention is split, we can only take in parts of what we want to learn. Imagine that our attention is a form of currency. When we spend our change on a number of odds and ends at once, not one of them necessary. But then, we have to make some necessary purchase, like a bus ticket to a big game. We get set to go to the game, bring everything we need with us, get dressed and then we can't find the change to get on the bus because we spent it already.

The first challenge is in recognizing when our attention is divided.

We have the power to put our attention where we want it, instead of allowing it to go anywhere and do anything it wishes.



Tip for developing one-pointed attention: Eliminate attention-dividing habits and activities



One of the ways we can promote one-pointed attention is to eliminate activities or habits that limit our ability to focus. One the biggest culprits that divides our attention is our exposure to mass media.

If you take a look at the news screen of any major news channel, there are a million things going on — a ticker runs along the bottom of the screen listing the latest headlines, an announcer is speaking, other headlines may flash on the screen, and images bounce back and forth. One glance at the news and it's no wonder that as a culture we have trouble focusing! As the very nature of the media is to divide our attention, one of the ways we can promote one-pointed attention is to eliminate our exposure to the mass media.



Take the media challenge!

by Todd Diehl, Texas Nonviolence Educator



Quickwrite

1. On a scale of 1-10 (with 1 being “not at all” and 10 being “extremely”), how much does media affect you?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. Why?

Last year, I asked my students to join me on an interesting challenge: fast from the media for one evening. This meant no TV, no cell phones, no Internet, no Facebook, no music, and no video games for one evening. Then we wrote about the results. My students made some surprising discoveries about themselves.

One group of students discovered this intense need to plug into some form of media. “I can’t live without it,” one

student wrote, and this led me to see that for so many, media is truly an addiction, and that night they were in withdrawal. For another student, the compulsion to consume media was automatic; he was automatically turning on his music while he did his work without even thinking about it. For others, the constant, looming spectres of boredom and impatience came back again and again when they didn't have a song, video, or text message to consume their attention. That is, of course, exactly what media do: they demand and focus our attention from one thing to another, distracting our focus and fragmenting our minds along the way. For these students, they were hopelessly hooked on the power of media to tantalize our minds, and in denial about it: "Media doesn't affect me," one wrote.

A second group of students began to reflect critically on the media fast and the role of media in their lives. These students looked past the challenge to be thrown out of their comfort zone and looked at how this improved their lives. "I got my homework done!" one exclaimed. Others took time to appreciate nature and engage their imaginations in their lives. Another pointed out that, once she got over the initial urge to consume media, she felt calmer, and had no worries. They found that there is strength in numbers, too; when you get help from a fellow student or family, fasting from the media is much easier.

I believe my students learned two powerful lessons from this challenge: One, they learned that they don't need media to live a happy, productive life; and two, they learned that the media has some negative effects on their life they had not explored before.

This year, I will return to the challenge, and ask my students to take one night every week free from media. I would like to ask you to do the same.

For one night a week, take the media challenge. Fast from all forms of media. Reconnect with people. Go enjoy nature. Listen to the trees, the birds, the wind. Engage with the real, instead of what you experience through a screen or through headphones. You may be surprised at what you find out about the media — and what you discover about yourself.



The myth of multitasking

Another habit we often have that inhibits our ability to have one-pointed concentration is multitasking, which is the antithesis of one-pointed attention. Multitasking is a myth. In reality, when we are multitasking, we are fragmenting our attention so that it is not focused on any one thing. When we multitask, we are dividing our energy, and are not devoting our energy to any one particular thing, and as a result, everything that we do suffers.



Imagine your attention is like shining a light. With one-pointed awareness, your attention becomes highly concentrated and directed — much in the way that sunlight becomes powerful and concentrated when it shines through a magnifying glass. When you multitask, this light becomes diffuse and your awareness is foggy. So it is with our concentration.

In our culture people often value the “skill” of multitasking, and there are times when it is important, such as when we drive a car. When we drive, we need to be aware of everything that is going on around us. We steer with our hands and press the gas or break with our foot, while at the same time keeping our eyes open for road signs, potential danger, and other traffic, and listening to the sounds around us. The act of driving involves doing many things at once. However, if we add other activities, such as texting or playing with the radio or eating, it can lead to an accident. As Michael Nagler noted in the Introduction, even using a hands-free phone means our mind is divided!



It is a precious skill to develop one-pointed attention

When we develop one-pointed attention, we can focus it on anything, and we will be more effective and efficient in what we do than if we try to spread our attention everywhere.

In our highly connected world, we are almost always multitasking: listening to music while doing homework, texting while walking, watching TV while eating — maybe all of the above! We can practice one-pointed attention by taking an activity where we often multitask (such as eating) and give our full attention to this activity. A very simple way we can develop one-pointed attention is by focusing on an inspiring passage.

Passage practice

The practice of concentrating on an inspiring passage helps us in a number of ways. First, when we choose a positive and uplifting passage, it helps to reinforce our vision of a positive world. Secondly, repeating a passage helps us to develop one-pointed awareness. The Buddha said,

*“All that we are is the result
of what we have thought.
The mind is everything.
What we think we become.”*

Our thoughts have an incredible power to shape our lives and the world around us. Through practicing repetition of passages, we can shape ourselves and the world in a positive way.

How to practice: ideally, try to memorize the passage (if not, you can read it). Then slowly repeat the passage in your mind, concentrating on each word. You may want to start just repeating it a few times, for 5-10 minutes. As your concentration develops, you can try it for longer periods of time.



Here are some examples of passages that you could use:

The Way to Peace

by Swami Sivananda

If anyone speaks ill of you,
Praise him always.

If anyone injures you,
Serve him nicely.

If anyone persecutes you,
Help him in all possible ways.

You will attain immense strength.
You will control anger and pride.
You will enjoy peace, poise and serenity.
You will become divine.

The Best

by Lao Tzu(Tao Te Ching)

The best, like water
Benefit all and do not compete.
They dwell in lowly spots that everyone
else scorns.
Putting others before themselves,
They find themselves in the foremost place
And come very near to the Tao.
In their dwelling, they love the earth;
In their heart, they love what is deep;
In their words, they love truth.
In the world, they love peace.
In personal affairs, they love what is right.
In action, they love choosing the right time.
It is because they do not compete with others
That they are beyond reproach of the world.

The Whole World Is Your Own

by Sri Sarada Devi

I tell you one thing —
If you want peace of mind,
do not find fault with others.
Rather learn to see your own faults.
Learn to make the whole world your own.
No one is a stranger, my child;
this whole world is your own.

Mother of All Things

by Lao Tzu (Tao Te Ching)

The universe had a beginning
Called the Mother of All Things.
Once you have found the Mother
You can know her children.
Having known the children,
Hold tightly to the Mother.
Your whole life will be preserved
from peril.

Open up the openings
Multiply your affairs,
Your whole life will become a burden.
Those who see the small are called
clear-headed;
Those who hold to gentleness are
called strong.

Use the light.
Come home to your true nature.
Don't cause yourself injury.
This is known as seizing the truth.

Discourse on Good Will

by the Buddha

May all beings be filled with joy and peace.
May all beings everywhere,
The strong and the weak,
The great and the small,
The mean and the powerful,
The short and the long,
The subtle and the gross:

May all beings everywhere,
Seen and unseen,
Dwelling far off or nearby,
Being or waiting to become:
May all be filled with lasting joy.

Let no one deceive another,
Let no one anywhere despise another,
Let no one out of anger or resentment
Wish suffering on anyone at all.

Just as a mother with her own life
Protects her child, her only child, from harm,
So within yourself let grow
A boundless love for all creatures.

Let your love flow outward through the
universe,
To its height, its depth, its broad extent,
A limitless love, without hatred or enmity.

Then, as you stand or walk,
Sit or lie down,
As long as you are awake,
Strive for this with a one-pointed mind;
Your life will bring heaven to earth.

Tool 2: Listening

“Love is a form of attention.”

-Eknath Easwaran

How does concentration relate to our relationships? One of the most important ways is through listening. Our relationships — to ourselves, our friends, family, and the world around us — depend on the kind of attention and care we bring to them. We have an unlimited supply of concentration waiting to be tapped. One of the most important ways we can bring our attention into relationships is through listening.

Listening is hearing someone with complete attention, concentration, and openness. Listening is not judging; it is not “fixing”; it is not passive. When we listen, we give someone our one-pointed attention, put all distractions aside, and allow ourselves to be a presence to really hear another person.

Even though we think we might be listening to others, we might not be really listening at all. We might be interpreting, comparing, judging, or thinking about our own lives; but when we can truly listen to others, it is the first step in beginning to resolve our conflicts because we might hear a situation from a new perspective or we might see the person in another light: someone who, just like ourselves, wants and needs to be deeply listened to.

The practice of listening can be very revealing about ourselves and about our relationships. When we listen well, we might find that we often multitask when we are listening, so we are not really giving others our full presence and one-pointed attention. We might find that there are some people we can listen to very easily and we might find that there are others to whom it is much more difficult to be present. We might find that we are curious about some subjects and not others. We might find that we connect in a new way with people around us when we learn to listen. We might find them listening to us in return.



Freewrite



1. The last time someone really listened to me was...

2. I felt...





With active listening, you are focusing your one-pointed attention on the speaker.



Practice: Active listening

Let's try an exercise to hone our listening skills. This is called active or compassionate listening. With active listening, you are focusing your one-pointed attention on the speaker. You try not to make any judgements about them, fix them, place blame or formulate a response. Instead, you are just listening. You should refrain from talking back during the allotted time, and also be conscious of your body language (nodding, smiling, posture, etc.). When you respond to the speaker, you can paraphrase what they said (repeat what they said in your own words to make sure you understand and heard correctly), and you can also ask clarifying questions (what did that feel like for you?).

To practice the active listening exercise, you will need a partner. In this exercise, you will take a few minutes in which one person speaks and the other practices active listening. You could either time yourself for a set amount of time, or the speaker can speak until they don't feel like talking anymore.

1. Choose a topic to speak about, for example:

- What is your vision of the future?
- Where do you notice you put your attention?
- Is it difficult to concentrate?
- What is your personal mission statement? Why?





2. Once you decide how long you are going to do the exercise, the speaker can begin speaking and the listener just listens. To review, the listener should try to:
 - remain silent and avoid interrupting
 - focus completely on listening
 - refrain from judging, forming responses, blaming, speaking
 - be aware of body language (nodding, shaking your head, smiling, etc)
 - When the speaker finishes, summarize by paraphrasing the speaker's words and/or asking clarifying questions

3. Next, switch roles. After both partners have had the chance to share and listen, discuss together (or in a group):
 - How did it feel to be the listener?
 - How did it feel to be the speaker?
 - Was it easy or difficult to practice active listening?
 - Do you think you are a good listener in your daily life?
 - What can you do to improve?





Nonviolence and listening

“A riot is the language of the unheard.”

—Martin Luther King, Jr.

Weeks before Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated, riots broke out across the United States due to the desperate economic conditions that many people were facing. King, who strongly advocated for and practiced nonviolence, understood the cause of these riots. He said, “These conditions are the things that cause individuals to feel that they have no other alternative than to engage in violent rebellions to get attention. And I must say tonight that a riot is the language of the unheard.”

When people do not feel like their voices are being heard, sometimes they resort to violence because they feel it is the only way that people will listen to them. This does not justify the violence, but rather helps to explain it. People may also resort to violence because they may not have had the opportunity to learn about nonviolence.

Can you think of an example of a time when you witnessed or heard about violence, when the perpetrator(s) may have been trying to be heard?

This helps us to understand why it’s important to learn the skills of nonviolence. It also teaches us that active listening is one of these skills. Through practicing active listening, we may even prevent violence by helping people to feel their voices are being heard.



Tool 3: Slowing down

“Undue haste is a form of violence.”

—Gandhi

A good tip for improving concentration, our mental well-being, our capacity for one-pointed attention, active listening, and even nonviolence is our ability to slow ourselves down.

This is a tricky point because it applies on two levels. Let’s think of it as catching a pass before making a basket: Society might tell us to do things quickly. We have to get to class in ten minutes, we have only 20 minutes after waking up to get to the bus stop, we don’t have time to slow down on the road because we have to drop off our little sister at school first before we go, and so forth. This is what life passes to us. When we catch the pass, we have the opportunity to pause, to slow things down and get them back to pace before we are ready to move forward successfully.

We can plan ahead in life for most things so that we give ourselves enough time to do what we need to do without excess rushing. If we usually only give ourselves 20 minutes to get to school driving because we would rather sleep in, we can find a way to wake up earlier. If we rush through our homework because we have to go to work, we might find look for unnecessary activities (like spending time on Facebook, for example) which can be put on hold until we finish our homework.



Slowing down, in other words, makes our life easier, which then helps us achieve our goals more easily, and it requires planning and discipline. It is not *what* life hands us, but *how we respond* to what life hands us.

Now for the basket: we receive the pass from a hurried life. The real secret to slowing down is learning not only how to



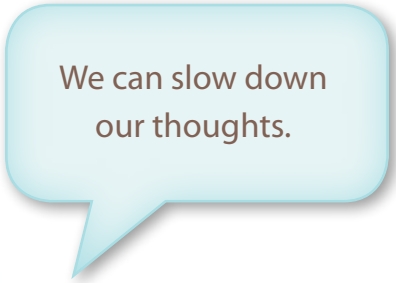
It is not *what* life hands us, but *how we respond* to what life hands us.





take care of our outward life, to plan better and to find places where we can gain time and slow down, the trick is to learn how to slow down our thoughts.

Why is this important? Think about a time when you are very angry or fearful. Pay attention to your thoughts at that moment and you will find that they are going at a very fast pace. Think about a time when you feel at peace. Pay attention to your thoughts at that time, too, and you will find that they are much slower. Just like on a basketball court, when players are moving fast, it's hard to keep up with them and it's hard to keep our eyes on the ball. When the players are at their best is when they are slowed down but precise, directing each movement like an artist — carefully and efficiently. We can do the same with our thoughts.



We can slow down
our thoughts.



How to slow down our thoughts when our mind is racing

- Gain awareness of the thoughts as they are passing in a fast manner
- Notice your heartbeat and breathing. Count to three, or better yet, ten!
- Walk or exercise in a fast pace for 20 minutes. At the end the thoughts will be slower.
- Find a positive word or phrase that you repeat when you feel your thoughts speed up. This might be something from a religious tradition or a word that evokes for you a positive ideal.
- Free write: you can write that word or you can write your thoughts as they come out onto the page. Be curious about them and when you are ready begin to understand what is going on at a deeper level.
- Drink hot tea
- Take a nap
- Help someone do something



What *not* to do when our mind is racing

- Write angry letters
- Act on speeded up thoughts (for example, when we are getting angry with someone, we should avoid doing something that would cause harm because our fast-paced minds going have convinced us to do so)
- Use insults
- Use intoxicants
- Gossip
- Make decisions that are unnecessary.
- Eat unhealthy food or food in unhealthy quantities
- Inflict harm on ourselves in our thoughts or in our deeds.

The key is to act in freedom, never to be forced to act by our hurrying thoughts. When we can gain “detachment” from our thoughts, we can act with more integrity and truly respond to situations when we are able to slow down our thoughts.





Slowing down

Create some strategies for how you can slow down your thoughts and your life in general.

1. What helps you to slow down?

2. How do more of this (or do less)?



Summary

In this chapter, we talked about how concentration can benefit us in our daily life. After reading the section, think about these questions:

1. Summarize three things you learned in this chapter.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
2. What are the connections between nonviolence, concentration, and well-being?
3. Develop a plan for how you can incorporate these tips and skills into your daily life.
4. How can developing concentration benefit ourselves *and* our communities?

Sense Training



Our feelings are often related to how we treat our bodies. In order to feel good, we need plenty of exercise, healthy food, and to eliminate toxins. When we are faced with a challenge, strong emotions which are hard to fight can be purified through vigorous exercise and healthy choices. When we take good care of our bodies, our minds benefit as well. And it's a positive feedback loop—when we take good care of our minds, as we worked on in Section II, we develop the concentration, awareness, and discipline we need to take good care of our bodies and give them what they need to stay healthy. On the other hand, when we are not taking good care of our bodies, we often struggle with unhealthy, toxic thoughts as well.



Professional athletes pay a lot of attention to their bodies to stay in top shape for the game. Olympic athletes don't spend their free time eating chips while sitting on the couch watching TV—they would never make it to the Olympics if they did that! Pro athletes need to eat healthy, well-balanced meals so that their bodies can perform at peak levels. They have to practice and work out every day to stay in shape and build stamina. But it's not all work—they also need to get enough rest and relaxation. Taking good care of our bodies means we find balance—making sure we are active but also get enough rest.

Good nutrition, exercise, and rest aren't just for pro athletes though—everyone needs to incorporate these into their daily lives to be the best they can be. No matter what you do—whether you're



healthy body = healthy mind
healthy mind = healthy body



studying hard, playing sports, creating art—you need to take care of your body so you can do and be your best. How we take care of our bodies has a huge impact on our mental health and happiness. Physical health is directly related to our mental health, and vice versa, so if we want to be happy and balanced in our minds, we also have to try to be balanced in our bodies.

When you have a car, you make sure you put good fuel into the car and routinely take care of its maintenance and tune-up. We also need to always make sure we put the cleanest fuel we can into our bodies, and have regular maintenance and “tune-ups!”

Healthy living is a skill. Just like we need to train the mind, we also need to train our senses by developing discipline and awareness. Let’s explore different ways we can do that!

Nutrition

“Let food be thy medicine.”

—Hippocrates

When you have a car, you try to put good quality fuel into it—you wouldn’t give it fuel that was dirty and had rocks in it. You want to put in high-quality fuel so that the engine runs properly. Like this, we need to try to put the best fuel—food—into our bodies so that we run at peak levels. We can’t reach our highest potential if we aren’t giving ourselves the food we need!

When we are thinking about good nutrition, it’s helpful for us to ask: **what’s the purpose of food?** What do you think the purpose of food is?

Food fuels our bodies and helps us to gain strength. When you are trying to choose what to eat, you can ask yourself, **“Will this strengthen me?”** And see what your body tells you.

Hippocrates said “Let food be thy medicine.” Food can heal our bodies and provide strength and nourishment—but it can also poison our bodies, leading to decay and disease. Many of the illnesses prevalent in modern society are diet-related and are preventable by eating a healthy diet. When we eat a healthy diet, we are giving our bodies the best chance to heal and be strong.



What does Metta World Peace eat?



MWP eats organic foods as often as possible, since it is better for our bodies and better for the planet. He eats lots of vegetables, fruits, nuts and whole grains like brown rice and quinoa. He limits his intake of meat and eats a lot of vegan food, but is not vegan.

When he eats meat and animal products, he eats only grass-fed, free range. He likes his sweets, but tries to eat healthy versions — cookies made with organic ingredients and whole wheat flour, for example.

MWP advocates for getting 7-8 hours a sleep a night, and knows that most people are not going to work out like he works out. So he encourages people to get 30 minutes of cardio at least 4 times a week, whether it is walking, biking, running, or swimming. Participating in team sports is also a great way to get exercise and socialize with others, and participating in team sports also helps illustrate the importance of working *with* others. He encourages people to work out together — go hiking with friends, bike rides with family, etc.

MWP strongly advises staying away from energy drinks with taurine. He feels these are poisonous to our bodies, and can in fact be dangerous.





So what does healthy eating mean?

- **Eating enough.** This means not eating too much or too little. We really need to try to eat a balanced amount of food, and depending on your size and level of physical activity, you may need to eat more or less. While health professionals can give general guidelines, ultimately you need to develop an awareness of how much food your body needs.
- **Eating fresh.** Try to eat more things that grow on trees or come from the ground. If it came from a package and has ingredients that you can't identify, it probably isn't good for you.
- **Getting enough water.** Drinking water is one of the best things we can do for our health! Do you drink enough water?
- **Eating mindfully.** Eating mindfully — slowly, and with full attention — can help us on all fronts of healthy eating. It helps us to identify when we're hungry and when we're full, helps us to savor the food we eat. We'll explore mindful eating more later in this chapter.
- **Being thankful for your food.** Food tastes better when we're thankful for it! It's important to remember how fortunate we are to be eating.

Food journal



Part 1: Write down everything you eat

For one 24-hour period, keep a food journal.

- a. Jot down everything you eat and the time.
- b. Notice what you eat, how much, how hungry you were before, how you feel after you eat things. You can even try to do this activity for a week and see how your eating patterns change throughout the week—when you're at school vs. home, during the week vs. weekends.

Part 2: Assess

At the end of the day/week, do an assessment. Ask yourself:

- a. Does the food I eat strengthen me?
- b. Is my diet overall healthy?
- c. What choices can I make to have a healthier diet?

Part 3: Making positive change

Choose one unhealthy food or beverage choice to eliminate for one week, and continue writing your reflections in your journal.

- a. Notice your thoughts throughout the week. Do you find yourself craving this food/drink/activity?
- b. When you have those cravings, try to replace them with a healthier option. For example, if your habit is giving up soda, try to drink some water or fruit juice instead. Check in with yourself to see if you're really thirsty, or if you are just wanting a drink out of habit. What are you really craving?

Mindful eating

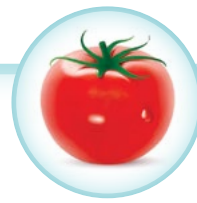
Did you ever open a bag of chips in front of the TV, then suddenly realize the chips were gone and you had eaten the whole bag? This is called mindless eating, when we eat without paying attention, and often not because we are hungry but because we are bored, distracted, feeling sad, or agitated. The antidote to this is mindful eating. Mindful eating is very simply paying attention to the food that we eat, as we eat it—and even before we eat it! It is essentially applying the mental skills we worked on in Chapter 2—awareness, concentration, and discipline—to what we eat. Through mindful eating, we continue to develop these skills. When we practice mindful eating, it also helps us to develop a sense of calmness and inner peace. It has many benefits. For example, it helps us to:

- Digest food better
- Regulate the amount of food we consume
- Make better choices
- Learn to listen to our body
- Be aware of the reasons we want to eat (hunger, emotions, etc.)

One of the great skills we need to develop healthy eating habits is awareness of how hungry we are and what our body needs. There are a number of tools we can apply to tune into our body and assess the situation.



Hunger scale



We often eat out of habit, at a certain time, or when we are not actually hungry and we use food to fill another emotional need. It's very important to learn how to listen to our body's hunger and eat when we're hungry, and stop before we are full. We can learn to evaluate our body's level of hunger with the hunger scale exercise.

Hunger scale exercise

1. Listen to your body right now.

- a. How hungry are you? Rate your hunger on a scale from 0 to 10, with 0 being not hungry at all and 10 being voraciously hungry.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- b. How do you know you are hungry?

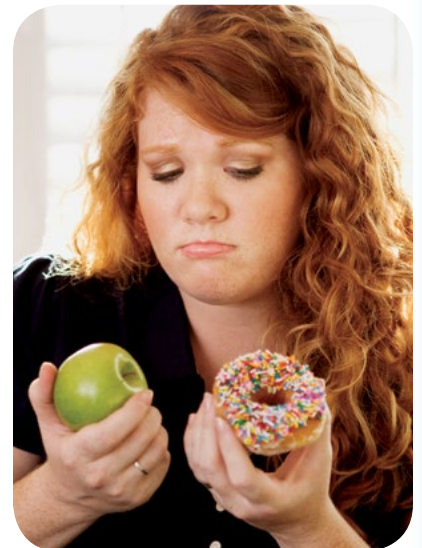
- c. Where do you feel it in your body? In your stomach? Mouth? Head? Eyes?



2. **If you have an urge to eat...** Instead of just jumping for a bag of chips or a cookie, ask yourself, "Am I really hungry?" Then make a choice based on your level of hunger and what your body needs at the moment. Ask yourself:

- a. What would satisfy my hunger?

- b. What food choice would nourish me?



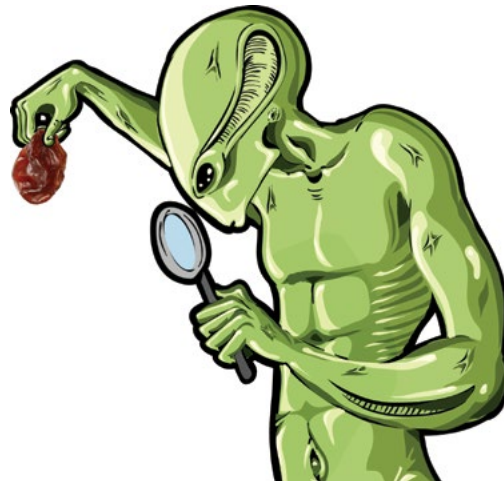


Mindful eating exercise: The raisin

For this exercise, you will need one small bit of food. The activity is traditionally done with a raisin. However, you can do it with anything that you have available. It's best that the food be bite-size and something you can hold in your hand. You can do this activity on your own, or have a friend read the script to you.

Script

Imagine you are from another planet, and you are looking for food when you find a raisin. You have never seen a raisin before. You explore the raisin with all your attention and total curiosity. (Note: this is an opportunity to practice your concentration skills!)



1. First, take the raisin in your hand. Look at it. Notice the colors, textures, the way the light hits it. Is it shiny? Dull? Now begin to feel the raisin. Roll it around a little in your fingers. What is the texture like? Is it sticky? Soft? Hard? Feel the skin of the raisin, noticing the contours and grooves.
2. Now take the raisin to your nose and smell it (be careful not to inhale too strongly!). Notice the smell. What does it smell like?

3. Then take the raisin near your ear. Roll it in your fingertips. Does the raisin make a sound?
4. Finally, it's time to taste the raisin. First put it between your lips, but don't eat it just yet—notice its texture with your lips. Then slowly take the raisin in your mouth and feel it with your tongue. Don't bite just yet! Notice the texture, and notice the taste before you bite into it. Now take one bite, one chew. Notice the burst of flavor that happens with just one bite. Slowly, continue to chew the raisin and notice the way the textures, flavors and sensations change.
5. Now take another raisin in your hand, and try to see all of the interconnections within that one raisin. See if you can see the rain that nourished the grapevine it grew on, the minerals in the soil, the sunshine. How about the farmworkers who tended the plants and picked the raisins? And the people who transported the raisin from the farm to the store, the store clerk, and finally the person who bought the raisin (you, a friend, a family member). Imagine all of the places and people that you are connected to through that one little raisin. Amazing, isn't it?
6. Now eat that raisin as you did the first, paying your fullest attention to it.

Notice how you feel after that exercise. Was it different to eat a raisin in this way? Was it easy or difficult? What did you notice?



10 Tips for mindful eating



There are many simple ways that we can begin to practice mindful eating. Bite by bite, we can become more aware of the way we eat, the way our food affects us, and the way our food habits affect the outer world. This practice can help us to feel calm, as well as to become more aware of our choices and make better choices for our health and well-being.

There are many small ways that we can integrate mindful eating practices into our day-to-day lives. You don't need to try them all at once — maybe just pick one, try it and see what happens. Here are some tips to start:

- 1. Turn it off!** Turn off the TV, computer, radio, or other distractions that will keep you from being fully present when you are eating.
- 2. Clear your dinner table of clutter.** Put books, papers, and anything that is unnecessary off to the side and create a clean space that will allow you to focus on the food.
- 3. Make it special.** We often save our nice place settings and candles for special celebrations, but every meal is a cause for celebration and gratitude. Even just setting the table can help us to slow down and make it special.
- 4. Sit.** This almost goes without saying, but many of us eat while “on the run,” while driving, or while carrying out other activities. Try to make a point of stopping whatever else you are doing. If you really have to eat while on the run, you can at least still be aware that you are doing this.
- 5. Pause to look deeply.** Before you begin to eat, take a moment to look — really look — at your food before you eat it. Notice colors, textures, notice the way the light hits your food. Take a moment before you eat to soak it in through your non-taste senses. Think about where your food came from and everything that had to happen in order for the food to get onto your plate. This practice helps us to see our deep connection with the environment and all the people who played a part in our food.
- 6. Express gratitude.** Every meal is a cause to give thanks. It's important to remember how lucky we are to be eating.



- 7. Put your fork down between bites.** This is a very small gesture but can have huge impacts on how fast you eat your meal. This simple act will allow you to slow down and focus on the current bite, not reaching forward into the future looking for the next bite, as we often tend to do. The overarching principle of mindful eating is simply to take your time and slow down, and putting down your utensils between bites really helps us to do this.
- 8. Chew well.** Some people suggest chewing each bite of food 20-30 times, which also helps you slow down and helps improve digestion (which begins in the mouth, after all!). Chewing well also gives us a chance to pay attention and really taste the food we are eating. You can even notice how the flavor changes from bite to bite. You can also notice the physiological effects of the food on your body as you consume it. How does your body feel as you absorb and digest the food? Being more aware of the way different food affects our body can help us to make better choices for our health and well-being.
- 9. Use chopsticks or a smaller utensil.** This is another way to help us slow down and take smaller bites. Slowing our pace down also helps us to become aware when we are about 2/3 full, which is the optimal level of fullness for health and digestion. Using a smaller spoon, for example, forces us to take smaller bites and helps us to learn to savor each one. This helps us to practice moderation and simply taking what we need rather than more.
- 10. Practice silence.** While this might not be practical at all times, when you can, try to eat a meal in silence from beginning to end. This can be a profound experience, especially when practiced with family or community. After the meal you can share your reflections, both on the food and the experience.

Try to approach mindful eating with curiosity and enjoyment, rather than with obligation. These practices should be enjoyable and not something you feel like you have to do. We are often used to rushing through meals, so the practice of mindful eating can seem strange at first. Over time, as we practice, it allows us to connect with the present moment, bite by bite.



Looking deeply at our food: where did it come from?

Recall the mindful eating exercise. We explored the raisin with curiosity, noticing its color, smell, sound, texture, and taste. Another way we can look deeply into a raisin (or any item of food) is to think about where it came from. This helps us to recognize the plethora of interconnections to people, places, plants and animals through the food we consume.

You'll be amazed to think of how many people were involved to bring you just one raisin! It also helps us to make better food choices when we come to understand where our food came from. If we examine our food and decide that we don't like the conditions that it came from, we can make the choice to not eat it and replace it with something better for our health, other people, and the environment.



Exercise:

The story of your food

*"We are caught in an inescapable web of mutuality,
tied in a single garment of destiny.*

Whatever affects one directly affects us all indirectly."

—Martin Luther King Jr.

Take an item of food—ideally, the simpler the better (for example, a raisin), but you can choose anything that you eat regularly. Looking at the food, try to trace back the steps of where this food came from, from beginning to end, from your hand to the farm. Imagine each step. Here are some questions to guide you:

1. Who bought the food? (you? your family? a friend?)

2. Who sold the food? (a store clerk? a farmer?)
3. How did the food get to the store/market/point of sale? (a truck driver? transport worker? what kind of vehicle? How far did it travel?)
4. Was the food processed in a factory? Or did it come straight from a farm? If it was processed, what happened to it? What was added to it? How did it change from its purest form?
5. Who grew the food? (a farmer? farm worker?)
6. What kind of plant did it come from? (or animal?)
7. What was the seed like? What conditions does it take for this seed to grow? What kind of inputs (organic, chemical, machines, etc.) were used to grow it?
8. You can even try to draw a map or picture to show all of the connections to your food. Notice all of the people and places that you are connected to through the food. Can you see the “web of mutuality” that Martin Luther King, Jr. talked about?





Avoiding toxins and intoxicants

After the exercises above, hopefully you have started to notice the way food affects your body and mind. Part of making healthy choices is also choosing not to eat foods or drink beverages that harm our body. This means toxins, which come in the form of chemicals that can be found in highly processed foods, as well as intoxicants, which alter our mental state.

Sometimes if we feel strong emotions, we may want to turn to intoxicants to “turn off” or diminish the intensity of the strong emotions we are feeling. When we do this though, we are only compounding our problems, and these emotions will be buried under the surface, only to come back stronger the next time they are triggered.

Avoiding intoxicants is one of the best things we can do for our physical and mental health. If you use intoxicants, try the exercise of giving them up for just one day and notice your thoughts. See if you can resist the urge to indulge, and instead replace the use of intoxicants with something healthy, like taking a walk or talking to a friend. Your body and mind will thank you!



Food and relationships

Food also provides us a wonderful way to build relationships—another important component of nonviolence and overall well-being. Cooking together with friends and family is an opportunity for bonding, and mealtimes are a great place for conversations about the day and about life in general. Sharing food is a way we can practice generosity. And potlucks—where everyone brings one dish to share—can be a very fun way to get together with friends and learn new ideas for cooking.





Practice: Cook with someone

1. This week, try to take an opportunity to cook with friends and family, or organize a potluck—you could even do this at school! (instead of everyone bringing their own lunch, you can each bring one thing to share). Notice how food can help bring us together.
2. What are some other ways that food can serve as a connector?



Physical exercise

Did you ever experience a time when you felt really tired and didn't want to exercise, but then you made yourself exercise and you felt better? Have you ever felt a “runner's high”, a euphoric feeling from intense physical exertion? There is a direct connection between our physical exercise and our mental health. If we want to have healthy, balanced minds, we need to make sure we are active and exercise our bodies. A lot of research has been done on the connection between happiness and exercise, and over and over again scientists are finding a strong connection between mental health and physical activity.

Establishing an active lifestyle requires discipline—it



means trading the couch for running shoes, it means being active rain or shine, and it means prioritizing exercise over other activities that might not be as healthy for us (such as watching TV, playing video games, etc.).

Try different activities and find one you like. If you enjoy competition, try joining a team. This will also help you to reap the benefits of being part of a community and collaborating. If you prefer to do things on your own, there are plenty of activities that can be done solo—you can even shoot hoops solo!

We don't need to run a marathon to get a workout! Even just integrating basic activity 30 minutes a day can help us maintain our physical and mental well-being. You can go for a walk, play a sport, ride a bike instead of driving/riding in a car.

Tips for being active

- **Take a hike.** Walking is one of the best forms of exercise. Walk to the store instead of driving or taking the bus. Take a dog for a walk! The next time you feel tired, take a quick, brisk, 15-minute walk instead of drinking a soda or coffee and see how you feel. The fresh air might be all you need!
- **Take the stairs.** Instead of taking the elevator or escalator, get your lungs pumping by taking the stairs. Your lungs and legs will thank you!
- **Ride a bike.** Cycling is a great way to get exercise. Just make sure you always wear a helmet and follow the rules of the road.
- **Stretch out.** Stretching is a great way to release tension and keep our bodies healthy. You can do simple stretching almost anywhere, even in a chair at a desk.
- **Do it with friends.** Exercise is a great way to spend time with your friends and family. Instead of watching a movie together, why not take a walk, play a sport, go for a swim? Exercise is a great way to build relationships, an important part of living a life of nonviolence.



Healthy habit activity



Try to be active for at least 30 minutes a day this week

- 1. When you have the urge to watch TV...** Instead, try to take a walk, or have a conversation with a friend. Better yet, invite a friend for a walk!
- 2. Try something new.** Or, if you have an activity that you love, try doing it every day and notice how you feel at the end of the week.
- 3. Get outdoors.** Another benefit of activity is getting outdoors. Even if you live in a city, you can benefit from the fresh air and sunshine.
 - a.** In an urban center, you can pay particular attention to how nature thrives — even in a city.
 - b.** Notice the grass and flowers growing through the cracks in the sidewalk, notice the sky which is always above you.

Getting out into nature is a great way to feel interconnected and find peace, but you don't need to go anywhere to rediscover this interconnection.



Relaxing



As important as activity is, rest and relaxation is equally important. Not all rest and relaxation is created equal, though. Sometimes we say we're going to relax, "zone out," and watch a movie, but the tense drama and violence on the screen only adds to our physical tension and mental exhaustion. Relaxing can also help us to tune into our bodies and develop greater body awareness, which can then help us to make better choices for our bodies. It's a win-win situation!

Pro athletes need to push their bodies hard—but not too hard. They need to push their bodies to the "edge," the place that challenges them to the best of their abilities, but if they go over the edge, they risk injuring themselves and could spend months on the bench—and in worst case scenarios, may not be able to play their beloved sport again.

There is the old adage "no pain, no gain." Is there truth to this? On one hand, most achievements require us to struggle and work hard, but if we don't listen to our bodies and ignore pain that we are experiencing, we run the risk of seriously harming ourselves. This goes for physical pain as well as emotional pain.

Pain is one way our body speaks to us. The next time you feel pain, try to back off from what you're doing, and ask, "What is my body trying to tell me?" Listen closely, and see what you find out.

One way we can hone our skill of awareness and relax is through a body scan. To do this scan, you can either record it and play it back to yourself, or have a friend read it to you. Ideally, do this exercise lying down, but you can also do it sitting, or even standing if you have to.

Body scan script

- 1. Lie down, ideally on a firm, flat surface, and make yourself comfortable.** You may wish to place a small pillow under your head, cover yourself with a blanket, or use some cloth to cover your eyes. Let your legs separate hip width or wider apart, let your arms lay by your sides a few inches from your body, palms facing up. Allow your body to settle and become still.



- 2. Begin to notice your breathing.** As you breathe in, feel calmer, and as you breathe out, let go of tension. Continue to follow your breath in this way.
- 3. Now bring your awareness to different parts of your body.** Just feel them, and allow them to relax. Start with your feet. Bring your awareness to your feet, feel your feet, and allow them to relax. Feel your ankles, lower legs, knees, upper legs, and hips. Feel both legs and allow them to rest and become heavy. Continue traveling with your awareness up the front of your body, feeling the pelvis, belly, ribs, chest, collarbones. Feel your shoulders and allow tension to melt away. Then allow your awareness to travel down into your arms, feeling your upper arms, elbows, lower arms, wrists, hands, fingers and fingertips. Allow your arms to grow heavy and relax.
- 4. Then take your awareness back up to the shoulders and across to the base of the throat.** Feel the throat, jaw, mouth, nose, cheeks, eyes, temples, ears, forehead. Allow your face to soften and relax.
- 5. Then take your awareness to your tailbone and feel your back.** Your lower back, middle back, upper back and shoulders, back of the neck, back of the head, crown of the head. Feel your whole head and allow it to grow heavy and relax.
- 6. Feel your whole body from your toes to the crown and allow it to relax.** Continue to lie here as long as you'd like, following your breath and continuing to rest.
- 7. When you are ready, you can slowly start to deepen your breath.** Wiggle your fingers and toes, roll over to one side, and press up to a seated position.
- 8. Notice how you feel.** Do you feel refreshed? Sleepy? Calm? How about your mind?

Practice this every day if you can. It will help you to train your senses, develop a keener sense of awareness of your body, help your mind to relax, and help you to release stress.



Healthy living

Healthy living is a lot like cooking—there are many variations for the same recipe. Just like we could each have a recipe for the same kind of food but they would all be different and all taste delicious, there is no one single recipe for healthy living. There are many ways to stay active, have a good diet, and overall well-being. Below are some ingredients for healthy living—try them out and see what works best for you!

Key ingredients for healthy living:



- Drink plenty of water
- Eat three balanced meals a day
- Get enough sleep (for most people, around 8 hours)
- Eat more things that grow on trees
- Eat a varied diet
- Be active at least 30 minutes a day

Here are some additional ingredients

- Take 10 minutes a day to do nothing
- Don't take yourself too seriously
- See problems as opportunities to learn
- Stay positive
- Spend time with your friends and family
- Do things that positively impact others
- Practice self-discipline
- Learn or discover new things
- Enjoy the beauty of nature or art
- Manage your stress levels
- Limit unhealthy mental habits like worrying
- Surround yourself by positive images and inspirational quotes



Ultimately, healthy living is about creating new habits. When we are disciplined in developing these habits, they become second nature to us.



Habit poem

(author unknown)

I am your constant companion.
I am your greatest helper or heaviest burden.
I will push you onward or drag you down to failure.
I am completely at your command.
Half of the things you do you might as well turn over to me and I will do them—quickly and correctly.
I am easily managed—you must be firm with me.
Show me exactly how you want something done and after a few lessons, I will do it automatically.
I am the servant of great people, and alas, of all failures as well.
Those who are great, I have made great.
Those who are failures, I have made failures.
I am not a machine though
I work with the precision of a machine plus the intelligence of a person.
You may run me for profit or run me for ruin—it makes no difference to me.
Take me, train me, be firm with me, and I will place the world at your feet.
Be easy with me and I will destroy you.
Who am I? I am Habit.



End of chapter reflection



1. In what areas do you need the most sense training?
2. Where do you feel your strengths already are?
3. Summarize what you learned in this chapter.
4. How can you apply what you learned into your daily life?
Try to pick one new habit in sense training to work on.
5. What is the connection between your own health and well-being and the health of your community?

Nonviolence



“Nonviolence is the greatest power at the disposal of humankind.”
—MK Gandhi

What is nonviolence?

Nonviolence is often misunderstood as the absence of violence—but it is so much more than that! Nonviolence arises from the conversion of a negative drive, such as anger or fear, into constructive action. We all experience these negative drives, and we always have a choice as to what we do with that anger or fear. Reviewing the workbook introduction, we learned that nonviolence:

- is what happens when, because of a higher vision, we resist negative drives like anger, fear, or greed
- is any kind of action where you have the well-being of the other person in mind, even if you have to push back against what they’re saying or doing
- can be done by anyone who has a mind (which means *all of us!*)

As nonviolence is a force, in order to fully understand it, let’s take a look at power.

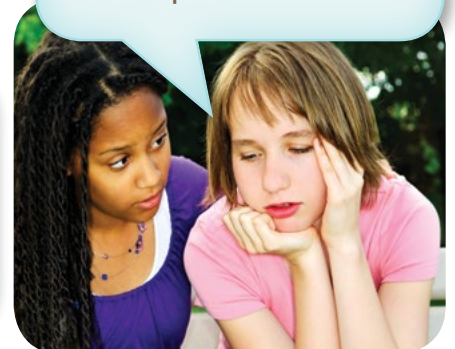


Nonviolence can be done by anyone who has a mind (which means *all of us!*)

Nonviolence happens when we choose to resist anger, fear, or greed.



Nonviolence is any action where you have the well-being of the other person in mind.



Three faces of power

Economist Kenneth Boulding described three different types of power in his book, *Three Faces of Power*. He called these types of power: **threat**, **exchange**, and **integrative**.

Threat power (power over)

“You do something I want, or I will do something you don’t want.”

Threat power involves using force to get someone to do something. This kind of power never results in a long-term positive outcome for either party involved.



Exchange power

“If you give me something I want, I will give you something you want.”

Exchange power is like a market transaction, and is essentially neutral. The parties make some kind of mutually agreeable trade, no one is coerced, and the two are not driven apart, nor are they brought much closer together.



Integrative power (power with)

“I will be authentic, and it will bring us closer together.”

Integrative power is when both parties take positive action based on what they believe to be true. In the long run, this results in a closer relationship and greater well-being for everyone.





Reflection

1. Think of one example from your life or that you have seen for each type of power:
 - a. threat power
 - b. exchange power
 - c. integrative power

2. What were the outcomes in each situation?
 - a. threat power
 - b. exchange power
 - c. integrative power

3. In the situations with **threat power** and **exchange power**, can you envision an alternative outcome?

4. How might you (or the other party) use **integrative power** instead of threat power or exchange power?



Gandhi's first name is not 'Mahatma,' it is Mohandas. 'Mahatma' is an honorific title given to him by the people of India, meaning "great soul." He was trained as a lawyer in England and took his first job in South Africa where the following scene takes place.



Illustrating integrative power: Mahatma Gandhi in South Africa

"I have learnt through bitter experience the one supreme lesson to conserve my anger, and as heat conserved is transmuted into energy, even so our anger controlled can be transmuted into a power that can move the world."

– M.K. Gandhi

One of the greatest examples of integrative power is found in the life story of Mahatma Gandhi. In 1893, just a week after his arrival to South Africa, Gandhi was thrown off a train because of his skin color. Forced to spend the night outside at the train station, Gandhi was furious. But after a long night of bitter reflection, he realized he didn't have to take the insult personally. Rather, he saw it in the context of the whole tragedy of man's inhumanity to man, the whole outrage of racism. He found himself asking not "How can they do this to me?" but instead "How can we do this to one another?"

He also kept great faith in human nature. From this incident, he knew he couldn't run home to India, nor could he just sue the railway company — he found a third way, channelling his anger into nonviolent action to confront the real problem, racism.

Imagine Gandhi standing at the station platform in Pietermaritzburg with a good head of steam, much like an old-fashioned locomotive. You could shovel in more coal and just bottle up all that power and even pretend it wasn't there until finally it exploded, you could just open the valves and scald everyone on the platform — or you could use it to drive the train. This is what Gandhi did with all the emotional power built up in him by the accumulated insults he had met since his arrival in South Africa. He chose neither to "pocket the insult," as he said, nor to lash out at the immediate source of the pain. Instead, he launched what was to become the greatest experiment in social change in the modern world. In transforming his anger, Gandhi not only changed himself, but he changed the world.

When you feel angry, try to think of this analogy of the steam engine. You have several options:

- To bottle up your energy, pretend it's not there, and keep adding more energy until you finally explode
- To immediately release your energy and scald everyone around you
- To consciously and intentionally use the energy to “drive your train” in a positive, forward direction



Reflection



1. Think of a time when you bottled up your energy. How did it feel?
2. What happened?
3. Think of a time when you immediately released your energy (like opening the steam valves on the train). How did you feel?
4. What happened?
5. The next time you feel a strong energy like anger or fear, see if you can take the “locomotive approach” — the same approach Gandhi took. Instead of bottling it up or immediately releasing it, try the third way of releasing this energy in a positive way. How does it feel?
6. What happened?
7. How was this different from bottling up or releasing the steam?

Integrative power in action: the story of Karen Ridd

Let's look at another example of integrative power through the story of Karen Ridd. In 1989 Karen was working in El Salvador with Peace Brigades International, when she was suddenly arrested by the Salvadoran National Guard along with four other volunteers. Three of the volunteers from Spain were deported, leaving Karen, who was from Canada, and her friend Marcela Rodriguez from Colombia. Luckily Karen had the chance to call the Canadian consul and alert another PBI volunteer about their situation. After being blindfolded and subjected to 5 hours' interrogation, a Canadian embassy finally came to release Karen — but not Marcela. Karen walked out of the barracks, but when she thought of Marcela, she returned to the barracks, not knowing what would happen to her but knowing it could not be worse than how she would feel walking out on a friend.

The soldiers were startled and handcuffed her. Next door, a soldier banged Marcela's head against the wall and said that her friend had come back for her, and now she would see the treatment a terrorist deserves. Karen explained to the soldiers why she came back. "You know what it's like to be separated from a *compañero*," she told them. That got to them. Shortly after, they released Karen and Marcela, who walked out under the stars, hand in hand.

Through her courage — and through her determination to stay in solidarity with her friend — Karen changed the minds of the soldiers. She was authentic — she hadn't thoroughly thought through the consequences of returning to the barracks; she only knew that she couldn't leave her friend. Her authenticity allowed her to tap into integrative power — she opened the soldiers' eyes to their shared humanity and offered them an escape from their own hostility. Through her bravery, Karen offered the soldiers a way out of this conflict, and found herself wielding an unexpected power — the power of nonviolence.



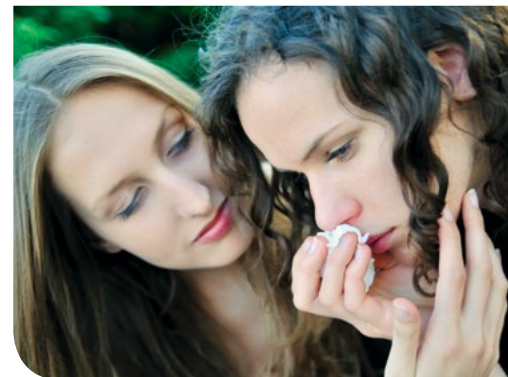
Karen Ridd

Principles of nonviolence

- 1. Fight injustice, not people.** The people aren't the problem — *the problem* is the problem. Try to approach conflict by solving the problem.
- 2. Seek win-win solutions.** Emphasize building long-term relationships over short-term “victories.” Let go of needing to be “right” all the time and try to get the bigger picture. Conflict makes us feel that in order for me to “win,” you have to lose. That is a delusion. In nonviolence we do not seek to be winners, or rise over others; we seek to learn and to make things better for everyone. The point is not to “win,” but to build relationships. Basic human needs are universal. At the heart of every conflict a “win-win” solution is possible.
- 3. Respect everyone — including yourself.** Humiliation — making fun of someone — should never be used as a tool. Everyone deserves respect.
- 4. Nonviolence will always improve things down the line.** Violence — of any kind — will always make them worse. Nonviolence always “works” — but not always in the ways we would imagine — whereas violence never works in the long run because it always leads to further violence.
- 5. The means are as important — if not more so — than the ends.** We do not have control over the final results of our actions. But we do have responsibility for the means we use, including even our feelings and the state of our mind as we use them. If we want a positive, constructive result, we need to use positive, constructive means (as opposed to negative, destructive, violent means). Nonviolence will always produce a good result at some point down the road, even though we may not quite see the connection. Violent means never lead to positive, constructive ends.



Continued on next page





“Over the last few years I have consistently preached that nonviolence demands that the means we use must be as pure as the ends we seek. So I have tried to make it clear that it is wrong to use immoral means to attain moral ends. But now I must affirm that it is just as wrong, or even more so, to use moral means to preserve immoral ends.”

— Martin Luther King, Jr.,
“Letter from Birmingham City Jail”

- 6. Each of us has a piece of the truth, but none of us has the whole truth.** Be prepared to listen to other peoples’ truths.
- 7. Persuade, don’t coerce.** In nonviolence, we never want to use force if we can avoid it. Since our efforts are based around trying to make things better for everyone, we use persuasion to help our opponent see the win-win solution.
- 8. Use discrimination.** Never sacrifice your principles, but be ready to change tactics or compromise on details. Don’t cling to symbols. Be constructive wherever possible and obstructive only when necessary.
- 9. These principles come from — and help to sustain — a belief that all life is an interconnected whole and that any problem can be solved once its real nature is understood.** In other words, once we understand our real needs we will find that they are not in competition with any others’.

In fact, as Martin Luther King, Jr. said,

“I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. And you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be.”

Nonviolence practice



Think of an example from your life when a relationship was deepened through the practice of respect. Discuss how you might find ways of extending this practice to other relationships and what challenges you might face, as well as solutions for handling those challenges.

Challenge: Offer respect to someone who disrespected you without letting go of your own dignity. Note what you feel and what changes.



Nonviolence strategies

1. Nonviolence has two modes: **obstructive program**, where we stand in the way of injustice (such as a protest or boycott) and **constructive program**, when we create solutions.
2. Never give up on another human being.
3. Cling to essentials, like your human dignity. Be willing to compromise on nonessentials, like symbols.
4. Do not give in to threats. Ask yourself, “What are they holding over me?” Let go of that, and you are free.
5. When nonviolence succeeds there are no losers. Gloating over “victories” can actually undo what we have gained in nonviolent action.



Nonviolence does not mean “not fighting back.” It means fighting back but with the weapons of respect, dignity and love. Is this hard to do? What challenges would you face when you respond to an insult with compassionate love? What benefits would you reap?

Explore: Read about a positive figure from the history of nonviolence and explore the qualities they developed in their life that you would like to develop in yours. Did this person lead an easy life or were there many challenges and opportunities for violence that they did not take?





Person power

Another type of power we need to talk about when we discuss nonviolence is **person power**. Person power is the unlimited potential inside each human being. According to nonviolence, the greatest power lies within each of us as individuals. When we join together, yes, we have an amazing capacity for collective power, but it is important not to forget—and not to deemphasize—the power that each one of us has to make positive change in the world. As noted above, Gandhi’s life story serves as a great example of how one person can change themselves and in doing so, literally change the world.

Person power characteristics

Someone who has tapped into their person power:

- Is a leader. They aren’t afraid to stand up for what they believe in, and they are very persuasive and able to get people to change their minds to the solution that benefits everyone.
- Feels empathy. They try to understand where other people are coming from.
- Respects everyone. Martin Luther King, Jr., Gandhi, and Jesus all told us to “love your enemy.”
- Is courageous. Gandhi said he could convert an angry person to a nonviolent practitioner, but he couldn’t convert a coward. Person power requires that we be courageous.



5-point plan for developing person power

1. Consider boycotting the mass media (see “Take the media challenge” on page 36).
2. Practice one-pointed attention.
3. Learn nonviolence (like you’re doing right now! But don’t stop here—try to learn everything you can about the practice and principles of nonviolence, and role models throughout history who have carried out their visions of a nonviolent world).
4. Respect everyone—see the interconnectedness between yourself and all other human beings, and treat others with respect and dignity. Instead of sending a text, put down your phone and go see your friend. Smile to the cashier at the grocery store.
5. Understand nonviolence as the bridge between our personal development and social change—through practicing nonviolence and trying to be a good human being, you have the power to make great changes in your school, neighborhood, community, and the world!

You have the power to make great changes in your school, neighborhood, community, and the world!



Explore the bridge of nonviolence



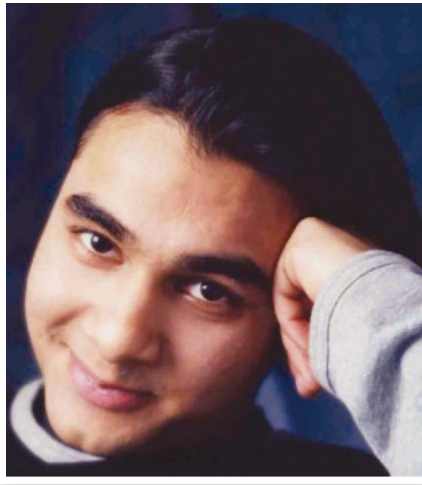
1. Now let’s explore that bridge by asking ourselves:
 - a. How can nonviolence help me?
 - b. How can I use nonviolence in my daily life?
 - c. How can nonviolence connect my personal growth to social change?
2. Write, draw, or work with a partner or group and brainstorm ways to be nonviolent in various aspects of your life. Create a visual representation of your ideas on poster paper or make a digital image using a computer.

The next time you are having a conflict with someone, try the following tips:

- **Slow down.** Remember when we talked about slowing down our thoughts? Often fights and arguments happen when people react to their minds when they are moving at fast forward. When words leave our mouth, we can never really take them back. Make sure you are both ready to talk, and if needed, take some deep breaths or even go for a walk and wait to talk until you are both ready.
- **Have respect.** Treat the person you are having the conflict with as you want to be treated. Don't try to make fun of them or humiliate them. Remember that they're a person, just like you.
- **Seek win-win solutions.** In every conflict there is a win-win possibility. Be creative and figure it out!
- **Separate the person from the problem.** Don't confuse a person's actions with who they are.
- **Have the well-being of the other person in mind.**
- **Practice active listening.** Listen to understand the other person's needs, feelings, and point of view, ask clarifying questions, paraphrase to make sure you have understood correctly
- **Forgive.** Just like with respect, we need to learn to forgive ourselves as well as others.



Practicing forgiveness: the Azim Khamisa story



Tariq Khamisa



Azim Khamisa

In 1995, 20-year old college student Tariq Khamisa was shot and killed by 14-year old gang member Tony Hicks. Tony became the first child under the age of 16 to be tried and convicted as an adult, receiving a sentence of 25 years to life.

Some people might have rejoiced in this sentence, thinking the killer “got what he deserved,” but not Azim Khamisa, Tariq’s father. Azim believed that there were “victims on both sides of the gun,” and he reached out in forgiveness to Tony’s grandfather, Ples Felix, to begin the process of healing. Azim did not want to seek revenge. He said, “I will mourn Tariq’s death for the rest of my life. Now, however, my grief has been transformed into a powerful commitment to change. Change is urgently needed in a society where children kill children.”

Together, the two men started the Tariq Khamisa Foundation, a nonprofit organization that seeks to stop violence through education, mentoring, and community service programs. Since 1995 they have reached over 500,000 youth with their their programs.

Azim’s story illustrates the power we have to practice forgiveness and respond to all situations with nonviolence and compassion. Losing a child is one of the most horrific things that can happen to anyone. Many people would expect Azim to react with revenge or hate for Tony’s family. Because Azim chose the

path of forgiveness, hundreds of thousands of students’ lives have been touched with the TKF educational programs.

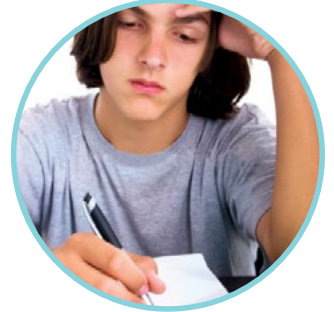


Forgiveness challenge



Write a letter to a person with whom you would like to restore a personal relationship in some way. Perhaps you need to forgive them or ask for forgiveness, or maybe both.

1. What are the needs of that person?



2. What are your needs?



3. How can you find a solution where both of your needs are met?



Nonviolence and social change: making a difference in your community

“Apathy can only be overcome by enthusiasm and enthusiasm can only be aroused by two things: first, an ideal that takes the imagination by storm, and second, a definite, intelligible plan for carrying that ideal into practice.”

— Arnold Toynbee

The outward expression of nonviolence is making a positive difference in our communities. When we transform our own minds, we also transform the world around us as we interact more positively with it. By developing a positive vision, concentration, training our senses, and practicing nonviolence, we not only change ourselves but can change the world.

“My life is my message”

Gandhi once said, “My life is my message.” He meant that the way he lived his life said everything that he needed to say. If you wanted to understand Gandhi, you could look at any aspect of his life and see nonviolence shining through. He truly “practiced what he preached,” and lived in a way that was completely aligned with his deepest beliefs.



What message does my life convey?

Looking at your life, what message does it convey?

“My life is my message” personal challenge



1. The qualities, virtues, or values that are most important to me are:
(Examples: service, kindness, friendship)

2. Examples where my life reflects these values:
(Examples: when I volunteer, when I’m nice to my brothers and sisters)

3. Notice the difference between Question 1 and Question 2. Write down the values that are important to you but are not fully reflected in your life at this moment: (Examples: courage, leadership)

4. In order to achieve this goal, I will take the following steps:
(Example: I will seek opportunities to practice public speaking, which will require courage and help me to be a better leader)


Suggestions

- community
- connection
- cooperation
- courage
- creativity
- family
- friendship
- full self-expression
- gratitude
- growth
- happiness
- health
- joy
- justice
- kindness
- love
- leadership
- music
- nature
- nonviolence
- oneness
- peace
- respect
- self-awareness
- service
- spirituality
- social change

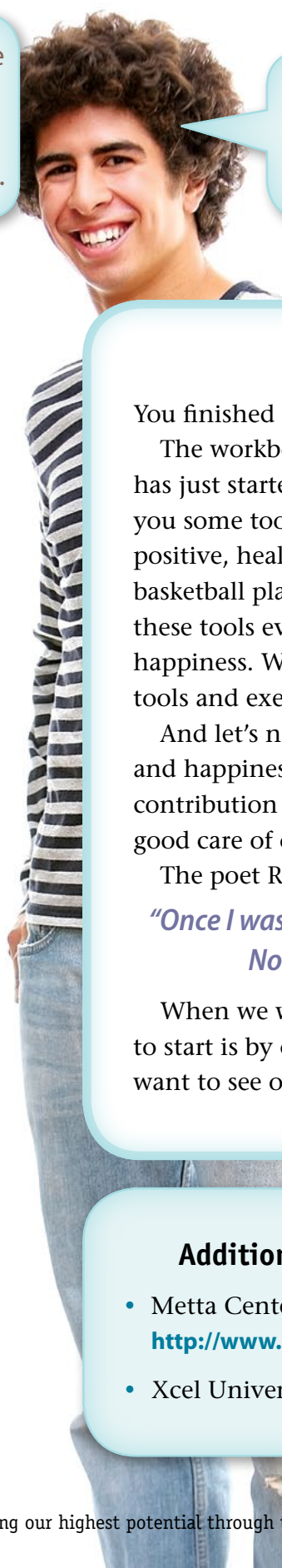


Dreaming big, finding your path: How can you make a positive impact in your community?

- 1.** After you take the “My life is my message” personal challenge on the previous page, return to your vision on page 26. Compare your vision with your challenge results.
- 2.** Think of a project that blends what you’re good at and what you’re passionate about with the vision you would like to construct. You may want to research projects that are already out there that fit your skills and passions.
- 3.** Make an action plan, outlining concrete steps for how you can get involved in or create a project around your vision.
- 4.** Then put it into action!



When we want to change the world, the best place to start is with ourselves. We have power within us.



We need to practice these tools every day to maintain our well-being and happiness.

Conclusion

You finished the workbook — good job! Now...so what?

The workbook may be finished, but your practice has just started. We hope that this workbook has given you some tools to use in your daily life to help you stay positive, healthy, and happy. Remember, just like a basketball player practices every day, we need to practice these tools every day to maintain our well-being and happiness. We hope you return again and again to the tools and exercises in this book.

And let's not forget — by maintaining our own health and happiness, we are better able to make a positive contribution to our communities and the world. Taking good care of ourselves benefits everyone!

The poet Rumi wrote:

*“Once I was clever so I decided to change the world.
Now I am wise so I change myself.”*

When we want to change the world, the best place to start is by changing ourselves, to “be the change” we want to see on the outside.

Additional resources for exploration

- Metta Center for Nonviolence
<http://www.mettacenter.org>
- Xcel University <http://www.xceluniversity.org>

