

64-WAYS TO NONVIOLENCE

In 2003, many volunteers contributed to the creation of the following audio files, one for each of the 64 days in the Season for Nonviolence that are listed below, aimed to assist you in approaching three main areas of life: Personal, Interpersonal, and Community. You are welcome to read the text of each day, listen to the audio file of the text, and if you wish, download each of these MP3 files. We hope that they will inspire you to live in a nonviolent manner.

64 WAYS TO PRACTICE NONVIOLENCE

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We learn to practice nonviolence one step at a time, one choice at a time, one day at a time. Through our daily nonviolent choices and actions, the noble and courageous spirit within each of us expresses itself as the skills, wisdom and character of a nonviolent human being. This is how we each, in our own way, move the world in a direction of peace.

PERSONAL

Nonviolence begins by learning how to be less violent and more compassionate with ourselves. We learn by building the courage to speak and act with a respect, honor and reverence for our own being.

1. Courage

Eleanor Roosevelt urged, "You must do the things that you think you cannot do." Practicing these 64 Ways will challenge you to do things that you think you cannot do. Today, light a candle and accept the courage to practice 64 Ways of living nonviolently.

2. Smiling

Buddhist teacher, Thich Nhat Hanh said, "If in our daily life, we can smile....not only we, but everyone will profit from it. This is the most basic kind of peace work." Today, share a smile with at least three people, knowing that your smile contributes to peace.

3. Appreciation

Louise Hay says, "Praise yourself as much as you can....the love in our lives begins with us....loving yourself will help heal this planet." Write down 10 things that you appreciate about yourself. Read aloud what you have written.

4. Caring

According to Peter McWilliams, "Nonviolence toward the self is caring for oneself. Self-love a crowning sense of self-worth ... it is what the Greeks call reverence for the self." Real caring is not just what we say, but what we do. Make a list of at least five ways that you can take better care of yourself. Practice at least one today.

5. Believing

Author Wayne Dyer writes about the impact that our beliefs have on our daily lives. Today believe that you have all the resources to move your life in the direction of peace. Be aware of simple, peaceful responses you receive.

6. Simplicity

To simplify is to invite peacefulness. Think of three ways you can simplify your life and put at least one of them into practice today.

7. Education

Knowledge strengthens your conviction and deepens your wisdom and understanding. Learn about the power of nonviolence by educating yourself. Read an article, periodical or book; watch a video on a subject that relates to nonviolence. Learn about human rights, diversity, ecology, history, politics, forgiveness, spirituality, peace studies, biographies of heroes and more.

8. Healing

Writer, poet, activist, and professor Maya Angelou turned a traumatic childhood experience into a catalyst for creativity and achievement. Today, choose a painful incident in your life and find the "gift" it has given you. Consciously share this gift with others.

9. Dreaming

Martin Luther King, Jr., had a great dream. What is your own dream for peace? Write it down. What is one thing you can do to honor your dream? Do it today.

10. Faith

When Caesar Chavez was organizing farm workers, he challenged them to say, "Si, se puede" (yes, it is possible) when they didn't know how they would overcome obstacles. Today, say, "Yes, it is possible," even if you don't know how your goal will be realized. Have faith and say, "it is possible," until you find a way.

11. Contemplation

For at least three minutes, relax, breathe, and let your mind be fed by "whatsoever is good and beautiful." Sacred scripture states, "as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

12. Groundedness

Gandhi said, "To forget how to dig the earth and tend the soil is to forget ourselves." And Black Elk said, "Some little root of the sacred tree still lives. Nourish it, that it may leaf and bloom and fill with singing birds." Today place a seed in the earth or nurture a plant.

13. Creativity

The worse thing you can do to a human soul is to suppress its natural desire to create. Identify at least five ways in which you express your creativity everyday. Today, allow something unpredictable and joyous to express through you.

14. Humility

Making mistakes is a part of learning and growing, simply an "error in approach." Today, freely acknowledge at least one mistake you make and reflect for a couple of minutes on what you have learned.

15. Reverence

Environmentalist John Muir said, "Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where Nature may heal and cheer and give strength to body and soul." Today go for a walk and realize the beauty around, above and below you.

16. Gratitude

On her show Oprah Winfrey frequently promotes the daily practice of gratitude. Begin the day by listing five things for which you are grateful and end it by sharing with one person all of the good things that happened to you today.

17. Integrity

Do the right thing. Spike Lee used these words as a title for one of his movies. When faced with a choice today, listen to your conscience. You know what's right. Do it.

18. Freedom

Civil rights activist Diane Nash said, "Freedom, by definition, is people realizing that they are their own leaders." Take a leadership role today in your own life. Find one way you can be more expressive of who truly are.

19. Acceptance

"Resentment, fear, criticism, and guilt cause more problems than anything else," says Louise Hay. Today, choose not to judge yourself (your looks, your capabilities, your expression). See yourself as unique, loving, capable and bright!

20. Self-forgiveness

When you judge yourself, you tend to believe that who you are is what you have done or not done, what you have or don't have. Knowing that who you are is greater than all these things, today, forgive yourself for forgetting the good that is in you.

21. Inspiration

Think of at least two people who exemplify the practice of nonviolence. What is it you admire about them? Practice these behaviors today so that other people may be inspired.

22. Mission

“My life is my message,” says Gandhi. Write down what you want to stand for in your life. Note at least one way you can show, through action, that you stand for your beliefs. Take this action today.

23. Prayer

“Prayer from the heart can achieve what nothing else in the world can,” said Gandhi. Begin and end the day with a prayer for peace. Let peace begin with you.

INTERPERSONAL

In order to create a peaceful world, we must learn to practice nonviolence with one another in our day-to-day interactions.

24. Harmony

Choosing not to engage in any form of gossip today contributes to harmony. Today, choose to see the good in others rather than finding fault.

25. Friendliness

To humorist Will Rogers, strangers were simply friends he hadn’t met. View those you encounter today in that light. Make a new acquaintance.

26. Respect

Gandhi taught, “Language is an exact reflection of the character and growth of its speakers.” Today, respect yourself and others by choosing not to use any profanity or “put downs.”

27. Generosity

Mother Teresa said, “There is a hidden poverty more pervasive than lack of money. It is the poverty of the heart.” Find three ways to generously give of your time, attention and resources to others.

28. Listening

Today, stop what you are doing and take five minutes to listen to the feelings behind someone’s words to you. Be fully present for the conversation and be interested in what the person is saying.

29. Forgiveness

When we forgive, we do not condone hurtful behavior. When we realize that there is something within us that is more important than this wounding experience, we are free to let go of the past and move on with our lives. Today, write a letter to forgive someone. You do not have to mail it.

30. Amends

Make amends today. Apologize to someone you may have hurt and mean your apology sincerely.

31. Praising

Appreciation helps people to grow. Offer praise to at least three people today for their personal qualities, achievements, or helpful service.

32. Patience

According to Caesar Chavez, “Nonviolence is not inaction ... It is hard work ... It is the patience to win.” When your plans seemed delayed, choose to be patient by identifying at least three ways that you can constructively use this time to support your goal.

33. Acknowledgment

Tell someone today what a difference he or she has made in your life. Acknowledge that person for being there for you. Make this a day when you don’t take people for granted.

34. Love

Gandhi wrote, "Nonviolence is based on the assumption that human nature ... unfailingly responds to the advances of love." Today, focus on what you appreciate most about the person you like the least.

35. Understanding

Thich Nhat Hanh says, "When you understand, you cannot help but love...practice looking at all living beings with the eyes of compassion." Send a silent thought of love to ten people today. Share your experience with someone.

36. Mindfulness

If we just act in each moment, with composure and mindfulness, each minute of our life is a work of art. Be aware of the motivation behind your action, the intention behind your words, and the needs and experiences of other people. By doing so, you are making life more beautiful for others.

37. Graciousness

When you are out driving today, be more courteous. Give others the right of way and stop and let pedestrians cross the street.

38. Kindness

Every day we hear of random and senseless acts of violence. Participate in the counter-revolution of kindness started by Anne Herbert. Perform three acts of kindness today.

39. Dialogue

Marianne Williamson describes a healthy society as one in which "those who disagree can do so with honor and respect for other people's opinions, and an appreciation for our shared humanity." In the Desiderata by Max Ehrmann, he says, "Speak your truth quietly and clearly and listen to others." Today, speak up but do not enter into the spirit of argument.

40. Unity

Differences give variety to life and are often only on the surface anyway. Today look for three ways to see beyond outer differences in opinions, appearances, or goals. Find the meeting point of underlying unity that exists in diversity.

41. Openness

A Turkish proverb says, "He who builds himself a fence, fences out more than he fences in." Today be open to understanding ideas and people that you have previously opposed.

42. Accountability

In conflicting situations, personal accountability allows us to take responsibility for how I contribute to the conflict. Today, take responsibility for how you contribute to a conflict and make a different choice that can lead to a peaceful resolution.

43. Uniqueness

Dale Carnegie says that the greatest need people have is for love and approval. Praise, compliment and honor the uniqueness of at least five people today. Notice the positive impact you make by valuing the individuality of each one.

44. Cooperation

When we work together, we are stronger than when we work alone. Today, find one significant way that you can cooperate more effectively with the people in your family or workplace, school or community. Do it.

45. Mastery

Labor organizer Caesar Chavez teaches, "If you use violence, you have to sell part of yourself for that violence. Then you are no longer a master of your own struggle." Breathe deeply, silently counting backwards from ten to calm yourself and cool off before you speak or act with impatience or anger. Do this at least once today.

46. Compassion

Mother Teresa implored us to "find someone who thinks he is alone and let him know that he is not." Today, do as Mother Teresa suggests.

COMMUNITY

Nonviolence challenges us to stand for truth by taking action that honors the dignity and worth of every human being.

47. Disarmament

Have a conversation with someone today about what the world would be like if there were no weapons nor any need for them. Imagine such a world.

48. Ecology

Value the earth by conserving natural resources and avoiding the purchase of products that deplete rain forests or exploit labor forces. Practice recycling today by using at least one recycled product or by recycling a product.

49. Honor

Albert Einstein said, "There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as if everything is." Before each meal today, stop to honor all the hands that brought it to you and to bless the earth for its bounty.

50. Choice

Be aware today of any jokes or remarks that show disrespect toward ethnic groups, women or men, classes of people, religious groups, gays or lesbians. Be considerate of every person's dignity, and choose not to participate in disrespectful conversation.

51. Advocacy

"When someone stands up to violence," says Thich Nhat Hanh, "a force for change is released. Every action for peace requires someone to exhibit the courage to challenge violence and inspire love." Today be an ally. Without blaming or judging others, speak out for those who are disrespected.

52. Equality

Have you ever noticed the groups of people who are under-represented in your activities and lifestyle? Find one way to connect with a person from these groups today.

53. Action

"Each of us can work to change a small portion of events and in the total of all those acts will be written the history of this generation," said Robert Kennedy. Today, find a way to make one, small change that will contribute to the well-being of your home, school, workplace or community.

54. Giving

Practice generosity by sharing time, energy and material resources with those in need. Clean out your closet, bureau drawers, or garage. Are there things you aren't using that might be of value to someone else? Today give away what you are no longer using.

55. Responsibility

The quality of your community starts with you. Take responsibility for the quality of your community wherever you are. Today, pick up trash that is not your own, whether at home, at the office, or on the street. Every little bit helps.

56. Self-sufficiency

People need the dignity of work and the opportunity to provide for themselves and their families. Economic self-sufficiency is a requirement for a nonviolent world. Today, create a job for someone or help someone to find employment (examples: help them with a resume or application. Help them make phone calls, dress appropriately, practice interviewing.)

57. Service

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "Everybody can be great ... because anybody can serve ... You only need a heart full of grace and a soul generated by love." Sign up to volunteer a minimum of two hours this month with an organization of your choice. Share your commitment with at least one person.

58. Citizenship

Robert Muller, former assistant secretary general to the UN, urges, "Use every letter you write, every conversation

you have, every meeting you attend, to express your fundamental beliefs and dreams." Today call or write one of your legislators and register your views.

59. Intervention

Alcohol and drug abuse is both a consequence and a cause of violence. Today have the courage to intervene in a caring way with someone who is using alcohol or drugs. Through your honest and straightforward communication, encourage them to get educated, get help, get sober and free from drugs.

60. Witnessing

"We are each other's bond," writes poet Gwendolyn Brooks. Those who practice nonviolence cannot close their eyes to injustice or cruelty. We are here to be a witness for justice and compassion. Today be willing to stand up for Truth by your presence, your words and actions.

61. Peace

An 11 year old writes, "Peace is a special thought or a special love or light or spark that we all share within ourselves." Thich Nhat Hanh wrote, "Practice watering seeds of joy and peace and not just seeds of anger and violence, and the elements of war in all of us will be transformed." Today, make a choice to meet each experience with an intention for peace.

62. Commitment

Spend five minutes reflecting on your commitment to nonviolence. Write down what it means to you and what you are willing to do as a consequence of your commitment to it. Make your commitment public by sharing it with at least 2 people.

63. Release

A Sufi proverb says, "When the heart weeps for what it has lost, the spirit laughs for what it has found." Today look back on how far you have come during this 64 day journey. Release the weight of your past, judgments of yourself and others, and the idea that world peace is not possible by acknowledging that you do make a difference.

64. Celebration

Rejoice in the work that you have done. Celebrate the journey that you have made with countless others who believe that every individual can move the world in the direction of peace with their nonviolent choice and action. Margaret Mead said "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed it is the only thing that ever has."

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