

“412” and Nonviolence

The U.S. Department of Justice statistics inform us that 412 rapes occur on a campus the size of K-State in a given year. Advocates have no reason to think that not the case.

For the sake of argument (because it certainly does not happen this way), let’s pretend our community does not deny this startling statistic. Let’s say 412 reports are made, 412 perpetrators are apprehended and sentenced, and that 412 lives are restored to health.

My question is... What do we do next year - and the next? Do we follow tradition and wait for the next 412 rapes to occur? And the next? Or... do we face the fact that a whole continuum of violence happens; that both perpetrators and the victims are not aberrations but, rather, they are our brothers and neighbors and ourselves? Can we come to see that safety and fairness (healthy

relationships and fair relationships) are inextricably linked and that it is up to us to step up and amend the injustices before the violence begins?

In my opinion, the question that will determine the safety and wholeness of our lives in the 21st century is this: “can human beings choose to evolve?” Can we transcend the dualistic worldview of our ancestors that led us to “survival of the fittest,” “win/lose,” problem solving? Can we take advantage of modern perspectives and technologies and move toward a more holistic and sustainable mode of problem solving? “ The bottom line is - if we want sustainable interactions, nonviolence is the only way to achieve them.

Want Peace? Work for Justice.
Want a safe community? Work for fair relationships.

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Nonviolence Programs

Kansas State University



Why are people violent but not illiterate?

We have been taught to read.

Preventing Violence by Promoting Nonviolence

What do learning nonviolent communications skills, yoga classes, an international news television in the K-State Union, cleaning litter from KS Highway #177, making and filling “empty bowls” for a local hunger project, shielding graduates and families from Topeka’s Phelps clan in a “Date with Hate” and a “Run Against Rape” event have in common?

They are a few of the ways K-State students, faculty and community members are acting to bring healthy, dynamic balance to their relationships, large and small. They also represent various projects of the Campaign for Nonviolence, Women’s Center and other Nonviolence Education programs at Kansas State University.

There seem to be a never-ending supply of conflict in our lives that, traditionally, we focus on after the crisis and violence have begun. Nonviolence education teaches us to address the complex sources of conflict before it becomes so serious. Maybe it is a fail safe mechanism build into the human brain like catching ourselves before a fall or maybe it is a miracle but, as fortune would have it, just as human beings are nearing system breakdown on all levels of our lives, from stress to divorce to economic collapse and global warming, holistic perspectives, network-building technologies and awareness of nonviolent problem solving methods are becoming available.

Nonviolence education helps us STEP BACK to conceptualize conflict within the layers of systems that surround them; begin to see connections, identify patterns and precursors, and plan ahead much earlier in the development of problem; and then asks us to STEP UP to devise nonviolent “ways” to correct the course of imbalanced relationships (which we see as injustice,

abuse of power; disease and dis-ease) before crisis and violence. Human history and patterns throughout nature show us that violence leads only to more violence and that nonviolent interactions are the only way to make our relationships sustainable.

Local nonviolence education projects address problems at all level of interaction, from our self to our environment. For example, yoga helps us “begin within,” to create better balance within our self. There are many ways to attain healthy equilibrium but yoga is something practical and fun, that we can do every day. Watching news and views from the perspective of other cultures makes it possible to understand the interconnected world in which we live and thus helps bring safe interactions to our world. Practicing good conservation is one way to move our shared environment toward sustainability. Learning the ABC’s of nonviolent communication is key to equitable and therefore safe interpersonal relationships.

K-State’s nonviolence education programs are based on an anthropological or holistic definition of nonviolence developed by Susan L. Allen, director of Nonviolence Education at K-State. Her previous job -- addressing endemic problems of rape and other violence on our campus as director of the Women’s Center -- combined with a background in the whole-systems perspectives of anthropology led Allen to generate a logical and practical approach to nonviolence she calls “every day nonviolence.”

Every Day Nonviolence (EDNV)
EDNV is based on a realization that we don’t have to be Mahatma Gandhi or Martin Luther King, Jr. to practice nonviolence; and, in fact, Gandhi said this, himself, with his famous admonition to “Be the change

us that nonviolence actually is a “force more powerful” than violence when applied visibly and persistently.

However unfamiliar or misunderstood, nonviolence actually gives us a relatively baggage-free, non-moralistic, unemotional and perhaps most importantly, logical lan—guage to set about changing the way we resolve conflict -- locally and globally, personally and institutionally.



Nonviolence Education Wish List

1. We have many requests for SafeZone trainings from campus and off-campus groups and for help starting new SZ programs in other communities -
*We need funds for trainers and a coordinator
2. We have created excellent nonviolence materials but we need more (for example, our “Bill Snyder Win-Win” TV video cost \$1000)
*We need funds for design, development, printing, etc
*We need funds for public education, videos, media fees for ad space and airtime
3. We have a new Nonviolence Studies Certificate Program available from the College of Arts & Sciences -
*We need funds for faculty salaries; a (named) Chair in NVS and a NVS Department or Program
4. We do applied nonviolence and violence prevention work as well as organizing academic programs and for this we need coordination -
*We need funds for an office, operational expenses and an administrator/projects coordinator
5. There are national and international resources available to broaden our programs and teaching
*We need funds for films, speaker fees, and travel

Nonviolence Studies Certificate Program

You. Kansas State University. The World.

Ever wonder how you can change the conditions that engender violence?

Do you think there must be a better way to resolve conflict than ...bullying? ...abusing power?war?violence?

Do you wonder why people care about...human rights? ...human wrongs? ...social justice?

Do you want to learn to change for the better ...the world ...the environment ...your relationships ...your Self?

Nonviolence strategies, tactics & tools help us resolve problems nonviolently.

Introduction to Nonviolence Studies,
Applied Nonviolence Studies & Many Electives
College of Arts & Sciences - 3 hours each/15 hours Certificate
Open to all majors and departments. Ask your advisor!
www.ksu.edu/nonviolence

The Word “Nonviolence” and Resistance to it

It may have been the anti-war fervor of the Vietnam era or even the polarized “red-blue” era in which we live, but something has created bad feelings among some about “peace and nonviolence” movements. Whatever its cause, in order to have a successful Campaign for Nonviolence or nonviolence movement, in general, it is important to acknowledge resistance to the word “nonviolence.”

Part of the problem is no one knows for sure what “nonviolence” means... Will it offend military family and friends if I work on a nonviolence project? Does it imply I oppose U.S. policy? Dare I question the status quo? Unfortunately, conversations about peace and war -- like all issues framed as polarities (love/hate, win/lose, fight/flight) -- use extreme language that can make us feel forced to choose between two opposing camps.

In fact, a core reason to adopt nonviolence as a strategy to prevent violence is that a primary goal of the nonviolence movement is to create a “third way” to approach conflict, which actually means the 358 degrees of “ways” beyond the two-degrees of either-or: us or them, active or passive, ‘my way or the highway.’ Nonviolence shows that there always are viable alternatives to begin unraveling the knotted ball of a problem.

Another difficulty with the word “nonviolence” is that, in English, it appears to mean simply “not” violence rather than doing something to prevent violence; and it seems to be “against” something rather than “for” something. Mahatma Gandhi was so dissatisfied with the word, in fact, that he coined a new word, “Satyagraha” as a substitute. To Gandhi, nonviolence or sata-graha is a “relentless search for truth” and a truth force....Satyagraha is an attribute of the spirit within....He said

“satyagraha has been designed as an effective substitute for violence.” The study of nonviolence is still so new, however, that most people mistakenly associate nonviolence with passivity. They may even think it means being cowardly. To the contrary, however, nonviolent methods are not passive; they are active. They do not oppose protecting oneself; indeed, they ask us to stop waiting for crisis and abdicating responsibility for what is by then serious conflict to professionals (who arrive after the fact, after the system has begun to fail).

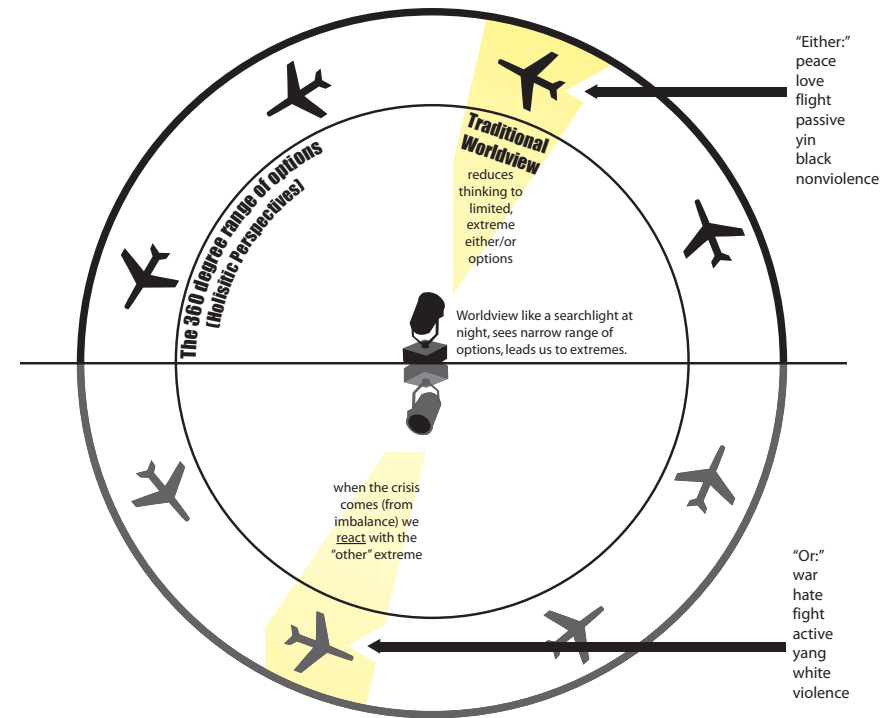
Nonviolence shows us the importance of “correcting the course” of a relationship while the disproportion is at a more manageable stage and while we have more options. Thus, it empowers us to “be the change we wish to see in the world,” as Mahatma Gandhi urged. Nonviolent methods certainly demand courage, as those who faced the tanks in Tiananmen Square and the dogs in Selma can attest; and also by the growing number of nonviolence proponents today who speak truth to a playground, boardroom, or bedroom bully.

What nonviolence theory asks is that we understand one thing: violence always leads to more violence; thus it never can resolve underlying problems (imbalances) that led to conflict. Further, it helps us see that by agreeing only to organize ourselves around “mopping up the blood” (literally, legally or otherwise) - after the violence has begun - we can never change the conditions that engendered the violence in the first place.

Thus, for practical, outcome-based reasons alone nonviolent methods are the only way to resolve conflict in ways that make relationships (between spouses as well as between countries) sustainable. Nonviolence theory shows

you wish to see in the world.” When we wait for a crisis and call the professionals, by definition, we always will be “a day late and a dollar short” because we are acting after the violence has begun. At K-State we are learning how to expect nonviolence and assume some response-ability for creating healthy interactions that will result in a more equitable and thus safer campus community.

Most local nonviolence education work is carried out through the Campaign for Nonviolence. Created in 2000, the CNV is both a grassroots, volunteer-based movement to build a nonviolent community and a presidential-level, campus-wide committee. Some of our projects are listed in this booklet. For more information, see: www.ksu.edu/nonviolence



This drawing adapts an image created by Sir Karl Popper during WWII, while the bombers flew over London, to show how human views are transitory and limited. In past times, we attended to problems and conflict as though they existed within the spotlight, ignoring interconnected systems that surround them. With the insight that our ‘given’ views are too limited we now can make an effort to gain holistic perspectives and attend to conflict as a process instead of as a fragmented event. This systems view allows us to identify connections and precursors much earlier so we can act to correct the course of a dysfunctional system before it crashes.

The K-State Campaign for Non-violence (CNV) - began in 2000 as an over-arching, university-wide “home” for applied and academic nonviolence education projects and programs.

*SafeZone - SZ Allies are peers/fellow citizens who attend training to become visible, accessible allies for fellow community members who may be troubled or who are in trouble. SZ allies offer a safe place to talk and to find additional help. Allies display the SZ symbol on an office door, backpack or other location and thereby, indirectly, also help build the expectation for a non-violent community. Over 700 allies have been trained and more take training every semester. We also help off-campus groups begin SZ programs.

* Season for Nonviolence -- is the 64-Days between January 30 and April 4 (assassination anniversaries of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr.). It provides an annual, international focus for localized events designed to increase awareness of nonviolence teachings and techniques and illustrate the practicality of nonviolence strategies. Each year the CNV sponsors many, varied events that focus on nonviolence and relationship systems. See: <http://www.k-state.edu/nonviolence/>

* Fall CNV Rally - a one-day event that gives a broad network of social service and social justice groups an opportunity to interact with the community. We have information tables, music, and annual “Be the Change” awards. Awards are given to individuals, groups and local businesses that have made a difference for positive social change in our community.

* Noontime Yoga - provides free yoga five days a week to the campus and community at noon, in Ahearn gym. Our philosophy of nonviolence includes learning to take better care of our own well being as a prerequisite to bringing a healthy, whole self to broader interactions.

* Awareness Meditation is a “nonviolence begins within” program with the same underlying aim. <http://www.k-state.edu/nonviolence/links/yoga.htm>

* KIOSK and International News Television - The CNV, SafeZone and Women’s Center (which provides a 24-hour service for victims of rape and other kinds of violence) now has a Kiosk in the Student Union. This location increases the visibility of our programs and makes them more accessible to fellow community members who need help. Our television, tuned only to international news sources, allows Union visitors to get views directly from other countries/cultures. We believe multiple perspectives make nonviolent interactions more likely at the global level.

* Nonviolence Studies Certificate Program – This 15-hour certificate program is a major new academic initiative open to all UG majors through the K-State College of Arts & Sciences. See: <http://www.k-state.edu/nonviolence/>



Inaugural CNV Rally, 2001

The hypothesis of EDNV is that the same “force more powerful” applied successfully to the liberation of peoples also can be applied at the local and personal levels; and in fact it suggests that nonviolence teachings can be applied to all relationship systems in ways that can help preempt violence (and that help even the oppressor). It suggests that when we learn to recognize relationships as systems we can create nonviolence methods to maintain relationships, in the same way we practice good nutrition over time to maintain equilibrium in a physical system or move a dysfunctional one toward wholeness.

Optimistic, yes; but today human beings have new perspectives and tools never before available. We are at a decisive moment in human development because today we can consciously choose evolve. Amazing but true. Today we have the information we need to modernize how we attend to change, to conflict and to the interconnected elements of our global systems. The question is, can we build the awareness, the expectation, and the skills needed to create and maintain nonviolent interactions before crisis and violence lead to system failure?

Nonviolence is an integrative, positive force with sustainability (not sentiment) as its aim. Because the mental images and logic of systems is impersonal, EDNV augments nonviolent methodologies by providing the common ground and shared language of systems to help overcome the obstacles of personal blame and reactionary, fragmented extremes. Nonviolent actions can be passionately felt but systematic and science-based in approach. We attend to the health of human interactions as pragmatically as we would apply Doppler radar to foresee a storm and ecological understandings to maintain the environment.

We challenge generations of abuses and imbalances of power that have resulted in a “culture of violence” with the logic of changing from people who accept violence as normal to people who expect and work together for nonviolent interactions. We develop and model situation-specific, inventive, intentional “ways” to practice nonviolence with the goal of bringing healthy balance to a system before it becomes so imbalanced it fails.

Locally

In our community this means -- through practical projects and classes -- that we are learning to recognize the logic of creating a just environment by resolving conflict with the positive power of nonviolence rather denying imbalance and then applying additional, ineffective negative force.

In this context nonviolence means examining a relationship within the framework of whole systems and carrying out actions intended to move it into dynamic balance -- justice, health, peace. By devising creative interventions into dysfunctional systems we can alleviate many problems before a crisis occurs; and we can apply conflict resolution, direct action and other nonviolent methods to stop violence even after problems begin.

In our educational setting it also is exciting to note that EDNV suggests the potential for new and re-focused jobs. A society that attends to conflict before the crisis will require professions designed to make relationships more ecological or “green.” Instead of or at least in addition to professions organized by violence and around ‘cleaning up’ after it, new “opportunity makers” of various types can help individuals and institutions ‘get ahead of’ the violence.

K-State's Campaign for Nonviolence (CNV)

The K-State Campaign for Nonviolence (CNV) is a university-wide committee as well as a voluntary affiliation of individuals and groups who reject violence as a viable way to resolve human conflict and who are willing to step up to "be the change" we wish to see in our community.

The CNV invites all citizens to take part by: joining SafeZone (as over 700 K-Staters have done); joining us for Noontime Yoga or Awareness Meditation; participating in or initiating a Season for Nonviolence event; joining a social justice-related student group; enjoying alternative international television at the SafeZone/CNV/Women's Center Kiosk; and/or by enrolling in or just sitting in on Nonviolence Studies courses.

The CNV & Community Campaign for Nonviolence (CCNV), located in our satellite office at the UFM House, 1221 Thurston, are organizations devoted to assisting individuals and groups practice and educate about nonviolence. The local community learning center, UFM, currently houses some of our Nonviolence Education programs and helps provide space for Awareness Meditation and Noontime Yoga

How the CNV Began

In the late 1990s, the CNV, itself, grew from the realities of a culture of violence faced daily by the campus Women's Center and other offices whose mission traditionally has been to assist people harmed by harassment, discrimination, physical violence and other abuses of power. We know that reacting to and "cleaning up after" violence is essential, but it also is necessary to reframe violence-and-nonviolence within its complex environment and begin culture change projects if we are ever to achieve a safe and harmonious community. Social justice based on nonviolent principles is our unifying challenge.

Call 532-5343 to find out how to be involved, find a speaker, or plan a nonviolence-related project or program.

Practicing Nonviolence Every Day

Most of us associate "nonviolence" with famous people like Mahatma Gandhi and drastic circumstances like the civil rights movement in the U.S. We do not associate it with something practical, that real people can do every day.

Nonviolence Education at K-State expands on traditional teachings to focus on the practice of nonviolence in our daily lives.

Every Day Nonviolence (EDNV) is an anthropological, holistic/systems (every day) approach to nonviolence

that identifies human relationships as systems: within one mind or body; between individuals, among groups; even between humans being and the Earth (ecology) and between humans and the universe (spirituality). It shows that by re-framing conflict within the context of interconnected systems, individuals and people-together can apply strategies traditionally used to "refuse to cooperate with injustice" after the fact of violence but apply them affirmatively - to "get ahead of the violence." Nonviolence often is called the "third way" because it seeks solutions beyond the extremes.

Projects...cont.

* Empty Bowls - is a collaborative event that brings together local potters and citizens who make bowls, area businesses that "sell" bowls for donations, and restaurants that fill bowls with free soup - all to raise funds for local groups who provide hot meals for hungry community members. See: http://www.k-state.edu/womenscenter/empty_bowls_project.htm

* Date With Hate - is an annual nonviolent event to counter the hateful messages of Topeka's Fred Phelps clan who routinely pickets the K-State graduation ceremonies.

* Nonviolence Walk in St. Patrick's Day Parade - is a fun way to bring awareness of nonviolence teachings to the entire community. We know you can't change hearts and minds by countering a negative with another negative - so all of our signs share a way to practice the integrative power of nonviolence: "Want Peace? Work for Justice," kids dressed in green with signs, "Whirled Peas for World Peace."



Manhattan St. Patrick's Day Parade, 2008

* Our participation with the KDOT "Adopt-a-Highway" program illustrates one way to bring better health to our human relationship with the Earth. Maintaining that relationship in healthy working order is key to sustainability. The CNV and an alliance of area social justice groups regularly picks up litter from the "Bill Snyder" section of KS177 Highway south of Manhattan.

There are more programs and events, too numerous to mention, including collaboration with Hale Library in the annual social justice film series, Movies on the Grass. The "Season" alone makes available a dozen or more speakers, films, and workshops each year. We also create awareness-raising posters, t-shirts, public service announcements and other materials to help make the abstract ideas of nonviolence more concrete and accessible.

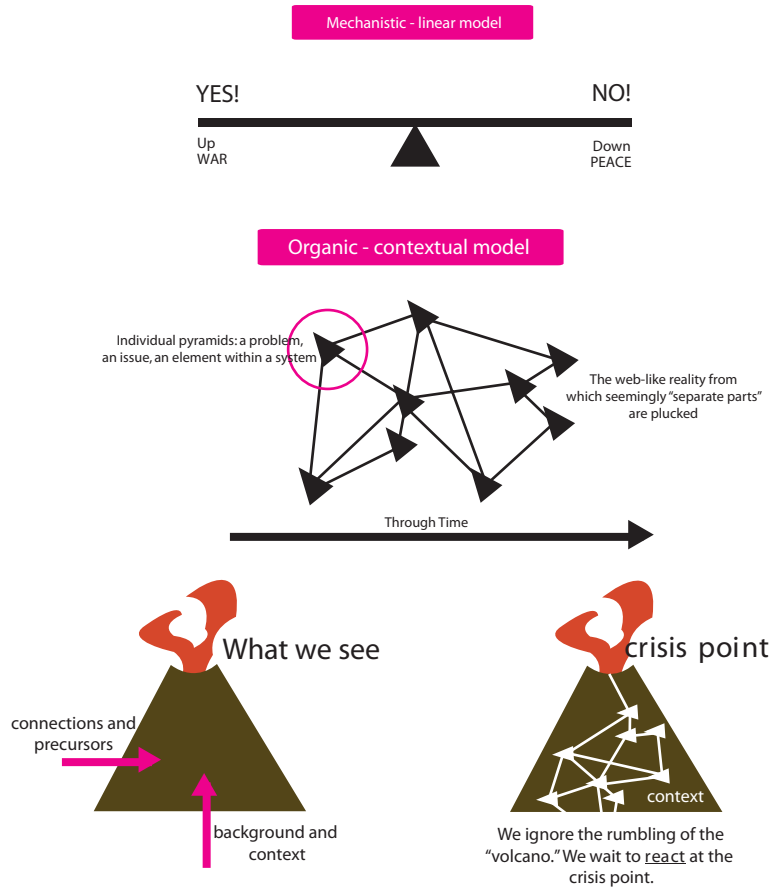


K-State Peace Pole
September 21, 2009

Nonviolence is... Creating Healthy Relationships

We couldn't make music without learning the notes. We couldn't read without the ABC's. So, what makes us think we can attain peace or justice or fairness until we learn the skills to achieve them?

The traditional problem-solving "MO" in our world has been to deny conflict and act after the crisis. When violence results from the conflict, we call 911 -- the police and the therapists, for example -- and close our eyes again until the next time.



The fact is -- as long as we agree to wait for a crisis before we act to improve the conditions that are leading to it, by default our only option is to "clean up the mess" after the violence has begun. Further, and importantly, if we only react after the fact, we can never change the imbalances that engender the conflict in the first place.

Conflict in a system of interconnecting elements -- including relationships, large and small -- is as inevitable as "bad" weather because life moves and changes. But, how we attend to conflict is a choice.

Nonviolence is a relatively new way to think about problem solving that takes complexity into account. Every Day Nonviolence defines nonviolence as an ecology of relationships to help us reframe problems within the context of whole systems so we can recognize options beyond extremes and give ourselves time to correct imbalances in an ongoing way, as early as possible. A key principal of EDNV is: "It's never either-or; it's more."

The global nonviolence movement axiom, "If you want peace, work for justice" translates locally to: If we want a safe campus/community, we need to work for fair relationships at all levels.

Concentric Circles of Relationships - For example:

We need to care about and then work to build a healthy, well-balanced mind and body to maintain the whole system that is our Self.

We need to care about and then work to build relationships where one partner does not abuse his or her power over the other - to maintain the whole system that is a friendship or a marriage.

We need to create a just community that promotes equal opportunity if we want a safe community.

The same pattern holds as we move out through the concentric circle of human systems that compose our world. Human beings also have relationships with our environment and the universe itself.

Think Globally - Act Locally - Act Now

Like the nonviolence movement in general, the Campaign for Nonviolence at K-State (CNV) and the Women's Center where it is housed are working to change the organizational principle of this community FROM a dualistic worldview where we ignore the little and big injustices, abuses of power and other precursors to violence and system breakdown; and move it TO a holistic worldview where we can organize around the principle of "getting ahead of the violence"; where we "go upstream" to devise positive ways and correct precursors to violence so we can prevent it.

Modernizing our conceptual and organizational frameworks in this way will require overcoming generations of bad habits based on the dualistic worldview that has led to denial, to extremes and to system failure. The holistic worldview demands new skills, more collaboration, honest communication, greater visibility and perseverance - but/and it leads to sustainability. Practicing nonviolence is much like learning to use seatbelts and resolving to practice healthy nutrition.

