

FIELD NOTES

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fields of peace • communities of faith teaching peace and nonviolence

Here is your first batch of **Field Notes**---loose and brief.

We hope they'll prove useful to you in teaching the message of peace proclaimed in your religious tradition. Most of all, may they nourish you in the deepening of your own practice of peace.

In these **Notes**, you will find a definition of nonviolence, a historical anecdote, a guiding image, quotes, a poem, and tips on healthy communication at home. Future mailings will also include stories, prayers, book and movie tips, and the sharing of thoughts from other **Fields of Peace** participants.

Please let us know what would be helpful to you.

We feel privileged to walk in peace with you.

Charles and Cathey Busch

P.S.

Please tell your friends in other faith communities about **Fields of Peace**. Ask them to check our web site, www.fieldsofpeacepv.org, or phone us at: 541.996.4766.

Defining Nonviolence

“Nonviolence” is defined in the same way we locate planet earth in our universe, by pointing to surrounding stars and planets and black holes, by pointing to where we are not.

Aung San Suu Kyi, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and Burma’s great activist, reports a comment made by one of the leaders of her country’s brutal, military regime: “You can do anything with money. If you hold a ten dollar note above a grave, a hand will come out and reach for it. And if you held out a hundred dollar note, the whole body would come out.”

Cynicism and greed, these are two places where nonviolence is not.

In a situation of conflict, nonviolence is not flight or fight. It is not passive in the face of injustice, nor does it meet brutality with brutality. Nonviolence stands in between flight or fight. It is the speaking of truth to the person or powers that be. It is the courage to be the one to absorb the last blow.

Nonviolence is not a destination. It is the moment-to-moment expression of our deep humanity.

A Guiding Image

To evolve from ingrained ways of thinking of power (might, dominance, manipulation) and trust fully in the transformative power of love, it helps to have an image.

One such image comes from what may seem an unlikely source: 19th Century, German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. On page one of Chapter One of Thus Spake Zarathustra, he outlines the three stages of “metamorphosis” intended for humankind.

We begin, he says, as a **camel**. That is, as youths, we are loaded up with rules, laws, mores, expectations, definitions of success. Then we carry our burden out into the trackless sands.

There, in that silence and harsh reality, those who can, shrug off their load and metamorphose into a **lion**. No longer tame, domesticated, they know the sound of their own roar. Their work: to kill the dragon “thou shalt.”

The third metamorphosis waits in each of us, says Nietzsche, but few manage it: the **child**---metamorphosis into one who is vulnerable, trusting and dependent on the love of others in order to live.

This image of the child as the one who saves us by calling forth what is best in us, is prominent in many religions. The infant Moses is placed in a basket on a river, adrift and dependent for survival on rescue. Jesus arrives as an infant, impoverished, on the road, and fleeing from threat. The boy Ishmael is banished with his mother into the desert where an angel appears to provide water and a word of promise: he will become a nation.

Camel. Lion. Child. Three ways of being. Each is potent in us and seeks expression. Embrace the child, says Nietzsche, the one who calls forth love from others. The one who makes of us a family.

Tips for Dealing with Disagreements at Home

Home is the primary school where our children learn gentle, respectful ways of relating, or the opposite. With thanks to psychiatrist, Dr. Tom DeBlois, we offer these tips for healthy ways to deal with disagreements at home:

- Take a cooling off time, then sit down together.
- Make eye contact with one another.
- Focus discussion on the present issue. Don't bring up past events.
- Speak without name calling, finger pointing, or blaming.
- Use "I" (not "you") language. I want, I need, I feel, I would like, I thought ...
- Work as a "team" to solve the problem.

Hidden History

In the years just prior to the American Revolution, among the Americans who were anti-British, there were more who opposed the violence of war than those in favor of going to war. Documenting this, Mark Kurlansky, Nonviolence, writes: “80,000 Americans belonged to nonviolent sects that would not accept warfare, far more people than the number of troops Washington ever had under his command at any one time.” To deal with this, the Continental Congress (1775) chose not to penalize conscientious-objectors for refusing service as long as they paid taxes.

Quotes

If we want the world to be different, we have to live differently. We cannot think ourselves into a new way of living; we have to live ourselves into a new way of thinking.

Glaude Anshin Thomas
(Zen monk)

Nonviolence is the real truth and fabric of daily human living---
violence is its interruption.

Gandhi

I believe in a world which does not exist, but by believing in it, I create it. We call ‘nonexistent’ whatever we have not desired with sufficient strength.

Nikos Kazantzakis

Don’t forget that the fist, too,
was once the palm of an open hand.

Yehuda Amichai

A Poem: “Revenge,” by Taha Muhammad Ali
 Nazareth, April 15, 2006

At times ... I wish
I could meet in a duel
the man who killed my father
and razed our home,
expelling me
into
a narrow country.

And if he killed me,
I'd rest at last,
and if I were ready--
I would take my revenge!

*

But if it came to light,
when my rival appeared,
that he had a mother
waiting for him,
or a father who'd put
his right hand over
the heart's place in his chest
whenever his son was late
even by just a quarter-hour
for a meeting they'd set--
then I would not kill him,
even if I could.

*

Likewise ... I
would not murder him
if it were soon made clear
that he had a brother or sisters
who loved him and constantly longed
to see him.

Or if he had a wife to greet him
and children who
couldn't bear his absence
and whom his gifts would thrill.
Or if he had friends or companions,
neighbors he knew
or allies from prison
or a hospital room,
or classmates from his school ...
asking about him
and sending him regards.

*

But if he turned
out to be on his own--
cut off like a branch from a tree--
without a mother or father,
with neither a brother nor sister,
wifeless, without a child,
and without kin or neighbors or friends,
colleagues or companions,
then I'd add not a thing to his pain
within that aloneness--
not the torment of death,
and not the sorrow of passing away.
Instead I'd be content
to ignore him when I passed him by
on the street--as I
convinced myself
that paying him no attention
in itself was a kind of revenge.