nonviolence
A MAGAZINE FOR PRACTICAL IDEALISTS
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the strategy issue

Interviews:

MARIA J. STEPHAN
CLAYBORNE CARSON

TOM HASTINGS
on movements and campaigns

MIKI KASHTAN
on responsibility for the whole
Pressenza is a space open to the social base. We provide a universal humanist perspective and actively promote cooperation agreements and partnerships with other agencies, as well as reciprocal links with portals, platforms, news and communications media of specific communities and cultures.

We give visibility to news, initiatives, proposals and scenarios related to Peace, Nonviolence, Disarmament, Human Rights and the fight against all forms of Discrimination. We place the human being as the central value and concern, and celebrate diversity. Thus, we propose active and lucid journalism that respects these essential premises, aiming towards the resolution of crises and social conflicts in all latitudes.
Courage, complemented by the knowledge of skillful nonviolence, as provided in this handbook, is a recipe for a world of peace and justice.

~ Ann Wright, Col. US Army (ret) and recipient of the US State Department Award for Heroism

Support your local bookseller with your purchase of a print copy.

Nonviolence Handbook: A Guide for Practical Action is also available as Amazon Audible and Kindle books.
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our deepest gratitude
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“Violent revolutions usually only mean a change of personnel at the top.
~ Petra Kelly
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Life is an interconnected whole of inestimable worth.

A question that no campaign or movement can really afford to forgo asking is: What’s our ultimate goal, and how do we get there? To borrow wisdom from a quote attributed to Benjamin Franklin: If we’re not preparing for campaign/movement success, we’re preparing for failure.

Hence this issue’s theme: Strategy. As Michael Nagler asks in his opening article (“Strategy: The How & the Why”): Military planners have their strategy whizzes, so where are the Sun Tzus of nonviolence? Anna Ikeda follows on that line of thought with “On Strategy: Lessons from Gandhi,” in which she shows that Gandhi’s successes weren’t a matter of happenstance; they resulted from his mastery with planning and implementing actions.

How can we know what stage of a conflict we’re in? Stephanie Steiner breaks it down in “Conflict Escalation Curve: A Practical Model.” Her piece underscores a vital fact: identifying the stages of conflict is a major part of developing an effective strategy. We can always learn from flaws in campaign and movement planning. Jean de Dieu Alingwi’s “Key Elements & Challenges with Nonviolent Movements & Campaigns in the Democratic Republic of the Congo” shows what activists are up against in the Central African nation—and what activists elsewhere would be wise to avoid.

Some bittersweet news: This is our last print issue of Nonviolence. Thanks for joining us for these three years of publishing adventures. We plan to continue sharing stories and analyses at nonviolencemag.org, not to mention the Metta Center’s bi-weekly Nonviolence Radio show. Want to broadcast your campaign/movement news? Send it our way: info@mettacenter.org.

KIMBERLYN DAVID
Editor & Creative Director
George Lakey has been planning and executing nonviolent campaigns for decades. These days he often talks with people coming into the movement for the first time. They include people who are used to making business plans, retirement plans, and all kinds of plans. They wouldn't dream of launching a business or their retirement without one, but when George asks them about their plan for their nonviolent efforts he gets a blank stare. There is a widespread misconception that you don’t plan nonviolence, it just happens. It’s not a science. If you’re lucky, it works.

Protests, demonstrations, marches, and the like are at best the beginning, not the end, of action that’s going to make an appreciable difference. Think of the huge worldwide turnout against the US invasion of Iraq in 2003. George W. Bush, the US president at the time, airily dismissed it—the largest worldwide popular demonstration in history—as a “focus group.” Such a galling insult could make us very angry, but it’s more important that it make us determined. For a successful demonstration we have to know a) what’s essential to us and what’s negotiable (think how much Gandhi gained by being able to compromise on inessentials), b) how we are going to make decisions, and c) how we are going to handle Antifa-like groups who want to add violence to the mix (of critical importance these days, unfortunately).

Then, if it’s well-timed and well-planned, a demonstration or protest can be built up to a campaign, and a campaign to a movement. None of this will happen without careful planning; in other words, a strategy. What is your final goal, or vision; what steps do you plan to get you there; how will you deal with contingencies—including unforeseen opportunities—along the way? Military planners have their Klauswitzes and Sun Tzus. Where is the Sun Tzu of nonviolence?

At the Metta Center for Nonviolence, we have long been occupied with the question of strategy. The following tips and guidelines were gleaned from our study of movements past and present. Most of these tips and guidelines have been built into our Roadmap (see the opposite page for an illustration). The clever reader will detect signs of Gandhi’s influence throughout the scheme.
A JUST & SUSTAINABLE WORLD

We all want a more peaceful and equitable society. Imagine what we can accomplish by strategically building a movement of movements together.

To facilitate that, Metta Center for Nonviolence created Roadmap, a set of tools to:

- Develop strategic thinking toward the realization of campaign goals
- Connect with others
- Train in nonviolence principles

Roadmap provides the unity, strategy and nonviolent power for an unstoppable movement.

Organizations are endorsing Roadmap and helping build the movement of movements. For details on how your organization, community group or even yourself can collaborate, email Metta Center for Nonviolence:

info@mettacenter.org.
The general idea of the Roadmap’s three circles is to move through them centrifugally, from inside out. (Gandhians will recognize his principle of swadeshi, or localism). Of course, some issues can’t wait; as Joanna Macy points out, “stopping the worst of the damage” must be a high priority at times like these. But when time allows we try to work on personal empowerment, then constructive program (CP), and finally to direct resistance where that’s still needed. As many of us have found to our cost, if we haven’t worked with our own anger and fear, for example, these unchecked emotions will be a limiting factor on the effectiveness of the things and institutions you try to construct. Similarly when we’re tempted to do an end run around CP to outright resistance (a common mistake), we can find ourselves stuck in reactive, not proactive mode—a big strategic disadvantage. You can think of a nonviolent campaign as a bird with two wings and a brain: one wing is CP, one is outright resistance (or obstructive program, OP) and the brain is where we decide when to do which.

The center circle contains five things anyone can do toward personal empowerment and, if you will, peace warriorhood:

1. **Free your mind from commercial mass media; just boycott it.** Our culture promotes violence in every way possible, subtle and obvious, and the main vehicle of our culture has been the mass media now for decades.

2. **Learn everything you can about nonviolence:** we have come to feel that nonviolence is the alternative story we need to turn things around—as in the top wedge of the Roadmap, “New Story Creation.”

3. **Get a spiritual practice** like meditation. If you already have one, rejoice in that!

4. **Interact personally** with everyone, wherever possible. The techno-cocoons we currently inhabit are keeping us separate, and thus easy to control.
5. *Act it out:* Find where your talents meet society’s needs. Tell the new story with your actions—what Lakey calls “the propaganda of the deed”—and, as is often overlooked, with your words. We should always be ready to explain the vision behind our commitment to peace and justice, namely that we are conscious and deeply interconnected beings with inner resources that are rarely explored. Our security comes from harmony with others, not domination over them, and our fulfillment comes from living in balance with the Earth, not exploiting her.

Then, in no particular order, consider these tips from many successful movements, past and present:

- Plan how your actions will *escalate:* start with something doable, and go on to the presently unthinkable. Example: build restorative justice in schools, then in prisons, then in the world order—no more war! (Yes, this is long-term.)

- Time your steps to be workable as well as progressive—the public may need to be sensitized and educated before they can accept your vision. Know where you are on the escalation curve (see Stephanie Steiner’s article, page 34). Don’t mount a protest before you’ve given the opposition a chance to respond; don’t rely on protest alone when it’s clear they aren’t responding.

- Be on the lookout for “stealth” issues: ones in which the opponent may not realize their importance until it’s too late (classic example: the Indian Salt Satyagraha of 1930).

- Always aim for “keystone” issues: ones that will really cause a significant change in the system (saving the whales, however valuable in itself, would not: reversing the Citizens United decision or abolishing nuclear weapons would).

- Don’t rely on symbols. Symbolic *action* can be powerful, empty symbols not: they’re subject to misinterpretation and in any case make it seem like you can’t do anything concrete.

- Observe “no fresh issue:” your campaign can move on progressively, but don’t add a fresh demand right after you’ve gained some leverage.

- Observe “non-embarrassment:” do not press an advantage when the opponent is distracted. Satyagraha succeeded in South Africa when the Indians called it off during a railroad strike (1913) and in India as WWII broke out (1942).

- When you’ve won on any step or whole campaign, avoid triumphalism. The point is reconciliation, not alienation, wherever possible.

Lastly, look for the sweet spot between overly centralized authority and lack of authority: study nonviolent leadership (and yes, Gandhi is the perfect example). Make sure that everyone participating in an action is ready to be his or her own leader if, for instance, the designated leaders are arrested (or worse). Similarly, find a balance between carrying out your well-developed plan and being ready to adapt to contingencies, be they opportunities or roadblocks.

I can’t imagine a well-knit community where people are looking out for each other with an inspiring vision (which nonviolence always provides), training, and a strategy for the long haul meeting with anything but success.

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On Strategy: Lessons from Gandhi

by ANNA IKEDA

How would you describe Gandhi in one word? Perhaps there are many words that would come to mind, and to me “strategic” is one of them. After all, how was Gandhi able to lead his country to independence from the British empire? What lessons can we learn from him when thinking about movement strategies?

Numerous analyses have been written on how and why Gandhi succeeded. For example, Mark Engler and Paul Engler, co-authors of This Is an Uprising: How Nonviolent Revolt Is Shaping the Twenty-First Century, point out that Gandhi adopted not only one but various strategies, which they argue was the key. That is certainly true but equally important, I would say, was his ability to shift gears and respond skillfully to changing situations.

When the conflict intensifies, we must also escalate our nonviolent response; our actions must correspond with the situation, and our strategies need to shift swiftly in response to the other side’s reaction. At the Metta Center for Nonviolence, we call this escalation—we think of phases of a conflict and necessary responses in three stages: 1. conflict resolution, 2. satyagraha (nonviolent resistance), and 3. ultimate sacrifice (willingness to risk one’s life).

Gandhi touches upon escalation in his Hind Swaraj when referring to the need for using a specific type of “force” to back up actions like petitions: “The force implied in this may be described as love-force, soul-force, or more popularly but less accurately passive resistance. This force is indestructible. He who uses it perfectly understands his position.” Gandhi also engaged in fasting “into death” as the last resort for his campaigns, such as the one he undertook in 1947 for a communal harmony in Calcutta.

Gandhi was also skillful at mobilizing actions that were both symbolic and practical, and they were crafted carefully. Let’s look at two of his most well-known actions, the Salt Satyagraha and the spinning of the charkha, as examples.

In March 1930, Gandhi and his followers from his ashram marched to the sea to collect some salt, in defiance of the British law that mandated that Indians buy salt from the empire, rather than producing their own. His action of scooping salt by hand was largely symbolic—though salt is a tangible commodity and the burden of taxation people felt was real—and the march did not result in the immediate change of the law. In fact, Gandhi was ridiculed for his strategy: “It is difficult not to laugh, and we imagine that will be the mood of most thinking Indians,” scoffed The Statesman newspaper.
First, being strategic does not mean that one should do whatever it takes to “win.” On the contrary, some actions, no matter how strategic they may appear, can do more harm than good in the long run. This is why Gandhi embraced the strategic principle of non-embarrassment, meaning those engaging in a nonviolent struggle should not actively pursue a resistance campaign when the opponent is distracted. In this spirit, Gandhi halted his satyagraha campaign during the 1913 rail strike in South Africa. The suspension was of course a mass movement of “Quit India,” when Britain was swept up in WWII. (For more details on why this principle is important, see: http://bit.ly/2l9uWlr). And being strategic is neither separate nor an antidote to engaging one’s heart for a cause. As Gandhi shows, it can be both. His strategic actions were expressions of his moral convictions—and I believe that made them even more effective. As Eknath Easwaran once noted about Gandhi: “His nonviolence is not a political weapon or a technique for social change so much as it is an essential art—perhaps the essential art—of civilization.”

But history would later show that it was in reality a decisive moment for his victory, a climax to his campaign. The march inspired the people of India, impressing in them the truth that they cannot be ruled by the British Raj without their consent. Soon, millions would break the law to produce salt themselves or buy it in the market. It was the catalyst of the mass non-cooperation that shook up the foundation of the British rule. The Salt Satyagraha was a stealth action, whose significance and potential the opponent is likely to underestimate and ignore, until it is too late.

And finally, for Gandhi, equally important as satyagraha and acts of resistance was constructive program—community-level efforts to build alternatives to the oppressive and dehumanizing systems that one is resisting. Constructive program is the channel through which nonviolence as a positive force is unleashed. Charkha (spinning wheel) became the symbol of Gandhi’s campaign for independence as he urged his followers to practice hand-spinning. By producing cloth and boycotting British products, Gandhi was establishing the practice of swaraj, or self-sufficiency. Gandhi was confident that it was through spinning that India would take back its power to govern itself; to him, this was a keystone issue, an action that would weaken the whole system of support for the oppressor.

So, to recap, we can draw the following strategy tips from Gandhi—though this list is by no means exhaustive:

1. Know when and how to escalate nonviolence.
2. Think of stealth actions you can take in your movement.
3. Think of a keystone issue—which can often be presented as a constructive program.

I will conclude by adding here what strategies are not.

Anna Ikeda serves on the board at the Metta Center for Nonviolence. She is also Program Associate at the Soka Gakkai International Office for UN Affairs in New York and a PhD candidate at Rutgers University, Newark.
God is Truth
The way to Truth lies through Ahimsa (non-violence)
Saharmati
13 \frac{3}{27}
M.K. Gandhi

Gandhi’s handwriting. Photo courtesy of gandhiserve.org via Wikimedia Commons
Like This We March

Confronted on a train while riding in the first-class compartment for which he had paid, soft-spoken, brown-skinned Mohandas Gandhi recognized his treatment by railway officials as unfair, even barbaric. To their humiliations he would never choose to become accustomed. Incredulous, he repelled the insults, refusing their demands to move to a second-class carriage. He reasoned, “I have a ticket for this seat.” But, to no avail. For his resistance, he was thrown from the train, his luggage tossed beside him.

Young barrister, stylish and suited in the English way, he had pride and courage; he knew his place was not on the ground, nor in the gravel. Mild-natured, he rose from the earth and took aim, determined to speak and demonstrate his Truth without fighting back. Resolute, he took the blows when they came. His conviction grew: that Right Action would prevail, and violence fail. In this, he remained unshaken.

Intelligent, educated, most clever, yet simple, he knew his foes in the struggle; he could think just like them. Thus, he came to expect equal treatment. Trained in law, familiar with nuance, he understood the Magna Carta from which British jurisprudence flowed, the laws and protections which governed the lives of English citizens. His inner reasoning was sound: Like you, we are industrious, self-reliant human beings, just of different color. As Indian subjects of the British Crown, your laws and protections should apply to us.

Collective memory had not yet faded, it remained deeply etched in the plain: The grain from our mouths you have taken; hunger in our homes and famine on our land was in your name. You have claimed the livelihood of our weavers and artisans. All our wealth you have drained. Shooting down a peaceful gathering of our people, how came the orders for such shame? No longer will we tolerate such cruelty, disregard or anonymity. You have treated us with disdain. In all your battles, we stood by you; we gave our sons, brothers, fathers and husbands for you. Our earth and hearts are stained; this arrangement can no longer be sustained! The time of atonement is here, the moment of reckoning most near: for our true loyalty and deep affection, our sacrifices in your name, the tough scars which remain and may never be slain, we demand you restore us with our freedom!

As fervor for India’s independence grew, Gandhi became more sure-footed and unflinching. He showed us that when we gather we must band together, hold hands for our Truth, act with Spirit to rectify past wrongs, recover self-rule in every step. He insisted that when we march, we act with caution: We must resist the dark abyss of violence, he proclaimed; he knew we must dodge this Demon, skirt it assiduously, to prevail.
Reverend Martin Luther King urged the same,
to lift voices skyward to our Creator, but not raise arms;
to sound the gavel, call for justice, hymn the praises of nonviolence and the Lord.
The Reverend and our Mahatma called upon us, both with their conviction and their passion,
to gather, to march, with love in our hearts
to take back what God already granted each one of us:
the salt from the sea, our equality,
an understanding of our humanity.

For our rights, for our mother earth, for those who are silent or invisible,
peaceably we march. We each matter, each one of us.
With our intellect and will, and wit as well, we elevate our voices to resist injustice.
Do not despair: we raise no arms, we will not kill.
We will speak, we will chant,
we will sing of the common life we share,
encircle those who need our protection,
take back the lands of which we are the rightful heirs.

We must nourish and protect our Truth,
cultivate our trust in the peaceful fight, the boycott power of our changeable ways.
Principle and perseverance our weapons,
clever strategic thought is our way.
To change the hearts of others, our compassion and humility must grow.
To change the laws of this country, we must believe in each other and our imperative,
resist the wrongs bestowed.

If hope dims, the struggle too long, then
inspiration we can re-discover.
Our humanity will unite us;
neither color, nor creed divide us.
Let humility guide us.

We are strong, we belong,
worthy resistance we can sow.

Like this we march.

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**Poem by Ira Batra Garde.** Ira (pronounced “Eera”) is a physician, poet, wife, and mother. She lives with her family in the San Francisco Bay Area and is currently at work on a novel exploring themes of history, culture, and psychological truth.
"We The Resilient" by Ernesto Yerena via Amplifier
Q&A: Maria J. Stephan

by MICHAEL N. NAGLER and STEPHANIE VAN HOOK

Maria J. Stephan directs the Program on Nonviolent Action at the United States Institute of Peace, which focuses on applied research; training and education; and informing policies and practice related to civil resistance, nonviolent action, and their roles in transforming violent conflict and advancing just peace. She is the co-author of *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict* (Columbia University Press, 2011), which was awarded the 2012 Woodrow Wilson Foundation Prize by the American Political Science Association and the 2012 University of Louisville Grawemeyer Award for Ideas Improving World Order. Her articles have appeared in numerous publications, including the *New York Times* and *Foreign Policy*.

**How did you become interested in nonviolence and civil resistance?**

I grew up in a small Vermont town where all politics is local and there’s a very strong focus on self-organizing, on communities coming together. My first real experience was eye-opening for me. I was living with former prisoners and college students at a transitional home called Dismas House. At one time it received a lot of pushback from the community; there was a lot of “Not in my backyard” sentiment. But some of those same individuals who were protesting became volunteer cooks and leading advocates of the house! Seeing that process, and a grassroots effort to promote an alternative to incarceration, was my first real experience in social justice.

Later, in graduate school at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, I was interested in some aspect of insurgency—how people come together and fight injustices. I was a Security Studies person, taking courses on internal war and insurgency and asymmetric conflict. But in the first year of my studies, I attended the first screening of a documentary film, *A Force More Powerful*, which has amazing footage from six or seven historical nonviolent struggles: the Gandhi-led independence movement, the Civil Rights movement, the nonviolent ouster of Pinochet, the Danish resistance to the Nazis—amazing stories of unarmed civilians challenging the most formidable foes and winning. For me the fundamental question was, “How is this possible?” How were they able to achieve such major goals, in some of the most difficult and repressive situations? That became not only a research interest but a passion.

So I ended up doing my dissertation comparing three self-determination movements, in East Timor, Kosovo, and Palestine (the first Intifada). I went on to work

“

In waging safe and effective nonviolent struggle, probably the most important strategic variable is the level and diversity of participation.
with the International Center on Nonviolent Conflict (ICNC) for almost five years, where I was interacting with activists from some of the most repressive places, and hearing their stories—imbibing their courage. During that time I met Erica Chenoweth, at a conference on how to teach about people power. Erica was very skeptical about the efficacy of nonviolent action, but she and I happened to be roommates. We went back and forth about different perspectives on nonviolent resistance, and by the end of that workshop we decided to do a study comparing the effectiveness of violent and nonviolent resistance. We had a rough sense of how to collect the data, and all that. After leaving ICNC I had joined the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations at the State Department. This is an expeditionary Bureau, so I lived in Afghanistan for 18 months, and that’s where I was writing and editing Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict (Erica was in California). This was the peak of the insurgency, so there’s Taliban rockets going overhead, duck-and-cover sirens going off—a very interesting time to be writing about nonviolent resistance!

The book’s findings were quite counterintuitive for a lot of people. Then I worked on Syria, and watching the Syrian struggle morph from an unarmed insurgency regime into a terrible civil war had a profound impact on me professionally and personally. It motivated me to take a step back, to leave government, and to have the space to reflect on what happened and what could have been done differently to support the nonviolent activists in Syria—and that’s been the thrust of my work ever since. At the US Institute of Peace, I lead our program on nonviolent action. There’s a research component, a training and education component, and a policy influencing angle; but a lot of it is about how can outside actors best support nonviolent campaigns and movements.

What are the important principles that people involved in a struggle need to know to carry out their struggle more safely and more effectively? What are the really good guidelines—who’s the Sun Tzu of nonviolence?

Luckily, there are lots of Sun Tzus. It’s no longer just Gandhi and Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela; there have been so many successful nonviolent struggles around the world that there’s a proliferation of nonviolent Sun Tzus.

In waging safe and effective nonviolent struggle, probably the most important strategic variable is the level and diversity of participation. That was probably the most straightforward finding of Why Civil Resistance Works. Erica and I found empirically that the nonviolent campaigns tend to attract a much higher number of participants, and not only young able-bodied men trained in explosives—young and old, men, women, disabled, abled-bodied—lots of different people from different parts of society, because there are so many things people can do in nonviolent resistance. Gene Sharp identified 198 tactics in the ’70s, and there are probably thousands by now. You always want to expand beyond the core group, and sometimes that means building alliances with strange bedfellows—people who normally aren’t talking to each other but who share common goals and can come together to work on them. So numbers matter, diversity of participation matters, and also nonviolent discipline.

There is a strategic logic to nonviolent discipline that transcends moral preferences, but there is also actual, empirical data that show that maintaining nonviolent discipline increases the likelihood of success.

It’s probably the hardest thing to do in any nonviolent movement: to maintain nonviolence discipline when you’re provoked. Being able to make the case and having the mechanisms in place to maintain nonviolent discipline is critically important, and movements have come up with ways to do that: codes of conduct, marshals, etc. One interesting point I found over the years in speaking with individuals who had been involved in armed resistance is that it’s particularly helpful when former leaders of armed movements can make the case for nonviolent resistance, because they
are seen as fighters, as people willing to take risks—they are able to make a compelling, believable case for why nonviolent discipline is important.

The fourth thing I would note just off the top of my head is the need to innovate tactically: mixing things up, not just relying on street protests or vigils but being able to alternate between types of tactics, for example between methods of concentration—the sit-ins, street rallies, barricades that bring a lot of people together in one space—and methods of dispersion, like consumer boycotts (as in the anti-Apartheid struggle), “walk slow” tactics, banging of pots and pans (e.g. in Chile and lots of other places). In Sudan when protesters were beaten brutally in the streets—this was 2013—the activists decided “We’ve got to change what we’re doing,” so the next set of tactics involved the stay-at-home campaign. People did not go to work, did not set up their shops: there was silence.

In our Roadmap, there are the concentric circles of personal empowerment, constructive program, and then Satyagraha, and in a way that’s been your own journey into nonviolence.

That’s a good point! I want to add that it’s tough when you want to make a change quickly. You want people to come in with the same awareness and belief and skillset, but that takes time. People have their own paths and their own trajectories and they’re inspired by different things. Great movement leaders recognize that. They take people where they’re at, welcome them, and find onramps for them. They respect what their experience has been and find a way to bring them on board.

What you’re talking about is a principle that many nonviolent actors have discovered: In nonviolent struggle, you’re building the community that you wish to see in the process. You’re solving problems of diversity before you even get down to dislodging the regime and establishing your own system.

There’s interesting data that demonstrates a positive correlation between nonviolent resistance and democratization. There have been about five independent studies on this, by prominent political scientists who have studied the relationships between democratic consolidation, building democratic norms and institutions, and the like, and they all found a very strong link to nonviolent resistance campaigns. Why? How do you understand this relationship? Well, if you look into what goes into building a nonviolent movement, it’s dialogue, it’s coalition-building, it’s building parallel structures and institutions. This was a huge part of my research on self-determination movements in East Timor, Kosovo, and Palestine during the first Intifada. Before there were a lot of street protests and demonstrations, there was an emphasis on building resilient community structures that could endure repression, or could at least survive it, that would allow people to remain self-reliant and to have services, to have education. The skills of dialogue, coalition-building, of getting to “yes” with people you would not normally get to “yes” with are critical aspects of movement-building, and they’re of course conducive to a tolerant, pluralistic society.

Empirically, what have you and Erica and others discovered about the correct formula, if there is one, for successful leadership? Can you do without a charismatic leader? Do you even want one?

That’s a great question. I don’t know that there’s a blueprint, but what I can say through data examples and experience is that charisma and charismatic leaders are always a double-edged sword. Charismatic leaders can help build bridges in divided societies. They can rise above the fray and represent unity and make a powerful case for nonviolent resistance—that’s the Gandhi and King approach, and it can be incredibly helpful. But as we all know, over-reliance on charismatic leaders can undermine a movement. What happens if the charismatic leader is imprisoned, God forbid killed, or otherwise removed from the scene? There are definitely downsides, but that doesn’t mean you don’t have a core group of decision-makers. The beauty and power of decentralized leadership is that
different individuals in different communities can apply the common strategy using different tactics, different forms of creativity based on the local surroundings and circumstances. There’s a freedom to riff when you have decentralized leadership, but there needs to be some relationship to a central strategy or unifying principle. If you have very different theories of change it can be tough to bring the different elements together and have a concerted focus, whether it’s a legislative approach or civil disobedience. There’s enough evidence out there that some element of centralized leadership and strategic decision-making—combined with active, vibrant, decentralized leadership—is probably the better combination.

You’ve been obliquely referring to timing and knowing when to do what. Gandhi seemed to have had a genius for balancing constructive and obstructive approaches—when obstructive was blocked, he could always have people push ahead with spinning and things like that. Have you found that to be working in other movements as well?

Yes. You choose tactics based on a general sense of how change is going to happen, which groups you need to have involved in that change, where the pressure points are. Sometimes you need to be more underground versus moments when you have built power and can launch a more massive tactic, like a mass strike or protest rally. There’s definitely not a single recipe, but this is where not only good leadership but good strategic planning is going to help suggest which tactics are appropriate for which time. And beyond nonviolent direct action, when do you negotiate? When do you engage in dialogue? How do you ensure that negotiation and direct action are mutually reinforcing and not at odds with one another? This gets to the bigger picture of developing a strategy and how your human and material resources are going to be used to achieve the desired ends. For me that’s the simplest, most straightforward definition of strategy.

Erica Chenoweth always said that it’s you who challenged her to do that research. We’re grateful for that small action!

I appreciate that, but there’s a power of complementarity in this research duo. I was a bit more confident that nonviolent resistance would beat out arms struggle in terms of efficacy, but Erica has the quantitative, methodological chops to be able to help orchestrate a serious study that passed multiple giggle tests. The way that we bring very different perspectives, skillsets, and experiences to the table has made the research partnership work quite well.

You used the term “diversity of tactics” in a positive sense, and the diversity of your skillset and Erica’s is one good example of that. As I’m sure you’re aware, “diversity of tactics” is also used to refer to what we call the “radical flank,” in other words adding some violence.

Yes, Erica wrote an article in Mobilization that asked: Does having a radical flank help the effectiveness of nonviolent movements? When I use the term, “diversity of tactics,” I mean “diversity of nonviolent tactics.” Adding a violent flank can be highly problematic and often is; that’s what Erica and Kurt Schock found in their analysis. In the short-term, adding a bit of violence to the mix can maybe bring media attention, but over the longer term, there are no positives. That’s an important finding for activists in this country and beyond.

Mind you, the rationale behind using violence is completely understandable. I respect and honor the willingness of people to put their bodies on the line and to take risks to advance justice and to protect others. But it’s more of question of, what are the effects of certain tactics on the perception of your movement? On the willingness of people to participate? On the ability to achieve backfire—meaning using the opponent’s use of violence to undermine their legitimacy and authority? Just asking those fundamental, strategic questions will lead you to the conclusion that it’s oftentimes problematic to mix these tactics. And if you look at the strategic level (versus the tactical level), it’s highly problematic. You may win some street battles, but the goal is not to win street battles; it’s to win the war. ■

Michael Nagler is the founder of the Metta Center for Nonviolence, where Stephanie Van Hook serves as the executive director.
Finding Resolve, Making Peace

by LAMISA MUSTAFA
My journey of finding resolve isn’t in wanting to punch people who call me a terrorist, but rather in turning around and educating them.

Terrorist. Don’t you get stopped in airports? Were you carrying a bomb? A gun? Do you get weird looks?

These are words I’ve heard said to my face.

He was a Muslim. He said Allahu-akbar. He believes in jihad. His religion encourages violence. He hates non-Muslims. He is involved in an Islamic organization. He is an Islamic radicalist.

These are words used to describe mass murderers who have brown skin.


These are words used to describe mass murderers who have white skin.

Was he a Muslim?

These are words my family and friends say when they hear of acts of terror and their subsequent news developments.

He killed my daughter because she is Muslim. That’s what I believe… When I go to court I’m going to look him in the eye: Why did you do this to my daughter? Then I’m going to forgive him and leave him to God’s face. The lord is going to judge him. He took my daughter’s life.

These are words from Mohmoud Hassanen, the father of Nabra, a 17-year-old Muslim girl who was beaten, killed, and thrown into a lake.

The words I quoted above are heartbreaking and enraging, but they paint a very brutal and real picture of what Muslims—Muslim Americans in particular—face every single day. For them—for me—the struggle is now, and it is so hard. I am certainly not a voice for all Muslims, but I hope that my experiences can shed light on discrimination that is embedded into so much around us.

The people who called me a terrorist saw me as a threat to national security before they saw me as a human, as a global citizen. I am lucky because I am not visibly Muslim—those who wear hijabs or burqas suffer more than I ever will. They are judged the first second a bigoted person lays eyes on them. I have the luxury of not being judged until I speak up about being Muslim.

We hear of innocent people being murdered every day, but it hurts and burns deeper every single time. Nabra’s death was one that hurt me in particular. She was every other Muslim girl. There are many of us who don’t have the privilege to just not care about these issues for a day or a week. Many of us live with this hatred every single day of our lives.

I believe that there is an overlooked and often forgotten consequence of 9/11. We think of the families of the victims of the 9/11 attacks and we think about the first responders. We think about the following War on Terror, which, in some ways, is bigger now than ever before. But we don’t recognize what Muslims in the US have experienced after 9/11. We forget the toll it has left on them, and the burden they carry on their shoulders every day because of it. We don’t have any memorials for them. We don’t talk about the War on Islam.

My grandma is stopped at Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport during customs and immigration every single time she comes home from visiting Bangladesh. She jokes that an invisible mark on her passport tells airport authorities that she is a potential danger and should be screened in extensive, and often pervasive, ways. Her bags are basically emptied, her belongings are checked thoroughly, and she is held for hours without explanation. I realize now that there is a visible mark on her passport—she is a Muslim.
My family asks whether “he was a Muslim” after hearing of mass shootings because they know the repercussions that Muslims will face if the terrorist is identified as a follower of Islam. They know that we will have to bear the brunt of judgment—of being demeaned as an entire religious base for the actions of one man. Their question doesn’t originate from a place of selfishness but rather from a place of self- and communal-preservation.

After the Orlando massacre, police shootings of black people, and other violent acts last summer, I was left feeling helpless. After reading about a man being shot and stabbed outside his mosque in Houston, Texas, I was in a state of paranoia. These incidents happened to fall during the month of Ramadan, Islam’s holiest month. I went to Eid prayer with a deep pain and fear in my gut. I was scared that someone would shoot up my local mosque. I was so scared, that I tried to rally my family as quickly as possible after the prayer was over because I was certain they would get hurt.

What does it mean when I am too scared to attend Eid prayer? What does it mean when a remarkable boy who builds a clock is labeled as a bomb maker? What does it mean when my grandma, a woman in her 60s who can’t even walk properly, is stopped at airports and held for long hours? What does it mean when a teenage girl, who was returning to her mosque after eating suhoor, is killed? What does it mean when the global community is ignoring the ethnic cleansing of Rohingya Muslims and the need for them to relocate to escape this horrid persecution? What does it mean when Palestinians have been kicked out of their own homes—their own homeland—for years? What does it mean when I am too afraid to say that I am Muslim because of how I think others will react?

Overt discrimination and outright prejudice are harmful, but they are not nearly as common as inner biases and subtle social norms favored against Muslims and non-Christians. Quite frankly, things like prayers—Christian prayers—before public events make me feel uncomfortable. They make me think “oh, this is not a place for me.” They make me feel like I don’t belong—like I am an outlier on a graph of Christianity and American ideals. I often wonder why we read, analyze, and ponder about excerpts from the Bible in my literature classes but we don’t do the same for excerpts from the Quran. I often wonder why I have to go through a special process of asking for permission and turning in official documentation in order to be able to miss school for Eid when people who celebrate Christmas are given weeks off—weeks that don’t count as absences because they are built into institutional calendars as national holidays. I often wonder why Muslim girls in some European countries aren’t allowed to veil, but there is little to no controversy when nuns wear veils or when Christians wear crosses as a proclamation of faith.

I believe that it is extremely important for us to acknowledge the stark difference between societal responses to bigotry targeted toward Muslims and non-Muslims. Why is there a different line to cross when it comes to Islamophobia? Why aren’t people as
enraged when Islam is associated with terrorism and mosques are called factories of hate as they are when someone does the Nazi salute in public? Maybe people feel more justified in bigotry against Muslims because 9/11 happened here, and because the United States doesn’t have a visible history of ethnic and religious discrimination (i.e. the Holocaust isn’t entirely on our shoulders and Japanese internment was excused as a “wartime necessity”). Maybe it has a lot to do with most Muslims having darker skin than most Christians and Jewish people.

My journey of finding resolve isn’t in wanting to punch people who call me a terrorist, but rather in turning around and educating them. Showing them that I am bigger and better than their assumptions about who I am. That I am stronger than any hurtful words they can throw at me like daggers. When I show them who I am, and, in effect, bring more of myself into conversations about faith, I can truly find resolve.

I often wonder what it means to be Muslim and especially what it means to be a Muslim in the United States. Moving forward, I will include words from allies who fill me with hope. To understand how recent media headlines related to Muslims are affecting both Muslims and non-Muslims, I asked these interviewees about their thoughts on Islamophobia, what Islam and the Muslim community mean to them, and strategies to deconstruct misconceptions about Islam and Muslims. These allies are doing so many inspiring things: they are pushing for anti-Islamophobic social studies curriculum, leading Muslim Student Association chapters on their campuses, interning for the International Rescue Committee, learning how to speak Arabic, following pork-free diets in solidarity with Muslims, and much more. Their answers make me hopeful because they remind me that kindhearted people still exist, recognize a need for societal change, and are here to help. Their beautiful and sincere words have shown me that the battle for nonviolence begins with each of us unapologetically being our true selves. When people say that Muslims aren’t doing enough to condemn violence, let’s all fight back—with peace—and show them that they are wrong.

Kindhearted people still exist, recognize a need for societal change, and are here to help.

How do recent headlines in the media about Muslims or related to Muslims make you feel?

To live in America, which should serve as a safe haven, and to have these events occurring is absolutely contradictory to what this nation stands for. It is utterly frightening to think that these acts of hate could easily happen to any of my Muslim friends. - Kathy Pham

It makes me feel uncomfortable and sad because people often classify Muslims as a single entity, attributing negative attributes and actions of the few to the many. - Paul Larsen

I wish that Muslims wouldn’t get that kind of exposure to the rest of the world. Whenever I hear about acts of unkindness or terrorism done towards other Muslims, [I feel] very upset and also a bit unsafe. - Humaira Islam

It upsets me to see biased headlines and news reports. If any crime is committed by a Muslim, the media blows it out of proportion, right away labeling them terrorists. It’s a sad reality that many will believe what they read rather than learn for themselves. - Sadiya Patel

I’m honestly feeling a lot of hopelessness right now. I just don’t see [many] White, Christian Americans willing to let go of their prejudices. In the last few weeks, we’ve seen so much violence and hate. It scares me. I think all we can do is do our best to be good people. - Amy Freeman

To self-identifying Muslims:

What makes you proud to be Muslim? What does Islam and, specifically, the month of Ramadan, mean to you?

I genuinely believe that practicing Islam causes one to become a better person through what it preaches and practices. Every time I see Muslims come together for anything, whether it’s Jummah prayer on a Friday afternoon or friends and family breaking their fast together, I feel this sense of pride and community. Knowing that these people share the same beliefs as me, not just religious beliefs but beliefs on how to be a caring and compassionate person, I feel safe and comfortable. - Fabiha Mobin

Islam to me is about family and inner peace. It is about respecting other people. Ramadan is a time to give back to communities. The true teachings of Islam about compassion and peace make me proud to be a Muslim. [Islam’s] long-standing traditions and culture give one a sense of being. - Faizah Yusuf
I take pride in our diversity of color, class, levels of faith. Despite this diversity, and probably because of it, we are still very united as one ummah. I also love that Islam is simple—we are the ones who make it complicated. ~ Hebah Jaffery

Islam to me is a way to better understand the world, myself, and my relationships with others. It gives me reason to want to be my best self. It gives me guidance through hard times. It gives me hope that things will get better. I am proud to be a part of something greater than myself. ~ Tamanna Basri

To non-Muslim allies:

What are some words of encouragement you have for your Muslim friends?

You are so valid. The strength that could be gleaned from faith is the strongest thing that you can hold onto right now. Also, find strength in your brothers and sisters. As a member of the LGBTQ+ community, I know what it is like to find support and shared pain in people. Non-Muslims like me, who are willing to learn and be open, will always be here to help. ~ Clotilde Tagnon

Your religion is beautiful—don’t let others take that from you. Forgive others; the harmful things people say are far more a reflection of their own ignorance. ~ Pier Larsen

Don’t let it shut you down. Talk about it and do your best to inform others about your faith. It’s so difficult to change people’s minds. ~ Kess Larsen

It takes a lot of effort to see how Muslims are treated and still go out and pursue your dreams. Considering the current political climate, your work will be much harder, but will have so much more value. ~ Rooha Haghar

Even if it doesn’t feel like it at times, there are people who love and support you, who’ll fight for your future and provide safe spaces for you in the present. ~ Chisara Campbell

How can we change misconceptions and stereotypes?

Misconceptions can be broken by witnessing the huge diversity of people in the Muslim community, and feeling the love and friendship that is spread by this religion. ~ Emily Clark

A lot of stereotypes come from misinformation and a place of hurt. It is essential to change the rhetoric used to discuss Islam in the news and put our own words of love and respect out into the world. Proving people wrong by acting out of love is a good first step. Additionally, pushing for legal change to protect Muslim Americans and prevent the unconstitutional travel ban are important steps towards larger improvements. ~ Sarah Freeman

Radical rehumanization. Never letting ourselves believe that someone else, for whatever reason—their faith, their politics, their choices—is less human than ourselves. ~ Stephanie Van Hook

These allies remind me that I should never waver in my beliefs and my highest ideals. I have found empowerment and reassurance through their words. I have realized that the best way for me to combat Islamophobia is to make sense of the world through the love, empathy, and charity that Islam teaches me. Only when I do those things will I be able to create a just and lasting peace for myself, and for everyone else around me.

Lamisa Mustafa is a community outreach intern for the SMU Embrey Human Rights Program at Southern Methodist University, where she is a Human Rights Major, Pre-Law Scholar (class of 2021). Lamisa also volunteers for the Metta Center for Nonviolence.
The Metta Pledge

of Protection & nonviolent resistance

To ensure continued progress toward a world of peace, justice, and dignity for all, I HEREBY PLEDGE with love and determination that, for as long as required and as long as I am able, I will:

PROTECT my home, Planet Earth, by RESISTING attitudes and actions that compromise the living systems that sustain all Life;

PROTECT the social fabric of my country by RESISTING attitudes and actions that marginalize others through prejudice, scapegoating, or other forms of hatred and division;

PROTECT and strengthen the security of my country by RESISTING violence and militarization, especially in the mass media and our cultural and educational institutions; and

LEARN nonviolence principles and practice them in all available forms, constructive and obstructive, as a guiding principle in my own life and the way to resolve these issues permanently and well, for all concerned.
People at a Trayvon Martin rally on March 24, 2012. Photo by Vic Damoses via Flickr
The lotus grows out of the mud

for Dr. Brian Williams

On my last days in Singapore
where Mandarin and Malay
live in skyscrapers adorned
by waterfalls and swimming pools
where guns are illegal
and schools praise the arts

CNN blasts a story of Philando Castile
murdered in his car
with his four-year-old watching

his girlfriend handcuffed
her iPhone bleeding.
   My mind careens to Trayvon Martin

now tied for eternity
with Amadou Diallo and Emmett Till
Coltrane’s sax ribboning their graves.

I speed dial my hoodie-wearing
gender-bending daughter
my tall Trinidadian son,

are you okay, can you stay inside
is there a sliver of safety you can slip into
until maybe, forever?

My daughter protests, my son posts bullet-proof vests
for Nike to market with sneakers
and I’m sinking.

No yoga helps
forget vinyasa, no swimming
no bo bo cha cha

no talking, no prayer
depressed is a lightweight term.
   I wrestle inside despair’s temple
thrash through the night
   until morning breaks itself open.
   CNN brings us a surgeon from Dallas

in his white coat
   as he travels down the corridor
   sterile to the point of empty

to cameras the size of faces
   to the podium
   his eyes round like bellies toward the sun

his hands trembling
   as he reaches for his pen in his pocket
   leaving it there.

Face to the lens
   his countenance finding his medical degree
   shoulders still at half mast

his hands the ones
   that held the cops’ hearts
   still on the table.

He tries to speak
   his breath halting
   about raising his daughter to respect the police

his knowing the terror
   of being seen as a target
   his anguish for police he couldn’t save

his wanting the madness to stop in this moment
   double consciousness clothed
   in a Black surgeon’s life

his eyes lakes
   filled with mercy and pain
   his hands now doves caressing the air.

Poem by Becky Thompson, PhD. Becky is a professor, human rights activist, mother, and yoga teacher. She is the author of several books on social justice, trauma, and healing. Her latest book is Teaching with Tenderness: Toward an Embodied Practice (University of Illinois Press, 2017).
Permaculture Leads to Nonviolence

by MATT POWERS

Gardening and working with animals has a healing effect, not just on the earth but on ourselves—that is why it is such a powerful solution.

What is permaculture?

Permaculture is essentially a lens based on observable universal principles found in the natural world and the three ethics of our longest lasting cultures: Care of the Earth, Care of People, and Care of the Future—it is the overlap of these three focuses that forms the permacultural lens. Recognizing biologically sound systems and partnering with them always leads to an abundance of food, biodiversity, water, soil, seeds, wealth, creativity, stability, and peace. When human systems are in balance with the larger systems and cycles of an ecosystem, it is a default reaction. Throughout history, our greatest times of freedom and collective progress were times of plenty and prosperity. In nature, coves and hidden valleys are oases of unique and often fragile biodiversity. In our gardens and permaculture systems, we develop sheltered areas, or microclimates, for biodiversity to thrive. The same is true for human systems when we foster appreciation of and reserve space for diversity of thought and expression. We are not built for violence or destruction but abundance and creation.

Permaculture leads to reflecting upon the principles of nature in light of our needs and the needs of life around us, from the microorganisms in soil to all plants and animals. We begin to see the world as an orchestration of life and syntropic cycles. Each layer builds upon each layer over time, expanding and creating larger, more-stable ecosystems. Even the clash between predator and prey are part of a greater cycle towards better health and stability, in both groups, as the sick, weak, or slow-to-adapt are removed from the gene pool the overall system improves. It is as if cross-species interactions regulate and edit each other for the benefit of all involved. Our sick plants beckon their own pests to come and remove them from our gardens and fields. Hurt animals wail in fear or pain, calling their predators to them. It is in scarcity, sickness, and separation that prey meets predator. And even in death, all living things return in peace to fertilize the soil. From the macro, all the “violence” in nature is beneficial—it is quite different within human culture where scarcity has led to a culture of pointless fear and separation.

Though we are much less violent in our daily lives than in previous iterations of western culture, our language is mired in scarcity and judgment. Leveraging technology, our governments and global corporations are spreading desertification, pollution, and conflict at a terrifying pace. Over the last 200 years, we have witnessed an acceleration of 10,000 years of habitual
degradation of the world’s natural capital—first with agriculture using fire and tillage and later using petrochemicals and fossil-fueled machines. Agriculture is responsible for many of our deserts, including: the Sahara, the Middle East, the Aral Sea, the Loess Plateau.

It is the opposite in nature; there we see syntropy: life begets more life. Human suffering caused by violence is akin to what we’ve dubbed entropy: energy is always being lost—things dissipate, loss leads to loss, negative leads to negative. This represents a decline in the macro picture. Violence is not beneficial and represents both a degradation in the landscape and in human understanding of natural harmony. Humans are actually stewards, as are many animals, fungi, and bacteria in their relative ecosystems; we’ve just lost track of our place and roles therein. We are the greatest force for regeneration, or the restoration and continual development, of ecosystems here on earth. It is violence at its core that disconnects and perpetuates separation from ourselves, each other, and the wild.

Gardening and working with animals has a healing effect, not just on the earth but on ourselves—that is why it is such a powerful solution. Biodiversity is being used to help returning soldiers with PTSD, criminals reintegrating into society, those with special needs, and children and adults who have suffered trauma of all kinds. Immersing ourselves in nature—and natural cycles like the mineral and nutrient cycles—reduces tension, anxiety, depression, and fear, and raises self-confidence, self-reliance, self-awareness, compassion, accountability, and overall mental and physical health. It increases our sense of self and other, so it leads to understanding, which erases fear and shows the truth: we can be abundant in our joy, love, peace, and prosperity if we follow a path of nonviolent partnership with nature.

STARTING OUT

Have you had the tough conversation yet about where your food, phone, computer, flooring, shampoo, and so much else come from? Where did the resources come from to make those products? How were they harvested? How were the workers treated? Were they fairly paid? At what point does participating in a large charade of distanced oppression and violence sink in? We may not have slavery in America, but we have wage slaves and sweatshops making our clothing, harvesting our foods, mining our rare minerals, making our christmas decorations, and all the rest.

Ready to move towards permaculture? Here are some first steps:

1. Know where everything comes from, and purge your life of violence and the products of violence and oppression.
2. Buy from the best sources possible or DIY for all products.
3. Grow a garden and buy from organic no-till farms only (they are giant carbon sinks).
4. Compost everything—even paper and cardboard are easy for worms and fungi to break down.
5. Boycott all non-recyclables and minimally buy recyclables (reusables are much nicer!).

A nonviolent future is possible if we partner with natural systems using the ethical lens of permaculture. It’s the only way we can bring back the biodiversity to sequester the carbon in time—there’s no other solution that can compete with photosynthesis.

Matt Powers is an author and teacher. He is also the creator of ThePermacultureStudent.com, where he offers online courses and consulting services. Matt’s podcast Permaculture Tonight can be found on iTunes and SoundCloud.
Conflict Escalation Curve: A Practical Model

by STEPHANIE STEINER

The truth we are clinging to is our inherent human dignity and interconnectedness.

In nonviolence strategy, it is important to understand what stage of conflict we are in to best determine what our options are for achieving our goals. The conflict escalation model is a tool that can help us determine our phase of conflict and strategically decide which tactics would be most appropriate to de-escalate the conflict and work towards reconciliation.

The escalation curve model developed by Michael Nagler in his book *The Search for a Nonviolent Future: A Promise for Peace for Ourselves, Our Families, and Our World* shows the relationship between dehumanization (on the x-axis) and intensity of violence (on the y-axis). When both dehumanization and intensity are low, we have many more options than at the later part of the curve, where dehumanization and intensity have escalated. As we all know, conditions can change quickly and conflict can escalate rapidly. Some conflicts simmer, while others reach a boiling point in no time. By understanding where we are in any given conflict, we can employ nonviolent strategies early on, to prevent things from boiling over, saving a lot of suffering.

We also need to be aware of the degree of conflict, so that we can apply the appropriate degree of “soul force.” The escalation curve is divided into three phases. In Phase 1, when intensity and dehumanization are both low and it’s still possible to reach the opposition by petitions and the like, the standard tools of conflict resolution—nonviolent communication, dialogue, negotiation, and mediation—work just fine. Gandhi discovered that we should always reach into this toolkit first, even if we have good reason to doubt that our opponent is still listening to us.

You do not want to “over apply” nonviolence, as this would not be strategically helpful. For example, you do not want to jump right into a hunger strike (one of the “do or die” methods of Phase 3) without having tried methods from Phase 1 or 2, in that order.

When attempts in Phase 1 are not working, it is time to engage in nonviolent resistance, or satyagraha. Intensity and dehumanization have increased to the point where dialogue has been unsuccessful, and direct action is needed to try to win over the heart of your opponent—and other potential allies. This is when nonviolent protest, boycott, civil disobedience, and other tactics of satyagraha—and there are many—kick in. *Satyagraha* means “cling to truth,” and the truth we are clinging to is our inherent human dignity and interconnectedness. We are activating what Gandhi referred to as the ability of nonviolence to “move the heart” of onlookers, often through our willingness to take on suffering. In risking pain (what Gandhi and others call “unearned suffering”), we do so not for its own sake but because there is pain in the situation and we don’t want to be the cause of any more harm. We therefore tap a power that can awaken our opponent to our humanity and their own.

But sometimes even our suffering doesn’t move the needle. If the conflict continues, we are in Phase 3 and it is time to risk making the ultimate sacrifice—putting our lives on the line to halt the injustice. Actions taken in this stage include hunger strikes and standing in front of a tank. These examples present “do or die” situations where we use our “ultimate weapon” in the spirit of trying to awaken our opponent’s heart, with the most intense means available to the nonviolent resister. In this phase, the fewest nonviolent options are available, and lives might really be lost. Lives are not always lost, but when they are, the number is far less than when violent means are employed.
It’s usually Phase 3 conflict that people are referring to when they say, “Nonviolence wouldn’t work against ____” (plug in Hitler, ISIS, a school shooter). What they fail to understand is that, first of all, we are often actively engaging in a conflict long before it gets to Phase 3 (as with the Treaty of Versailles, for example).

Secondly, nonviolence can and does work in extreme cases, as it did in Nazi Germany with the Rosenstrasse prison demonstration, when hundreds of women demanded the release of their Jewish husbands and relatives (in other words, it did work against the Nazis, when it was applied). Then there’s the case of Antoinette Tuff, who in 2013 relied on care and empathy to prevent an armed and mentally unstable man from going on a shooting rampage at the elementary school she worked at as a bookkeeper. The man was taken into police custody without a single shot being fired.

One other thing, and it’s important. Constructive program—building alternatives to the systems you are opposing—can and should be done at all phases of the conflict. Ideally you are doing this alongside, and in addition to, any obstructive actions (like protests), working towards building the world you want rather than just opposing the world you don’t want (opposing what isn’t wanted is of course still important!).

Constructive program can be done quietly, to slowly win over popular support while also increasing momentum for the movement, which can be harnessed when the moment of leverage arises. It is another way to minimize the amount of suffering and inconvenience we have to go through to remove an injustice and to make sure that if we, for instance, dislodge a dictator, there is an alternative system ready to fill the power void. As Gandhi said, “If you think you can get rid of the British and then reform Indian society, you are dreaming.” History has borne this truth out many times.

**Application:** Think of a conflict in your community or at the national or international level. At what stage is the conflict currently? Based on the phase, what degree of nonviolent resistance is appropriate? What strategies could be applied to de-escalate the conflict? What elements of constructive program are appropriate, or are currently taking place?

**Stephanie Steiner** is a peace educator and yoga teacher. She is also Director of Education at the Metta Center for Nonviolence and a graduate student at Pacifica Graduate Institute, where she’s specializing in Community Psychology, Liberation Psychology, and Ecopsychology.
Clayborne Carson is Director of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute, where his main work is to edit and publish the papers of Martin Luther King, Jr. (a task entrusted to him by Coretta Scott King in 1985). He is also Professor of American History at Stanford University.

An activist since his teenage years, Clayborne was at the 1963 March on Washington and saw King’s “I Have a Dream” speech. He was very active in a Los Angeles group called the Nonviolent Action Committee during the mid-1960s. He has worked with activists and civil society all around the world, and you can read more about his experiences in his book *Martin’s Dream: My Journey and the Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, which notes his path from that life-changing speech in 1963 to the present.

There’s a qualitative difference between rational information and wisdom, as wisdom sees into the heart of a situation. Dr. Carson demonstrates how to process information, relate it to our experience and knowledge about the past, and turn it into wisdom.

**What can we learn strategy-wise from the African American Freedom Struggle of the 1950s and ’60s? And how do you see the present moment?**

I look upon the Freedom Struggle of the ’50s and ’60s as a movement for citizenship rights. Coming out of WWII, most people in the world were not full citizens of the places where they happened to live.

Along with the citizenship movement, there was a human rights struggle. I think these two things kind of got mixed up in the rhetoric of the time a lot, but they were actually quite different. Human rights had much more to do with what are your rights as a human being wherever you are in the world. It crosses borders.
There was an effort after WWII to bring together these two concepts. It didn’t get very far because of national sovereignty.

Nations wanted to make a great distinction between what were considered human rights and what they were willing to guarantee to their own citizens. If you happened to be in one of the powerful countries in the world, your human rights were your passport. That’s what gave you rights across borders. A lot of times, nation states became the greatest violators of human rights. Furthermore, the advances in civil rights or citizenship rights made many people very complacent about human rights.

I don’t think we’ve made very much of an advance on human rights over the last 70 to 80 years, since they were enumerated after WWII in the Declaration of Human Rights.

For many people, the struggle for rights became more difficult after 1965. Martin Luther King, in his last three years, began to articulate human rights goals. Until 1965, he was very successful and very popular. After 1965, I think he encountered a great deal of opposition as he began to campaign against poverty.

The Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 didn’t require billions of dollars in appropriations to make them real, but guaranteeing the right to education or healthcare or housing would require enormous appropriations and redistribution of wealth.

Getting back to the question of tactics and strategy: As we got complacent we also began to have this kind of magical thinking that the same tactics that could bring about civil rights change could also bring about change in the post-civil rights era. The wake-up call really has come in this century with the Occupy movement, Black Lives Matter. These movements now are, to me, wake-up calls to the unfinished business of the 1960s.

I think that it’s going to take a different kind of struggle. It has to be a global struggle. I think it’s going to be much more intense and long-term because, in a sense, you’re going up against the notion of national sovereignty. So many of the rights that are meaningful now are rights against government. We’re asking to be protected from government when we think about Black Lives Matter. We’re trying to change the more oppressive roles of government—policing borders, for example—to affirm the notion of really serving the interest of citizens and noncitizens.

We’re at a crisis point, because along the fault lines between citizenship rights and human rights come issues like immigration. How do we treat people who are not citizens? I would estimate we’re probably
upwards of close to 100 million people now in the world who don’t have citizenship rights. That number is likely to grow as the oppressive roles of government cause people to become refugees.

We’re at that turning point where we’re trying to imagine future struggles and trying to decide how to deal with them.

What about the role of key leaders and strategists?

I’ve always felt that the movement came first. The strategists helped the movement and clarified things. Bayard Rustin arriving in Montgomery in 1956 was crucial to Martin Luther King Jr., because King was not an experienced leader and he was someone who was looking for more clarity on the questions of strategy.

It’s always interesting when we think about the sit-in movement. For all of James Lawson’s preparations and the workshops, it was the students in Greensboro, North Carolina who started the sit-ins, who had not been to any of those workshops. So that’s part of the magical thinking: It’s not that a leader in the quality of James Lawson is going to appear and provide this clarity and suddenly have a strong and resilient movement for human rights.

One of the exciting things about the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee is that, as anyone who knows about that group, they would have a three-day discussion if necessary. When you have a mass movement, you have that kind of intense ongoing discussion about the way forward.

What about the role of third-parties, such as with the strategic use of media, to reach a movement’s goals?

The end goal, to me, has to be human rights on a global scale. The means to get there, that’s the real question. When I see an articulation of a nonviolent strategy, it often has to do with the proponent of change and the oppositions of change, and there’s a dialogue between those two forces. I guess in the extreme view of nonviolence, you can use moral suasion to bring over someone from the opposite side.

I think that that happens, but that’s not really, in the modern world, the way change comes about. It’s usually an appeal to a third-party, someone who is not directly one of the participants in the conflict. The appeal is on the basis of some idealistic conception of justice, and the media becomes the way in which you reach that third-party. Often it was outside pressure on South Africa that caused the change. The apartheid system didn’t fall because of moral suasion, it changed because of economic pressure from the outside.

How did that economic pressure get exerted? Through a lot of activism around the world that ultimately caused people to intervene and tell the South African government, “You cannot continue on this course. Your economy will be destroyed.” Social media is a fantastic way of getting to the third-party. It can also be used to mobilize your opposition. It’s a complex technology.

Among the lessons we need to learn is how to get along with one another. And not just caring for the person as a political colleague, but as a human being.
We can’t all have our personal psychiatrists or therapists with us, but maybe we need to master some of the arts of therapy within movements so that we can be one another’s therapists. Because I think that notion of movements is something you burn out from. I always admired the long-distance runners—the Ann Bradens, the Ella Bakers, the Jim Lawsons, the Michael Naglers—who could manage to stay in the struggle for a long period of time, despite the bruises.

Are younger people going to be doing this in 30, 40 years? Or is it going to be something that you burn out from? I hope that along with the strategies and all the talk about long-term goals, we do some work on how we keep movements together over a long period of time.

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What about some of the positive lessons we have learned?

Among the less positive messages about the past is that sometimes the ’60s are romanticized in the sense that there was this unified movement. As a participant in it, I can testify that any of the disputes going on today were replicated 100 times during the 1950s and 1960s. [There was an] intensity of internal conflict in the movement and the way in which it sometimes weakened the movement because it exhausted people.

Among the lessons I think we need to learn is how to get along with one another. What do we owe to one another as freedom fighters? And caring not just for the person as a political colleague, but as a human being. [There’s a] point where you don’t want to go a meeting because you know you’ll just emerge exhausted and dispirited. That’s when movements begin to come apart, and we need to have ways of dealing with that.

We can’t all have our personal psychiatrists or therapists with us, but maybe we need to master some of the arts of therapy within movements so that we can be one another’s therapists. Because I think that notion of movements is something you burn out from. I always admired the long-distance runners—the Ann Bradens, the Ella Bakers, the Jim Lawsons, the Michael Naglers—who could manage to stay in the struggle for a long period of time, despite the bruises.

Are younger people going to be doing this in 30, 40 years? Or is it going to be something that you burn out from? I hope that along with the strategies and all the talk about long-term goals, we do some work on how we keep movements together over a long period of time.
While there is never a guarantee of success, a seriously researched and developed strategic plan will increase the chances for a victory.

The Global Nonviolent Action Database (GNAD) is a treasure chest of knowledge useful to those of us who are students and practitioners of nonviolent civil society struggle, particularly if we are more inclined to winning and less interested in hairshirt actions that might only bring suffering with little chance for policy success. What you will notice in particular is the interlocking nature of these elements of a successful movement to affect public, institutional, or corporate policies.

To illustrate, let’s consider the following aspects of nonviolent movements and campaigns and take lessons from that database:

NONVIOLENT DISCIPLINE

When, on December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a white man on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama, Martin Luther King Jr. implored participating campaigners to maintain nonviolent discipline. He said, “Be calm as I and my family are. We are not hurt and remember that if anything happens to me, there will be others to take my place.” That struggle pitted a minority against a hostile majority and yet the year-long strict adherence to King’s code of nonviolence gave the campaign victory in the majority US public opinion and victories in the courts.

MEDIA WORK

When the poorly paid janitors at the University of Miami sought higher pay and benefits, they only finally succeeded after a savvy campaign featuring good media work that highlighted their conditions and the opulent lifestyle of the university officials. Oscar Wilde was not correct when he claimed, “There is no such thing as bad publicity.” The best outreach cannot overcome the backfire if nonviolent discipline is not maintained. Media work can overcome the potentially damaging effects of violence done by those who claim to be acting in concert with a nonviolent campaign when the organizers of the nonviolent campaign strenuously distance their movement from any act of violence. Failure to do so usually results in the diminution of a campaign.

COALITION-BUILDING

In the British Virgin Islands it appeared inevitable that wealthy developers would be building more resorts in places that were renowned for their natural beauty and environmental sensitivity. One large project—approved by the Premier and sanctioned by the government for Beef Island starting in 2007—but was stopped by excellent coalition-building work by the opposition. The cultural-heritage activists joined with environmental activists and other local groups, but even more impressively, they sought and got external support for their coalition, including donations and statements of support from thousands of people living elsewhere, effectively strengthening their coalition. While they believe some development might still occur, they also believe it will be done to state-of-the-art practices to preserve ecological and cultural resources.

DECISION-MAKING

While different campaigns have embraced various forms of decision-making, the general principle that seems constant is that, once the irrevocable decision
is made by the initial organizers to commit to a behavior code of nonviolence, it is then important to agree on the method of making other decisions. Some movements tend to have a small group of deciders who then pass along those decisions to participants. Others adopt a consensus process, more time-consuming but more egalitarian and tending toward greater sustainability if done while respecting the code of nonviolent behavior. The British women who began their peace camp at the US military base at Greenham Common on September 5, 1981, committed to nonviolence and to a consensus decision-making process. This campaign continued through the remainder of the Cold War, even past the point where their stated goal—the elimination of the nuclear-tipped cruise missiles from Greenham Common USAF base—had been completely achieved.

CREATIVITY

The general public—and many activists—seem at times to have a very small repertoire of actions: carry signs in the streets to protest, sit down in blockade, and get arrested to resist. Scholar Gene Sharp, however, listed and categorized 198 methods of nonviolent action in 1973, and many more methods have been created since. Indeed, the hard-wired human response to mortal threat is a range from flight to fight to posing to abortion and to the only human quality that gives hope to nonviolent conflict transformation—the illimitable creativity of the human mind. The GNAD offers many case studies featuring highly innovative, adaptive methods. One such example is the 1999–2000 effort to save community gardens from demolition in New York City. In 1998, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani decided to permit removal of gardens that were where developers wished to build. A network of activists formed the Esperanza Garden campaign and swung into a highly creative struggle to challenge this, involving actions by activists in plant, poultry, and insect costumes; parades; garden camp-ins; lawsuits in court; garden parties; bonfires; cookouts; human chains in lockdown; a 200-person floating party; replanting bulldozed gardens; and much more. There were setbacks, but good media work, strong nonviolent discipline even when clubbed by cops, and fresh attention-getting actions consistently built the ranks of coalitional partners and swelled the people power vs. corporate money struggle to a level that cost the elected officials increasing losses in legitimacy. Finally, as noted by an Esperanza participant, “the Esperanza campaign radicalized a generation of garden activists and laid the groundwork for the 2002 garden settlement that allowed for the construction of over 3,000 affordable housing units while preserving almost 500 community gardens.”

RECRUITMENT

Some community organizers simply hold that no decision should be made without first pondering the impact on recruitment. It is not enough to assert, “If we do this action in this manner it will tend to attract this demographic.” It is far more effective to estimate both how many will be attracted and how many will be repelled. The net number is crucial. If “punching a Nazi” attracts a few hundred hardcore street brawlers but alienates the rest of the pool of potential participants, that “movement math” should help the deliberative process. A tough nonviolent campaign in Pakistan from 2007 to 2009 featured highly effective participant recruitment to oppose the evisceration of the judiciary and the decimation of the Constitution. As noted in GNAD: “On March 9, 2007, Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf suspended Supreme Court Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry from his duties on the Court in response to Chaudhry’s challenges to his Presidency.” Started by a small group of lawyers and growing to many thousands of them, they were able to field a half million from many sectors of society to march on Islamabad in 2008, and when they began another on March 12, 2009, the government caved. “That night all of the judges, including Chaudhry, were restored to their position and the lawyers’ movement won its final victory. The judiciary had regained its autonomy.”

STRATEGIC PLANNING

While there is never a guarantee of success, a seriously researched and developed strategic plan will increase the chances for a victory. In January 2014, the governors of six New England states announced plans to build a natural gas pipeline to carry two billion cubic feet of fracked natural gas per day. Opponents engaged in such effective strategic planning that they were able to direct simultaneous actions, educational sessions, and mini-campaigns to resist the fracking even as they promoted clean energy alternatives. They enlisted the town and county officials in the path of the proposed pipeline to pass resolutions of opposition and when the route was changed in response, more municipalities joined in the campaign. By April 2016, the clear majority won and the plan was ended.

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Key Elements & Challenges with Nonviolent Movements & Campaigns in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

by JEAN DE DIEU ALINGWI

Over the last few years, we’ve witnessed an upsurge in movements and campaigns in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and it continues to this day. However, these nonviolent movements and campaigns have rarely succeeded. Activists and organizers, from the Catholic Church and youth-led movements to political opposition leaders, are striving to convert popular frustration into mass mobilization, but the reality on the ground makes that a daunting process.

This article seeks to explore the reason there is such a poor record of sustained and successful nonviolent action movements and campaigns in the DRC, in general outlining what might be lessons learned for activists and organizers to fall back on when exploring opportunities to strengthen and improve their effectiveness.

Martin Luther King Jr. believed that four elements lead to a movement’s success: 1. It must have a distinct beginning and end; 2. It should focus on a local problem that could gain national attention on a more global issue; 3. Activists must be trained in nonviolent strategies; and 4. Attitudes within the local community must be transformed. Hardy Merriman, director of the International Centre on Nonviolent Conflict, suggested three indicators of success: unity, strategic planning, and nonviolent discipline. Unfortunately, these components are missing from movements and campaigns in the DRC.

The fragmentation of the political sphere means there is a lack of alliances that can galvanize a social base by responding to the needs of ordinary people. Broad, cross-cutting constituencies like religious groups, student groups, labor unions, business groups, women’s groups, and other such grassroots organizations are absent from movements and campaigns in the DRC. Groups that could form a hub of resistance on specific issues are internally divided, with parts of their leadership being co-opted by the government. And yet, scholars and practitioners of nonviolent actions have proven that collaboration among organizations, acting in concert for a common cause, is paramount to success. As Merriman writes in his essay “Agents of Change and Nonviolent Action,” a “movement’s success requires an inclusive vision that unites people, sound strategic planning, effective public communications, and the identification of appropriate methods for the situation.”

From time to time we can hear comments like, “If we could get rid of this person or that person, our problem would be solved.” Many people in the DRC have identified certain individuals in the government as problems, especially those within the ruling parties and security forces. So acts of destruction have been perceived as justified, with movement and campaign reports stating the number of facilities destroyed, police officers and civilians killed, and people injured and imprisoned. This way of doing or thinking stands in contrast to Dr. King’s third principle of nonviolence:
"Attack the forces of evil, not persons doing evil." This principle refers to a deep understanding of the root causes that produce oppressive conditions, and how to change those conditions, rather than finger-pointing at individuals.

The prevailing violence on the part of organizers and resisters is rooted in their inability to maintain nonviolent discipline and to raise public awareness on the dangers of violent behavior. According to Bernard Lafayette, a leading figure from the Civil Rights movement in the US and a trainer at the Center for Nonviolence and Peace Studies, “nonviolence really means fighting back with another purpose and with other nonviolent weapons. The fight is to win that person over, a struggle of the human spirit, much more challenging than fisticuffs.” In his book *In Peace and Freedom: My Journey in Selma (Civil Rights and Struggle)*, he adds that “nonviolence is about showing love towards others, and that love has the power to win people over.” Although we can celebrate the courage and commitment that people have—and the empowerment they may be receiving from taking action and coming out publicly to protest—we cannot glorify intimidation and acts of destruction. Discipline should be an unbreakable virtue.

When it comes to movements and campaigns in the DRC, many people have developed passive attitudes towards taking actions or getting involved. Others have resigned their confidence in being able to make a difference. In their minds, organizing movements and campaigns is just a waste of time. For example, when asked why he cannot join a movement, a Congolese citizen living in Goma, the capital of the DRC’s North Kivu province, said:

There is lack of communication and coordination among resisters. We can only hear organizers call for us to take on the streets without clear indications or orientations about what’s to be done and not to be done during the demonstrations or sit-ins. We all know today that a demonstration in the DRC is equivalent to destruction and violence. So I cannot take risks.

Another person’s reason for not becoming involved:

Movements and campaigns are often fueled by narrow agendas. Rather than focusing on social issues, activists, organizers, and other leaders put much attention on political issues which usually don’t match with our needs, like water, health, education, etc. The experience showed that they only use us and their movements as stepping stones to positions in the government. I cannot accept to take on a risky path, and I am not convinced of the issue raised or that those organizers are committed to the cause.
The prevailing violence on the part of organizers and resisters is rooted in their inability to maintain nonviolent discipline.

Although the freedoms of assembly and expression are constitutional rights in the DRC, the government enacted a law requiring certain public events, like demonstrations, to be granted authorization before they are held. This law prohibits groups to exercise their rights unless they introduce a letter of information 48 hours before the scheduled day of the event. This requirement puts organizers and activists in a dilemma position: not conforming to this provision could bring down repression and arrests. Many see this law as a government intention to halt activities they consider threatening to their authority.

Another challenge worth mentioning is the constant use of the same tactics, including marching and sit-ins. Although these tactics can show resisters’ courage and commitment, this lack of creativity has jeopardized the success and sustainability of movements and campaigns, as the government can quickly silence them through infiltration, tear gas, billy clubs, and arrests, all aimed at intimidating and frightening people. According to practitioners, repeatedly using the same tactics can be ineffective because it doesn’t create new points of pressure on a movement’s opponent, and participants and the general public lose enthusiasm. Effective tactics must often be innovative.

It’s worth noting the DRC’s decades of political crises and ethnic violence. Business is heavily influenced by the state, as well as the public administration, the media, and the security forces. To prosper as an entrepreneur or get decent jobs in the public administration, one has to have connections in the government. Instead of banding together to oppose corruption and excessive taxation, many individuals look out for their own interests.

As with some movements and campaigns in other parts of the world, activists and organizers in the DRC are denied access to the media, to prevent them from communicating their messages to a wider audience. Journalists hardly cover a grassroots movement’s actions, fearing reprisals that could emanate either from the security forces or the bosses, who are likely influenced by personalities within the government.

Despite these conditions, activists and organizers should understand that nonviolence is about winning over communities, winning the sympathy of those institutions critical to the regime. Scholars like Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan show that civil resistance is often successful, regardless of the conditions that many people associate with the failure of nonviolent campaigns and movements. These scholars suggest that skills and strategic choice often matter more than conditions in determining the outcomes of conflicts.

As the system of oppression and corruption persists, the “What next?” question should be looming in the hearts and minds of every resister and organizer. The movements that can bring about social and political change have a capacity to sustain mass participation, often over a number of years—and despite repression and interruption. Both activists and organizers should understand that it is not just about fighting against oppression and injustice. It is also a structural challenge.

Peter Ackerman and Hardy Merriman call on organizers and resisters to strictly adhere to a code of respect, so they can build the social capital that will make their efforts successful and sustainable. In their 2014 essay “The Checklist for Ending Tyranny,” Ackerman and Merriman suggest that when these indicators are present in civil resistance movements, they increase participation, reduce risks related to repression, and increase backfire as well as defections from a movement’s adversary. Any activists or organizers who would call for a civil resistance movement or campaign overlooking or ignoring indicators of success invites dangerous repercussions.

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The National Peace Academy offers educational resources for budding community leaders and experienced changemakers who seek the knowledge and skills to nurture positive change in themselves and their communities. Our programs integrate education, research policy and personal practice. Through partnerships with experts, we are striving to make learning for peace and social change as accessible, available and affordable as possible.

**Examples of current and planned work:**

- Spreading restorative justice practices, especially in schools
- Supporting reconciliation processes to eliminate structural violence and systemic racism
- Training in peacebuilding and conflict transformation
- Hosting community, government, and business leaders and practitioners to develop policy strategies for positive peace
- Funding scholar-practitioners in the field and in classrooms nationwide
  - Developing peace curricula for schools
If a social movement can win the battle of public opinion, the courts and legislatures will follow.
We have taken our decades of experience as organizers, researchers, and trainers in social movements and created a short, online handbook. Resistance Guide aims to equip you with the essential tools and strategies to shift public opinion, change laws and decisions, and elect new leaders. It is an essential road map for anyone who wants to understand how movements succeed, and how we can use this knowledge to fight for a better America.

The stories of successful movements in the Resistance Guide each highlight different aspects of strategies and tactics elaborated on in the guide. Often, history and the media recount how politicians or Supreme Court justices made sweeping reforms—but we know this is only the end of the story. In the guide, we share stories of the social movements that made those great reforms possible. Studying social movements can illuminate our path forward through this political moment. Here, we share two excerpts from the guide.

**THE MARRIAGE EQUALITY MOVEMENT**

As recently as 1990, three-quarters of Americans viewed homosexual sex as immoral. Less than a third of the country thought same-sex marriage should be legalized.

In 1996, the Defense of Marriage Act passed the Senate 85-14, to be signed by President Bill Clinton. By 2006, 26 states had passed amendments banning same-sex marriage.

But by June 2015, when the Supreme Court ruling in *Obergefell v. Hodges* allowed same-sex marriage nationwide, 37 states and the District of Columbia were already there, and public opinion polling showed a majority of Americans in favor of gay marriage.

How did marriage equality shift from a third-rail issue that politicians were afraid to touch to a political winner that everyone wanted to get behind?

The Supreme Court’s ruling in favor of same-sex marriage followed a long series of state and local fights. Not all were victorious. Early wins in courts and statehouses were reversed by legislatures and initiatives. San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom’s 2004 decision to marry same-sex couples in defiance of state law led to backlash and the 2008 passage of California’s Proposition 8, which enshrined heterosexual marriage in the state constitution. Yet even amid setbacks, there was progress towards acceptance of marriage equality.

The drive for marriage equality was grounded in a simple idea: If a social movement can win the battle of public opinion, the courts and legislatures will follow. By chipping away at hearts and minds across a broad range of constituencies and institutions, activists created a shift in public opinion so enormous that politicians had to reconsider which side of the argument was “safe” for them to support.

As hundreds of thousands of engaged citizens steadily pushed for acceptance of LGBTQ community members, television shows gave more—and more favorable—attention to queer life experiences. Celebrities came out with less hesitation. Religious congregations debated welcoming LGBTQ parishioners and clerical leaders, and some even began to consecrate same-sex unions. Fortune 500 companies offered health care benefits to same-sex partners. The number of LGBTQ student groups in high schools grew at a record pace. Experts on childhood development marshaled evidence in support of same-sex parents, making it increasingly difficult to produce credible testimony against gay marriage.

Harvey Milk, the first openly gay elected official in the United States, said in 1977, shortly after his election to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, that the simple act of coming out “would do more to end prejudice overnight than anybody would imagine.” Though Milk was later assassinated, the rapid rise in support for the LGBTQ community in the early twenty-first century proved his words to be prophetic. In a virtuous circle,
as more Americans came out to their families, friends, and colleagues, institutions became more welcoming and support for marriage equality increased, making it easier for more Americans to come out.

By 2011, public support for same-sex marriage was nearing 50 percent for the first time. In May 2012, Vice President Joe Biden declared on “Meet the Press” that he had changed his position and now supported marriage equality. President Obama completed his “evolution” shortly thereafter. In just one week in April 2013, six senators made similar shifts and proclaimed their support for marriage equality. By the time the Supreme Court was debating the constitutionality of the Defense of Marriage Act in 2013, the Obama administration had not only opted to stop defending the Act, it filed an amicus brief arguing that the law violated the equal protection clause.

One startling effect of the Supreme Court’s ruling was the reaction of Republican voters: same-sex marriage moved to the bottom of the list of their concerns. Today, even politicians who have not changed their position duck questions about their views on the subject. At nearly every point in the last three decades, legal and political positions on marriage equality have followed popular attitudes. As Evan Wolfson, founder of the organization Freedom to Marry, put it, “We had persuaded the country, and the courts followed.

THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Only a few generations ago, if you were Black and lived in the South (or any number of other places in the US), you would have been legally required to attend separate schools, drink at separate water fountains, use separate bathrooms, and swim in separate public pools from those of your White counterparts. Even the slightest violation of the racist social code known as Jim Crow could draw the anger of White mobs, who tortured and killed Black men and women while the law turned a blind eye.

Through the 1950s and 1960s, a series of political, legal, and legislative victories put an end to segregation and limited the scope of White supremacist terror. As with the achievement of marriage equality in the twenty-first century, those victories happened because a social movement—the Civil Rights movement—made them happen. The leaders and participants of the Civil Rights movement steadily increased active popular support until the political weather changed.
For decades, it seemed like the Jim Crow system would never change. Democratic and Republican politicians alike ran for office promising to continue segregation, assuring their White constituents that they would continue to treat Black people as inferior. The Supreme Court ruled in 1954’s *Brown v. Board of Education* that segregation laws were unconstitutional. But that decision didn’t play out immediately in communities living under Jim Crow. If anything, the Brown decision engendered more racist backlash. Black people were legally allowed to vote, but often could not do so without being threatened or killed. If you were Black and chose to exercise your rights, the simple act of walking to the polls could cost you your life.

But starting with the Montgomery Bus Boycott, in which a mostly Black, female domestic workforce refused to ride the bus until it was desegregated, a new, defiant attitude began to take hold. With strong organizing work, a social movement sustained the boycott for all of 1956.

Over the next few years, against daunting odds, Black activists continued devising new tactics to put pressure on businesses. In February 1960, four Black college students sat down at a segregated lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina, and tried to order. When they were denied service and asked to leave, the students stayed in their seats. Soon, Black students across the country were demanding service at segregated lunch counters. By the end of April there were sit-ins in 78 cities. Active popular support grew and grew. About 70,000 Black college students participated in some kind of protest during 1960. More than 3,000 went to jail. The movement was on fire.

In 1961, an integrated group of 13 civil rights activists known as the Freedom Riders rode interstate buses throughout the South to protest segregation, which had by then been ruled unconstitutional. The group endured violent reprisals throughout their trip, facing physical assaults and even the firebombing of one of their buses.

However, the Freedom Rides drew national attention to the violence that had been endemic to the South for decades. Segregation went from a way of life to an emergency. Politicians, including the president himself, could no longer remain silent; they were forced to pick a side. By polarizing the issue, Freedom Riders led the way to consensus about the urgency of ending Jim Crow.

Two years later, Martin Luther King Jr.’s Southern Christian Leadership Conference brought similar attention to segregated Birmingham, Alabama. When national TV news crews witnessed local police violence at peaceful marches, images of Black youth being attacked by police dogs and pummeled by water from hoses were burned into the public consciousness. Although King is widely celebrated today, he was a divisive figure at the time and his methods of nonviolent protest were frowned upon by the media, politicians, and the general public alike.

This excerpt from a letter King wrote in 1967 illuminates the far-reaching effects of seemingly local protests: “Sound effort in a single city such as Birmingham or Selma produced situations that symbolized the evil everywhere and inflamed public opinion against it ... Where the spotlight illuminated the evil, a legislative remedy was soon obtained and applied everywhere.”

When King, along with other civil rights leaders, called for a march on Washington, more than 200,000 people showed up to voice their support of integration. The political weather had changed. President Lyndon B. Johnson began to strongly advocate for civil rights legislation.

He later admitted that without the movement, he wouldn’t have been able to sign the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

“Birmingham, and the protests that immediately followed it,” writes historian Adam Fairclough in his book *To Redeem the Soul of America*, “transformed the political climate so that civil rights legislation became feasible; before, it had been impossible.”

For deeper reading on active popular support, polarization, changing the political weather, and other strategies drawn from the American Civil Rights movement, we recommend Taylor Branch’s *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years 1954–1963*. (Similar issues are explored in relation to LGBTQ rights in *The Mayor of Castro Street: The Life and Times of Harvey Milk*, by Randy Shilts.) The Civil Rights movement is also discussed at length in the Introduction and Chapter One of *This Is An Uprising: How Nonviolent Revolt Is Shaping the Twenty-First Century*, by Mark Engler and Paul Engler.

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Nonviolence Is Taking Responsibility for the Whole

by MIKI KASHTAN

Many years ago, just as I was beginning to explore nonviolence, the prime minister of the country I am originally from, Yitzhak Rabin, was assassinated by an ultra-right wing young man, Yigal Amir. Within hours, while talking with a supportive friend, I experienced the most unexpected feeling I could imagine: I felt compassion for God, in whose existence I don’t even believe! It was visceral and simple: a wave of tenderness washed over me when I recognized that in that moment God had the excruciating task of loving Yigal Amir, the assassin.

The task of opening our hearts to everyone, including those whose actions we see as dangerous and harmful, is at the root of embracing nonviolence. Oftentimes, it’s far easier to embrace nonviolence in action—doing no harm on the material plane—than it is to embrace nonviolence in word. It is, again, easier to embrace nonviolence in word than in thought. Yet, as Gandhi showed us, nonviolence reaches its fullest expression when it’s practiced at all three levels: thought, word, and action.

Similarly, many of us who choose nonviolence as a path of activism find it easier to practice nonviolence on the streets, in campaigns, and in other dramatic settings rather than to embrace nonviolence as a way of life that guides our every move. This aspect of nonviolence happens far away from the limelight, and rarely leads to any substantive changes on the larger, systemic level. I see this kind of nonviolent living as a form of constructive program available to any of us, always. There’s no setting in which we can’t practice it, no matter how extreme, because we always have the internal sphere in which we can begin our practice.

At all levels, this path spells a commitment to leadership, regardless of circumstances: the willingness to unilaterally assume interdependent responsibility for the whole. It’s unilateral willingness, because we are called commit to the path regardless of what others do. If kindness is part of my set of values, for example, it means I commit to kindness towards others regardless of whether or not they are kind to me. It’s interdependent responsibility, because leadership always involves collaboration with others. Day by day, on an endless journey, we can then learn better how to put all the pieces together and forge a path that has integrity, that is aligned with our vision for the world, and that is within our own human limits.

In this way, nonviolence and widespread leadership are the most direct antidotes to thousands of years of patriarchy and its offspring, now most acutely global capitalism and white supremacy. Nonviolence directly counters and transcends the pillars of patriarchy—separation, scarcity, and powerlessness—that have become the soundtrack of modern living. Nonviolent leadership connects us with ourselves, other individuals and communities, nature, and life as a whole. Nonviolent leadership emerges organically from the longing for a world that works for all. Nonviolent
leadership is an invitation to reclaiming the full power of choice that we can access as humans, and to then collaborate with others for the benefit of all.

What does it look like when we do it?

Fundamentally, for me, it takes the form of stepping outside of the patriarchal norms within which we have become accustomed to live and which we use to evaluate everything, including our actions to transform patriarchy itself.

Internally: Since patriarchy rests on an incessant drive to control that of which we are afraid, one clear step forward is to shift from control to humility; from fear and protection to opening our hearts to the humanity of everyone; and from an exterior of strength to tenderness and vulnerability. This is the kind of practice that allowed a number of Civil Rights activists in the ’60s to express forgiveness to their killers as they were dying. This is what caring for the whole ultimately means.

The reward for this exacting practice is an immense expansion of freedom and choice. This is how the practice of vulnerability has made me so much stronger rather than weaker, as common norms would assume. The whole also includes us. Part of the practice is to increase our capacity for self-warmth and acceptance. No longer are we reactive, ruled by habitual fight/flight/ freeze responses. We develop, instead, the capacity to choose how we respond based on what I have come to call non-reactive discernment.

Interpersonally: One of the ways that I understand nonviolence is as the courage to speak truth with love. Sometimes, this means being empathic even when we are hurting, continuing to see and reflect to the other their own humanity and suffering even when they cannot hear us. One of my favorite examples of this is the work of Edwin Rutch, who has brought his Empathy Tent to rallies and events of both the right and the left, always inviting people to be listened to or to listen to each other.

Sometimes, interpersonal nonviolence means speaking up and asking the other to hear us first, allowing our hearts to break and showing the truth of what we say. Tenderness, towards self and other, allows us to metabolize our own and others’ failures to live up to our values and to recognize our embeddedness within systems that dramatically constrain our options and capacity for choice. Vulnerability breaks down the cycle of escalation that responds to harshness with erecting protection and distancing. Sharing our vulnerability in the face of distance and judgment breaks down barriers and allows the magic of connection to surface again.

In the world: Life in our modern world is defined by norms that go against our evolutionary makeup. We are implicitly instructed to treat each other with perpetual low-grade mistrust; to anticipate transactional relationships based on exchange rather than care and generosity; and to prioritize the smooth functioning of the status quo rather than truth, integrity, or purpose.
Instead, we can choose to embody, moment by moment, what nonviolent leadership entails, regardless of where we are. It means remembering our largest vision for the world; reflecting on our values; assessing the possibilities of the moment, including the risks we incur by acting outside the norms; and choosing what is ours to do given our own gifts, challenges, limitations, and deepest priorities. Sometimes, the difference would hardly be perceptible; maybe a smile to someone who’s been shunned by others. Sometimes, the difference would be heroic acts. An unknown African-American cashier received money from a man who had a swastika tattooed between his thumb and forefinger. Without losing a beat, she looked him in the eye and said something like: “Why are you doing this to yourself? You are better than that.” A year later, this man began a process that changed the course of his life, and he credits that one minute encounter as the watershed event that started him on his inner journey.

The times we live in are not “normal.” When I imagine more of us embracing the soft qualities of tenderness and subverting the hard-edged qualities of our times, even while stepping into more courage and truth, I have much more faith in the chances of surviving these times and finding again our place within the web of life that sustains us all.

"Come for One, Face Us All" by Molly Crabapple via Amplifier
Most conversations about nonviolence end before they really begin. They usually start out with, “I believe in nonviolence.” To which someone replies, “Nonviolence doesn’t work, and it wouldn’t have worked in [name any situation here].” What I’ve observed over the years is that such exchanges obscure how nonviolence actually works—from its basic definition to its strategic dynamics. Though nonviolence is “as old as the hills,” as Gandhi said, humanity is only just waking up to its power, and we still have a long way to go.

**NONVIOLENCE, DEFINED**

Nonviolence is a form of active power. It derives its force from our ability to harness our tendencies and drives toward separateness (harm) into thoughts, words, and actions that consciously heal, transform, and engage the best in those around us. It’s hard to capture an image that really tells the story of nonviolence in one picture, because it’s more subtle than groups of people coming together without guns or with signs—it’s about the courage that it requires to renounce retributive actions in favor of restoring humanity to people and re-building respectful communication and relationships among parties.

Conflict is part of life, necessary even. Dehumanization, however, is another story—it saps our power. So we have to look beneath the surface to understand nonviolence. Whenever we realize someone is holding back a word that can harm another person, that’s nonviolence. Whenever we know that someone is trying to think of the needs of everyone, that is nonviolence. Whenever someone is provoked into violence but refuses to go along with it, that is nonviolence. That is, however, only the tip of the iceberg—it can also be used in constructive actions that undermine violent systems and in resistance movements based on mass participation.

**THE TWO WINGS OF NONVIOLENCE**

Imagine that well-worn symbol of peace, the dove. Like this dove, nonviolence also has two wings: constructive program and obstructive program, or satyagraha.

**Constructive actions** (or “program” if it is embedded within a campaign) serve to build up the kind of solutions that need to be in place to challenge the violence of a situation. Groups for women seeking to get out of abusive relationships, for example, always recommend that before she makes her move to leave, she has a plan in place: somewhere to stay, some money put away, and a means to keep herself safe once she is out of the situation she’s in. So it is with any situation of violence—we need to prepare a pathway out of what isn’t working. A famous example is in the Indian Freedom Struggle, when activists renounced British cloth in favor of making their own. Or in the United States, we witnessed a movement of constructive program with the United Farm Workers Union, created to empower people whose subjugation is contingent upon their lack of unity and lack of access to resources.

**Obstructive actions**, on the other hand (or wing), are about expressing our non-consent to the violence, whether built into some arrangement, out in the open, or both. With our words, with our bodies, with our actions, we emphasize: “Stop. I won’t let you do this.” Obstructive actions usually feature all the glamour of nonviolence, getting all the attention; but in fact they are only a small part of what is required for effecting lasting nonviolent change. Moreover, obstructive actions require a firm commitment to nonviolent discipline. We have to make sure that we can say “no” to the behavior of a person or a group without saying “no” to their humanity. That’s the part of them that we want to try to awaken.
Let’s return to our dove for a moment. It’s soaring. Sometimes tipping its wing toward the left, sometimes toward the right. Sometimes, the wings move in unison. Is it by a miracle? Not exactly—it’s because the bird has a brain. In our metaphor, this means strategy. The bird has a clear sense: Where am I going? What is my purpose? How do I get from this tree to the top of that house? And when do I flap which wing?

**PEOPLE CAN CHANGE**

What means would we use if we were convinced that people cannot change their thoughts and behaviors? That once we believe something about the world, we have to believe it forever? That once we say something out of ignorance, our ignorance can never be corrected? Clearly, there would be only one possible means: violence. The means, which path we choose, and our image of what is possible for human beings—and what we know about life and nature—are integral. This is why in its series of books about Gandhi (collections of his thoughts from the earliest to the latest part of his career in nonviolence), Navjivan Press printed a simple statement from Gandhi, who said, “In my search after Truth I have discarded many ideas and learnt many new things. Old as I am in age, I have no feeling that I have ceased to grow inwardly … and, therefore, when anybody finds any inconsistency between any two writings of mine, if he has still faith in my sanity, he would do well to choose the later of the two on the same subject.” He expressed in his life how people can change, how we synthesize new information based on new experiences.

Nonviolence will always make things better down the line, because it exerts a humanizing force into a dehumanized situation.

What I’m getting at here is that for nonviolence to be effective, we have to hold onto faith in one another to be able to change through persuasion by emotional and rational means. Then, we have to make space for one another to be able to re-integrate into our societies while going through that process of change. This is why we say over and over again at the Metta Center for Nonviolence that nonviolence calls upon us to uphold a “higher image of the human being.” It’s not moral, although there are moral implications; it’s just being practical. It’s a matter of justifying, rationalizing our use of nonviolence based in our participation in a common human destiny. Even if we only sometimes reach the particular goal we thought we wanted, this kind of nonviolence, with its eyes on the uplift of the human image, will always make things better down the line, because it exerts a humanizing force into a dehumanized situation.

*Stephanie Van Hook* is Executive Director of the Metta Center for Nonviolence, Co-host of Nonviolence Radio, and *author of Gandhi Searches for Truth: A Practical Biography for Children* (*Person Power Press*, 2016).
One Hundred Year Plan: A Vision

by the METTA CENTER FOR NONVIOLENCE

“We offer our 100 Year Plan as a blueprint for a desired future. It is modeled on the “500 Year Plan for Peace” developed by the Sarvodaya Movement of Sri Lanka, and meant to be used the same way: to set out an inspiring vision of the goal and then stepped back incrementally to identify what has to be accomplished at 90 years from now, then 80 years from now, etc., coming down to the immediate present, seen in the context of the long change. This vision incorporates the three values Martin Luther King Jr. identified as primary: humanity, freedom, community. The six sectors of change follow those of the Metta Center’s Roadmap. (See an illustration of the Roadmap, with its six wedges, on page 9.)

WHAT WE ENVISION BEING CARRIED OUT BY 2120 CE

New Story
The paradigm shift to a “new story” has long been accomplished in virtually all societies. In fact, a global culture has arisen whose key elements—reverence for the earth, human dignity, etc.—are acceptable to and practiced by peoples across the globe, alongside flourishing aspects of their own diverse cultures. The principle of unity-in-diversity that was once articulated so well by Martin Luther King Jr.—“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”—operates everywhere.

Peace
The condition of the world community is one of stable peace. Peace is universally understood as not merely the absence of war but a state where all parties desire one another’s welfare. Violent conflicts do not often arise, thanks to the awareness of human interconnectedness and the greatly reduced need people perceive for material possessions and egoistic gratification brought about by their higher image and sense of purpose. When conflicts do arise, they are resolved creatively, in a network of robust institutions. The family of nations has become a true community, not organized hierarchically but with global institutions in which all are equally represented, mostly by bio-region.

Common to all these cultures is a true image of the human being, of the presence of consciousness in the universe and throughout evolution, and of a living planet. Furthermore, the norm of nonviolence is expressing itself across all relationships and institutions. Education, which is free, universal, and meaning-oriented, incorporates this “new story,” which is now recognized as a perennial vision universal to all traditions of human wisdom. In the context of this vision, people everywhere are aware of their own high purpose within the meaning of life, and able to pursue it. It is common knowledge that human beings are mind, body, and spirit; that they have rich inner resources, including the capacity to offer nonviolence and respond to it; and that all of us are deeply interconnected.

“The most powerful leverage point in a system is ‘changing the dream.’ This is not just a metaphor. Visions have power!” ~ Donella Meadows
While trade and travel are common, using technologies that do not deplete or damage earth’s resources, most communities enjoy a high degree of self-sufficiency. At this level, as elsewhere, competition has given way to cooperation.

After having briefly resurfaced in the general demoralization that characterized the early twenty-first century, cross-border outrages to the human spirit—slavery, human trafficking, drugs, international criminal networks—have disappeared. Each person participates in the world community via a series of concentric relationships akin to Gandhi’s “Oceanic Circle.”

**Democracy & Social Justice**

True democracies based on the judgment of informed participants are the norm. Social justice is solidly guaranteed within these societies by the strong fellow-feeling among all people, based primarily on the vivid perception of the unity of life, and secondarily on the greatly reduced dependence on externals (relative to the present time). Consensus decision-making is practiced in smaller social groups, perfectly fair and accurate voting where that is impracticable. Trust and service characterize most human relationships. Justice, based on what Gandhi called “heart unity,” begins in the home and community but is widely adopted internationally.

**Vibrant & Needs-based Economies**

Advertising is no more—at least not in the highly manipulative forms by which it dominated the cultural landscape of the twenty-first century. In accordance with the image of the human being that has prevailed for some time, people are aware that once the need for food, clothing, and shelter is met, their fulfillment does not require exploitation of the earth or one another. Decentralized economic systems now easily fulfill the basic material needs of all persons and provide dignified, uplifting work for all according to their interests and capacities.

**Climate Protection**

As the vibrant sense of unity with a “living earth” is now universal, there has long since been no further need for special efforts to protect or restore the environment. “Global warming” (a euphemism no longer current) has long since been reversed. All external energy is now supplied from renewable sources like sunlight, tide, and wind, or others not yet imagined, as are resources like food and medicine. Human communities work with the earth to preserve and sustain its life-supporting systems.

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**The Environment**

The human population has stabilized. Virtually all people can live in contact with, and deeply appreciate, the beauty of unspoiled nature.

**SAMPLE BENCHMARKS**

**2025:** Restorative Justice has become the norm in all schools throughout the United States, and other societies are following suit, if they were not in fact ahead in this development. Activists and reformers are well-versed in the “new story” and have used it to encourage this change.

**2040:** Restorative Justice has spread to the prison system, which is accordingly greatly reduced in size from its peak in the early decades of the century.

**2050:** The same principles of human dignity, forgiveness, and reconciliation spread to the international system: war is over.

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The Metta Center for Nonviolence provides educational resources on the safe and effective use of nonviolence. Learn more at mettacenter.org.
Strategy: Definition & Some Resources

by MICHAEL N. NAGLER
What are the stepping stones that will take us across the river of time from the shore of injustice to the world of nonviolence and peace? We have tried, in this issue of Nonviolence and with this brief list of resources, to respond to the definition of strategy that was put forward by Peter Ackerman and Christopher Kruegler in Strategic Nonviolent Conflict: The Dynamics of People Power in the Twentieth Century (Praeger, 1993): “Strategy in its broadest sense, is the process by which one analyzes a given conflict and determines how to gain objectives at minimum expense and risk.” It was somewhat elaborated later by Jean-Marie Muller in his Dictionnaire de la Non-Violence (Éditions Le Relié, 2005; my translation):

[N]onviolent strategy consists, after one has analyzed the situation and evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of different protagonists, in choosing and planning different actions and putting them into effect in a coordinated manner with a view to attain a specific political objective…. The planning of a campaign calls for a comprehensive overview of the sequence of different actions making up a progression that can lead to victory.

In my introductory essay in this issue (page 8), I briefly alluded to a set of stepping stones: from establishing restorative justice as the disciplinary system (or at least an alternative made available) in a nation’s schools, and then to its prison system, and from there—joining with other states as well—to an abolition of war. These three giant steps progress in difficulty, starting from something conceivable to achieve right now to a goal at present all but unthinkable. The common thread that would make such a progress achievable, and which we think the actors should not hesitate to articulate, would be a “new story” image of the human being as deeply interconnected and fundamentally able to change.

Strategy in this sense (which I see as the biggest missing element in today’s progressive movements) is to be distinguished from tactics; I quote here from Andrew Boyd, who co-assembled Beautiful Trouble: A Toolbox for Revolution (OR Books, 2012): “Don’t let an individual tactic distract from a larger strategy. Strategy is your overall plan, and tactics are those things you do to implement the plan—a distinction critical for structuring effective campaigns.” We have not included much on the overlapping, but different questions of organization or training (our Summer/Fall 2017 issue looked at training) which are well-covered elsewhere. Here are a few representative samples of the welcome upsurge of interest in strategy proper:

**BOOKS**

Andrew Boyd, Ed. Beautiful Trouble: A Toolbox for Revolution (OR Books, 2012). I recommend especially the “Escalate strategically” page. Boyd, et al make an instructive comparison between Students for a Democratic Society and the contemporaneous Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. The former organization led itself into a dead-end by choosing violence. The Beautiful Trouble website has an extremely useful tool, which is also fun to use: beautifultrouble.org/2013/03/12/visualize-beautiful-trouble. As stated on the site, Beautiful Trouble and Beautiful Rising: Creative Resistance from the Global South are books and web toolboxes that put the accumulated wisdom of decades of creative protest into the hands of the next generation of changemakers.

Robert J. Burrowes, The Strategy of Nonviolent Defense: A Gandhian Approach. Burrowes’s point of departure is the concept of Civilian Based Defense that generated a lot of enthusiasm among scholars and activists after the 1968–1969 Prague Spring uprising in which Czech citizens held off a Warsaw Pact takeover for eight months against seemingly impossible odds. Though he continues to use the term “defense,” he covers nonviolent resistance generally, drawing often on Gandhi, and has a great deal of useful insight to share about matters such as timing, negotiation, evaluation, etc. He also touches on constructive program. While Burrowes situates the development of nonviolence in a new “social cosmology” (what we call the “new story”), he does not say much about how to transition to that new paradigm.

Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan, Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict (Columbia University Press, 2011). This breakthrough study, the first of its kind in political science, furnishes eye-opening documentation of the power of nonviolent (or non-violent) uprisings as opposed to armed struggle. Along the way it provides many insights into the do’s and don’ts of such struggles.
Mark Engler and Paul Engler, *This is an Uprising: How Nonviolent Revolt Is Shaping the Twenty-First Century* (Nation Books, 2016). This is an indispensable study of the distinction between “strategic” and “principled” nonviolence (the authors understand the distinction a bit differently from my own view, which sees the former as a stepping-stone to the latter), and many strategic principles today’s movements are slowly (perhaps too slowly) learning. This book (along with other relevant reads) is offered as a gift to new subscribers of wagingnonviolence.org.


George Lakey, *Powerful Peacemaking: A Strategy for a Living Revolution* (New Society Publishers, 1987). This is a classic, based on years of experience with training and organizing.


Srdja Popovic, Slobodan Djinovic, Andrej Milivojevic, Hardy Merriman, and Ivan Marovic, *CANVAS Core Curriculum: A Guide to Effective Nonviolent Struggle: Students Book* (2007). The Centre for Applied Nonviolent Action and Strategies (CANVAS) grew out of the successful overthrow of the Slobodan Milosevic regime in Serbia in 2000, and has been used for similar movements worldwide. The paperback version of the book, at least on Amazon, is wildly expensive but you can get a PDF of it under the Library tab on the CANVAS website (click the “Publications” link). See also the documentary *Bringing Down a Dictator*, which features Srdja Popovic and Ivan Marovic.


War Resisters’ International, *Handbook for Nonviolent Campaigns* (2009). The chapter on planning nonviolent campaigns is especially valuable. This book also covers organizing, training, evaluation, etc. It provides many case studies, as with almost all the resources listed here.

**WEBSITES**


*Pace e Bene* ([paceebene.org](http://paceebene.org)). In addition to useful articles by Bill Moyer (not Moyers), you’ll find strategic and other tips on the “Mainstreaming Nonviolence” page.

*The Vernal Education Project* ([vernalproject.org](http://vernalproject.org)). I highly recommend the articles by Randy Schutt.

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Michael N. Nagler is Founder of the Metta Center for Nonviolence and author of *The Nonviolence Handbook: A Practical Guidebook.*
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Thanks in advance for the wonderful support!

We work with students, educators, activists, members of the media, and military personnel from around the world who see, however far off in the future, a vision of healing, respect, justice, and compassion based on a much higher image of the human being and the meaning of life. Thanks for joining us in building a more nonviolent world.
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THE BEAT OF AN UNSTOPPABLE MOVEMENT

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