

DOING JUSTICE THROUGH SOULFORCE

I. “Help those who suffer”

II. “Help cut off the suffering at its source”

I. Help those who suffer THROUGH CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMS: “...quiet, solid, substantial work in direct personal service of the masses, suffering for them, organizing them, and educating them in the ways of nonviolence, thus bringing about a peaceful atmosphere of solemn determination.”¹ (Ex., community centers, churches and synagogues, counseling programs, telephone hot lines, food/clothing banks, grassroots training & organizing, parades, rallies, celebrations, bookstores, etc.)

IIA. Help cut off the suffering at its source THROUGH NEGOTIATION: (9 Nonviolent Guidelines to help us persuade our adversary to end the words or actions that lead to suffering.)

1. Before any negotiations begin, I will investigate my opponent’s position carefully, trying to understand exactly what my opponent is saying or doing and why my opponent is saying or doing it.
2. I will confront my opponent’s words and/or actions that lead to suffering on the basis of truth alone (without resorting to half-truth, exaggerations, unsubstantiated claims, or lies of my own.)
3. I will confront my opponent’s words and/or actions lovingly, without resorting to physical, spiritual, or psychological violence.
4. I will confront my opponent’s words/actions relentlessly, refusing to give up or to compromise my truth (or any portion of it) unless my opponent proves me wrong. In that case, I will admit my error gratefully, seek my opponent’s forgiveness, and if all is resolved, end the confrontation in peace.
5. Throughout our negotiations I will work to earn my opponent’s trust and friendship.
6. I will refuse to break off our negotiations until we have reached a third position that is acceptable to us both.
7. I will question the ideas that lead to suffering. I will not question the motive or the integrity of the person who holds those ideas.
8. If my opponent and I cannot reach an acceptable third position, I will ask my opponent to choose with me a neutral, third party, respected by us both to arbitrate our differences.
9. If my opponent breaks off negotiations, refuses to arbitrate, or maintains negotiations to stall or end our confrontation, I will have no other option but to take direct action against my opponent.

IIB. Help cut off the cause of suffering at its source THROUGH DIRECT ACTION: (12 Nonviolent Guidelines for the use of direct action to get negotiations started when our adversary refuses to negotiate or when negotiations break down (ex., boycott, fast, march, strike, civil disobedience, etc.)

1. The primary goal of any direct action is reconciliation, not victory.
2. Any direct action must be planned and conducted to win the heart and mind of our opponent, not to terrorize, overwhelm, embarrass, shame or force our opponent into submission.
3. A direct action is taken when we know no other way to end the impasse and to revive the discussion that will lead us to a third position we both can accept;
4. Although one individual alone may enter into a direct action against an opponent’s untruth, it is always important to consider the greater good that comes by making our case clear to the public.
5. Sometimes just in the act of recruiting/training allies, the opponent is moved to reconciliation.
6. The primary principles of 'soul force' (truth, love, self-suffering) must guide our relationships with our friends and allies as much as it guides our confrontation with the adversary;
7. Any direct action(s) we take must be as pure and as loving as the end we seek;
8. We refuse to participate in any direct action that involves physical violence;
9. We refuse to participate in any psychological or spiritual violence as well.
10. We will accept/absorb any suffering that results from our direct action without anger or retaliation;
11. We will do our best to take on ourselves any suffering that our direct action causes our opponent;
12. We will not fear (or seek) our own death but if death comes to us out of our quest for justice, we will accept it as a gift from God and know “that death is not the end, but the beginning of life.”²

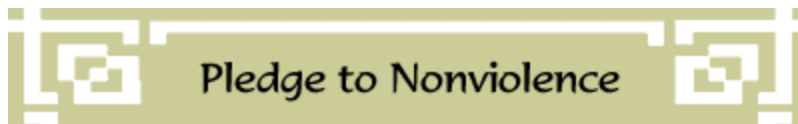
¹ Gandhi, *Harijan*, May 18, 1940, p. 129.

² Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s last words before being hanged by the Nazis.

The Eight Basic Steps of the Soul Force process...

- Commit and recommit ourselves to the nonviolent Soul Force principles;
- Research the case against our adversary carefully, in print, audio and video;
- Negotiate with our adversary first: amicably, carefully, relentlessly, if this fails;
- Educate the media, our allies, and the allies of our adversary;
- Recruit and train allies for direct action;
- Confront our adversary with direct action only to move negotiations forward;
- Negotiate a third position that will satisfy us both;
- Reconcile with our adversary and help bring in “the beloved community” which is the ultimate goal of Soulforce.

*By Mel White for Soulforce, Inc.™ from the writings of Gandhi and King.
For more information visit: www.soulforce.org*



The Pledge to Nonviolence
Originally written by Martin Luther King, Jr.
Modified by Soulforce, Inc. 2003
<http://www.soulforce.org/article/291>

1. As I prepare for this direct action, I will meditate regularly on the life and teachings of Gandhi and King and other truth-seekers.
2. I will remember that the nonviolent movement seeks justice and reconciliation-not victory.
3. I will walk and talk in the manner of love and nonviolence.
4. I will contemplate daily what I can do so that all can be free.
5. I will sacrifice my own personal wishes that all might be free.
6. I will observe with friend and foes the ordinary rules of courtesy.
7. I will perform regular service for others and for the world.
8. I will refrain from violence of fist, tongue, and heart.
9. I will strive to be in good spiritual and bodily health.
10. I will follow the directions of the squad leaders and other Soulforce leaders on our nonviolent direct actions.