

Season for Nonviolence

64 Daily Practices

Greater Dallas Task Force

WEEK 1 (1-7)

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

Day 1 – COURAGE (Jan. 30)

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

Day 2 – SMILING (Jan. 31)

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

Day 3 – APPRECIATION (Feb. 1)

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

Day 4 – CARING (Feb. 2)

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

Day 5 – BELIEVING (Feb. 3)

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

Day 6 -- SIMPLICITY (Feb. 4)

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

Day 7 – EDUCATION (Feb. 5)

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

WEEK 2 (8-14)

Personal centeredness gives us the inner peace and calm to respond to situations with nonviolent means. Building that inner center is the first act of peace making.

Day 8 – HEALING (Feb. 6)

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

Day 9 –DREAMING (Feb. 7)

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

Day 10 – FAITH (Feb. 8)

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

Day 11 – CONTEMPLATION (Feb. 9)

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

Day 12 – GROUNDEDNESS (Feb. 10)

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

Day 13 – CREATIVITY (Feb. 11)

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

Day 14 – HUMILITY (Feb. 12)

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

WEEK 3 (15-21)

By practicing nonviolence with ourselves, we begin to see how it might apply toward others. Each personal practice can be turned into a practice toward another. Try it.

Day 15 – REVERENCE (Feb. 13)

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

Day 16 – GRATITUDE (Feb. 14)

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

Day 17 – INTEGRITY (Feb. 15)

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

Day 18 – FREEDOM (Feb. 16)

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

Day 19 – ACCEPTANCE (Feb. 17)

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

Day 20 – SELF-FORGIVENESS (Feb. 18)

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

Day 21 – INSPIRATION (Feb. 19)

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

WEEK 4 (22-28)

“The nonviolent approach does not immediately change the heart of the oppressor. It first does something to the hearts and souls of those committed to it. It gives them new self-respect; it calls up resources of strength and courage they did not know they had.” -- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Day 22 – MISSION (Feb. 20)

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

Day 23 – PRAYER (Feb. 21)

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

Day 24 – HARMONY (Feb. 22)

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

Day 25 – FRIENDLINESS (Feb. 23)

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

Day 26 – RESPECT (Feb. 24)

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

Day 27 – GENEROSITY (Feb. 25)

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

Day 28 – LISTENING (Feb. 26)

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

WEEK 5 (29-35)

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

Day 29 – FORGIVENESS (Feb. 27)

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

Day 30 – AMENDS (Feb. 28)

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

Day 31 – PRAISING (March 1)

Appreciation helps people to grow and lets them know that they matter. Offer praise to at least three people today for their personal qualities, achievements, or helpful service.

Day 32 – PATIENCE (March 2)

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

Day 33 – ACKNOWLEDGEMENT (March 3)

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

Day 34 – LOVE (March 4)

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

Day 35 – UNDERSTANDING (March 5)

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

WEEK 6 (36-42)

To require others to change for us to be more peaceful does violence to us both. By choosing to be peaceful in relationship, we invite others to nonviolence in return.

Day 36 – MINDFULNESS (March 6)

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

Day 37 – GRACIOUSNESS (March 7)

When you are out driving today, slow down, and let the other person in front of you. Stop and let pedestrians cross the street.

Day 38 – KINDNESS (March 8)

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

Day 39 – DIALOGUE (March 9)

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

Day 40 – UNITY (March 10)

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

Day 41 – OPENNESS (March 11)

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

Day 42 – ACCOUNTABILITY (March 12)

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

WEEK 7 (43-49)

Relationships based on nonviolence are built on the ability to see and understand another human being, whether or not we agree. Seeing people from our common ground gives us practice for bringing nonviolent actions, choices and behaviors into our communal life.

Day 43 – UNIQUENESS (March 13)

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

Day 44 – COOPERATION (March 14)

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

Day 45—MASTERY (March 15)

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

Day 46 – COMPASSION (March 16)

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

Day 47 – DISARMAMENT (March 17)

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

Day 48 – ECOLOGY (March 18)

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

Day 49 – HONOR (March 19)

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

WEEK 8 (50-56)

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

Day 50 – CHOICE (March 20)

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

Day 51 – ADVOCACY (March 21)

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

Day 52 – EQUALITY (March 22)

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

Day 53 – ACTION (March 23)

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

Day 54 – GIVING (March 24)

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

Day 55 – RESPONSIBILITY (March 25)

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

Day 56 – SELF-SUFFICIENCY (March 26)

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

WEEK 9 (57-63)

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

Day 57 – SERVICE (March 27)

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

Day 58 – CITIZENSHIP (March 28)

Robert Muller, former assistant secretary general to the UN, urges, "use every letter you write, every conversation you have, every meeting you attend, to express your most important beliefs and dreams." Today call or write one of your legislators and register your views.

Day 59 – INTERVENTION (March 29)

Alcohol and drug abuse is both a consequence and a cause of violence. Today have the courage to intervene in a caring way. Through your honest and straightforward communication, encourage yourself and others to get educated, get help, and get sober and free from drugs.

Day 60 – WITNESSING (March 30)

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

Day 61 – PEACE (March 31)

Thich Nhat Hanh wrote, "Practice watering seeds of joy and peace and not just seeds of anger and violence, and the elements of war in all of us will be transformed." Today, make a choice to meet each experience with an intention for peace.

Day 62 – COMMITMENT (April 1)

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

Day 63 – RELEASE (April 2)

A Sufi proverb says, "When the heart weeps for what it has lost, the spirit laughs for what it has found."

Today look at how far you have come during this 64 day journey. Release the weight of your past, judgments of yourself and others, and the idea that world peace is not possible by acknowledging that you do make a difference.

WEEK 10

“Nonviolence should mean a complete freedom from ill-will, anger and hate and an overflowing love for all The nonviolence I teach is active nonviolence of the strongest. But the weakest can partake in it without becoming weaker.” – Mohandas K. Gandhi

Days 64 and 65 – CELEBRATION (April 3 and 4)

Today, rejoice in the work that you have done. Celebrate the journey that you have made with countless others who believe that every individual can move the world in the direction of peace with their nonviolent choice and action.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."
-Margaret Mead.