

a season for nonviolence

Rocky Mountain Alliance

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 In Commemoration of the Memorial Anniversaries of M.K. Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

DAAILY PRACTICES

M.K. Gandhi said, “My optimism rests on my belief in the infinite possibilities of the individual to develop nonviolence. The more you develop it in your own being the more infectious it becomes till it overwhelms your surroundings and by and by might oversweep the world.” Indeed, individual efforts do make a difference. And, the only way we, as a society, will affect change on a grand level is to change our own individual attitudes and consciousness. Be the small stone that creates the big ripple in the lake by using these practices as your guide, and making a commitment to practice nonviolence for the nine weeks of *A Season for Nonviolence*.

Honoring Self

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

Day 1. “A man must elevate himself by his own mind, not degrade himself. The mind is the friend of the conditioned soul, and his enemy as well.” Bhagavad Gita VI-5.
Today, I affirm my value and worth with positive “self talk” and refuse to put myself down.

Day 2. “Every time you don’t follow your inner guidance, you feel a loss of energy, loss of power, a sense of spiritual deadness,” said Shakti Gawain.
Today, I am guided by my intuition to respond to experiences in a peaceful and constructive manner.

Day 3. “If you have inner peace, the external problems do not affect your deep sense of tranquility. You are happy regardless of circumstances,” wrote the Dalai Lama.
Today, I use prayer, meditation and/or other practices that deepen my inner peace.

Day 4. “The body is, quite literally, our vehicle for being – for giving, for loving, for moving, for feeling – and if it doesn’t work, it’s fairly certain that nothing else in our lives will work either,” says Diana K. Roesch.
Today, I relieve stress by exercising in a way that is fun for me.

Day 5. “Our deepest feelings, our passions and longings, are essential guides, and our species owes much of its existence to their power in human affairs,” explains Daniel Goleman.
Today, I pay attention to my feelings and what they are guiding me to do.

Day 6. Gloria Graham said, “The body is a sacred garment. It’s your first and last garment; it is what you enter life with and what you depart life with, and it should be treated with honor.”
Today, I honor my physical and mental well being by consuming only healthy foods and beverages.

Day 7. Abraham Lincoln said, “To sin by silence when they could protest makes cowards out of men.”
Today, I say, “No” to ideas and actions that violate me or others.

Honoring Others

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

Day 8. Mother Teresa shared her wisdom, “We should realize that poverty doesn’t only consist in being hungry for bread, but rather it is a tremendous hunger for human dignity. We need to love and to be somebody for someone else.”
Today, I support every being’s right to justice and equality.

Day 9. “Life is not so short but that there is always time for courtesy.” Ralph Waldo Emerson.
Today, I am courteous in my thoughts, words and actions toward others.

Day 10. Benjamin Disraeli said, “We are all born for love. It is the principle of existence, and its only end.”
Today, I identify something special in everyone I meet.

Day 11. “The greatest gift we can give to one another is rapt attention to one another’s existence.” Sue Atchley Ebaugh.
Today, I handle every interaction with courtesy, respect and patience, especially driving my car.

Day 12. “Our job is not to straighten each other out, but to help each other up,” explains Neva Coyle.
Today, I support others in finding peaceful solutions to conflicts.



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Day 13. “We must see ourselves reflected in every other human being...and respect and honor our differences,” said Melba Pattillo Beals, one of the first nine African-American students to attend Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Today, I appreciate other races and cultures recognizing that they enrich our world.

Day 14. “Every action generates a force of energy that returns to us in like kind... what we sow is what we reap,” shared Deepak Chopra.

Today, I cause a ripple effect of good by an act of kindness toward another.

Honoring the Environment

Our commitment to nonviolence extends to all of creation. We honor and respect the earth that sustains our lives.

Day 15. 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, I take time to admire and appreciate nature.

Day 16. “Man masters nature not by force but by understanding,” said Jacob Bronowski, British scientist.
Today, I practice nonviolence and respect for Mother Earth by making good use of her resources.

Day 17. 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.”
Today, I appreciate the earth’s bounty and all those who work to make my food available (i.e., grower, trucker, grocery clerk, cook, waitress, etc.).

Day 18. “It is the greatest of all mistakes to do nothing because you can only do a little. Do what you can,” counseled Sydney Smith.
Today, I recycle to reduce waste, and conserve energy and water.

Day 19. “What is man without beasts? If all the beasts were gone, man would die from a great loneliness of spirit. For whatever happens to the beast, soon happens to man. All things are connected,” observed Chief Seattle.
Today, I recognize that my treatment of animals reflects my respect for life.

Day 20. Mohandas K. Gandhi said, “To forget how to dig the earth and tend the soil is to forget ourselves.”
Today, I plant a seed or nurture a plant.

Day 21. “I firmly believe that nature brings solace in all troubles,” wrote Anne Frank in her diary.
Today, I notice the peacefulness in the world around me.

Expressing Gratitude

Maintaining an attitude of gratitude helps us focus on the positive things in our life and avoid the stresses that contribute to violence.

Day 22. Albert Schweitzer said, “To affirm life is to deepen, and to exalt the will to live.”
Today, I celebrate and give thanks for my life and all its blessings.

Day 23. “Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend,” states Melody Beattie.
Today, I start a journal of gratitude and each day I write down at least three things for which I am grateful.



Day 24. “If you bless a situation, it has no power to hurt you, and even if it is troublesome for a time, it will gradually fade out, if you sincerely bless it.” Emmet Fox.

Today, I look for the good in all situations and am grateful for all that I learn from them.

Day 25. 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, I appreciate humor and laughter for bringing joy into my life.

Day 26. Dale Carnegie said, “Flattery is from the teeth out. Sincere appreciation is from the heart out.”

Today, I thank three people who are making a difference in my life.

Day 27. “None who have always been free can understand the terrible fascinating power of the hope of freedom to those who are not free,” observed Pearl Buck.

Today, I give thanks for the freedom and opportunities this country provides to me.

Day 28. “We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give,” counseled W.A. Nance.

Today, I am grateful for the opportunity to express myself through my work and give 100 percent effort to each task.

Day 29. Samuel Johnson wrote, “The true, strong, and sound mind is the mind that can embrace equally great things and small.”

Today, I give thanks for products and services that make my life safe, comfortable and convenient.

Practicing Forgiveness

The practice of forgiveness is another way to avoid violence. To earn forgiveness we practice the 4 “Rs” - taking responsibility, expressing remorse, making repairs and promising never to repeat. To grant forgiveness we let go of our anger and resentment toward others.

Day 30. H.L. Hunt is credited with saying, “Each is responsible for his own actions.”

Today, I accept responsibility for my words and actions that have injured others.

Day 31. “A man should never be ashamed to say he has been wrong, which is but saying in other words that he is wiser today than he was yesterday.” Alexander Pope

Today, I express sincere regret and apologize to those I have hurt by my words or actions.

Day 32. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. shared his wisdom, “The time is always right to do what is right.”

Today, I do what I can to repair any harm I have caused others.

Day 33. “We learn wisdom from failure much more than from success. And probably he who never made a mistake, never made a discovery,” said Samuel Smiles.

Today, I promise not to repeat actions which have caused harm in the past.

Day 34. Indira Gandhi shared, “You cannot shake hands with a clenched fist.”

Today, I release resentment toward anyone who has injured me, seeing each—as I see myself—as a work in process.

Day 35. “You make yourself and others suffer just as much when you take offense as when you give offense,” advises Ken Keyes, Jr.

Today, I choose to neither take nor give offense.

Day 36. “He that cannot forgive others, breaks the bridge over which he must pass himself; for every man has need to be forgiven,” counseled Lord Herbert.

Today, I practice compassion and forgiveness for myself and others.

Demonstrating Compassion

Compassion is the deep feeling of sharing the suffering of another, together with the inclination to give aid or support or to show mercy. The practice of compassion opens our heart and clears our mind of any tendency toward violence.

Day 37. Thich Nhat Hanh says, “When you understand, you cannot help but love.... Practice looking at all living beings with the eyes of compassion.”

Today, in all my interactions, I seek to understand and empathize with others.

Day 38. “When I help with pre-school, I love to support the learning, not to give away the answers but to help out so they can figure it out on their own.” Jacinda Croissant, age 12 years.

Today, I care for other people, to help them.

Day 39. “Since at the beginning and end of our lives we are completely dependent on the kindness of others, how can it be that in the middle we would neglect kindness toward others?” asks the Dalai Lama.

Today, I take time to be kind to children and senior citizens.

Day 40. Mother Teresa implored us to “find someone who thinks he is alone and let him know that he is not.”

Today, I tell others I care for them.

Day 41. Albert Schweitzer stated, “Example is not the main thing in influencing others. It is the only thing.”

Today, I show caring toward people I don't always like.

Day 42. “To love and be loved is to feel the sun from both sides.” observed David Viscott, M.D.

Today, I take time to tell my family and friends how much they mean to me.

Day 43. “When you meet a man, you judge him by his clothes; when you leave, you judge him by his heart.” Russian proverb.

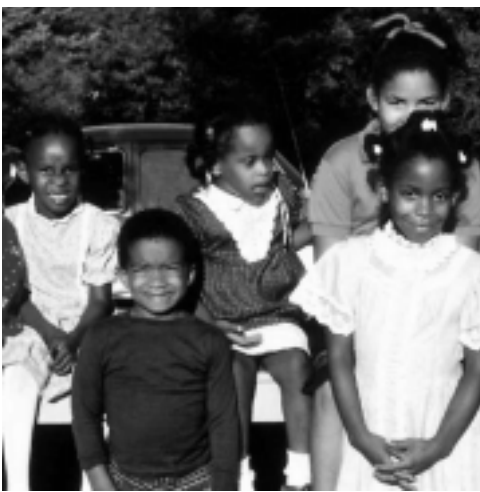
Today, I explore ways to come from my heart in each encounter with others.

Choosing Peaceful Thoughts

Our words and actions flow from our beliefs, values and attitudes. Creating peace in our lives begins by creating and nurturing peaceful thoughts.

Day 44. Jana Gassen commented, “Be careful of your thoughts, they may become words at any moment.”

Today, I examine my words and actions to see what beliefs they reflect.



Day 45. “The most powerful thing you can do to change the world is to change your own beliefs about the nature of life, people, reality, to something more positive...and begin to act accordingly,” recommends Shakti Gawain.

Today, I release one belief that no longer serves me in my interaction with others.

Day 46. “Let us not love only in words or in talk, but let us put our love in action and make it real.” John 3:18.

Today, I think of at least three peaceful ways I can handle a situation when confronted with conflict.

Day 47. Albert Einstein shared, “No problem can be solved from the same consciousness that created it. We must learn to see the world anew.”

Today, I am open to new ways of thinking about problems.

Day 48. “As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.” Proverbs 23:7.

Today, for at least three minutes, I relax, breathe deeply, and let my mind be fed by “whatsoever is good and beautiful.”

Day 49. 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, I do not allow my thoughts to be polluted by violence, whether in entertainment or news.

Day 50. “When I talk about controlling the mind, I mean cultivating less anger, more respect for others’ rights, more concern for other people, more clear realization of our sameness as human beings,” explains the Dalai Lama.

Today, I choose to be aware of what my thoughts, words, and deeds express.

Choosing Peaceful Communication

We demonstrate our commitment to peace by the words we choose to express our thoughts and feelings.

Day 51. Management guru, Peter Drucker said, “The important thing in communication is to hear what isn't being said.”

Today, I will listen so that others will talk, and talk so that others will listen.

Day 52. “Nonviolence is talking about your problems, thinking it over and trying to understand the other person's point of view and finding a solution that is acceptable to everyone.” Joseph Grubb, age 11.

Today, I listen and then ask questions to help me understand what someone else is saying.

Day 53. “Make no judgments where you have no compassion,” said Anne McCaffrey.

Today, I express my feelings without judging or blaming others.

Day 54. “The men and women that are lifting the world upward and onward are those who encourage more than criticize,” shared Elizabeth Harrison.

Today, I practice praise rather than criticism.

Day 55. Benjamin Franklin said, “I will speak ill of no man, and speak all the good I know of everybody.”

Today, I choose to be aware of what I talk about and I refuse to gossip.

Day 56. George Eliot said, “Blessed is the influence of one true, loving human soul on another.”

Today, I communicate with kindness, respect, and patience toward everyone.

Day 57. “All foods are good to eat, but not all words are fit to speak.” Haitian proverb.

Today, I will not use any bad, cruel or disrespectful language.

Day 58. “Treat others as you want them to treat you.” Luke 6:31.

Today, I turn my complaints into requests and listen for the requests of others that may be disguised as complaints.

Choosing Peaceful Actions

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

Day 59. “Robert Kennedy said, “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.”

Today, I oppose injustice, not people.

Day 60. “If you get mad, don't destroy your room or make a plan for revenge. Go somewhere with someone you feel comfortable with or go alone. Do something constructive but stress free. I play my violin, or go to the park with my dog.” Trevor K. Racine, age 12 years.

Today, I change my anger and frustration into good deeds.

Day 61. “Real leaders are ordinary people with extraordinary determination,” observed John Seaman Gaens.

Today, I cultivate my peacemaking skills so that I may be a leader in creative nonviolent action.

Day 62. “When we seek to discover the best in others, we somehow bring out the best in ourselves,” said William Arthur Ward.

Today, I work to help others respect and accept ways of thinking that are different from their own.

Day 63. 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.”

Today, I serve other people by giving my help when they need it.

Day 64. “There is no lovelier way to thank God for your sight than by giving a helping hand to someone in the dark.” Helen Keller.

Today, I lend a helping hand to those who are physically or mentally challenged.

Day 65. “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.

Today, I join with others to actively support community action to reduce violence in a peaceful manner.

Day 66. 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, I accept the courage to live nonviolently every day, — yes, it is possible.

