

Foreword by Ken Butigan

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Nonviolence is a stand against violence without using violence. But it is more than this. It is a vibrant, passionate way of being. It is creative problem-solving. It is active, surprising, serious, and powerful.

Hence the title of this book. Nonviolence is *engaging*. It does not shy away from conflict. It recognizes that conflict is perennial and essential. Perennial because we are all different. Essential because often it is only through conflict that our contending pieces of the truth can become clear. Nonviolent conflict can be a path to discovering a much larger truth.

Nonviolence is a process of engagement. It grapples with the violence and injustice in our lives and our world, by exposing and challenging injustice in creative ways that allow the situation to change and transform. To do this well ultimately requires a revolution in our thinking and practice. For those of us raised with a belief in violence, and educated in the ways of violence, the nonviolent path means slowly rearranging our understanding of the world and even our own identities. Critical to this transformative process of engagement is training and practice.

This is why Pace e Bene Nonviolence Service began publishing books supporting training in nonviolence nearly a quarter of a century ago, beginning with a series of manuals and handbooks for study groups, including *From Violence to Wholeness*; *Traveling with the Turtle: Women's Spirituality and Peacemaking*; and *Peace Grows: Exploring Cultures of Peace*. Using these guides, tens of thousands of people formed small groups to study and practice nonviolence together around the world—*From Violence to Wholeness*, for example, was translated into Spanish, Portuguese, French, Italian, and Creole.

At the same time, Pace e Bene organized or joined in many campaigns and movements for justice, peace, and environmental sustainability. Studying nonviolence prepared people for action; and action, in turn, nurtured ongoing training in the nonviolent life.

A decade after publishing its first study guide, Pace e Bene produced *Engage: Exploring Nonviolent Living*. This book incorporated many new stories, exercises, learnings, and principles of the vision and practice of nonviolence for personal and social change. As with these books, people used *En-*

gage to reflect deeply on their power as agents of nonviolent change in their families, their communities, and their societies. Many used its tools to build or strengthen their capacity to challenge war, oppose torture, safeguard human rights, and to foster constructive peace-building and restorative justice.

Now, more than a dozen years after the appearance of *Engage*, Pace e Bene is building on both its own work and the growing, worldwide lineage and culture of nonviolence education by publishing *Engaging Nonviolence*. The present volume began as an update of *Engage* but eventually became much more than that. It is a rich compendium of new resources that reflect the increasing proliferation of what can be called the technologies of everyday nonviolence as well as emergent methods designed to change the world. Such transformation is needed now more than ever, and this new book offers an interactive learning process that will help equip people for this soul-sized task.

The authors, Veronica Pelicaric and Nina Koevoets, have brought special expertise to this project. Pelicaric was part of the team—which included Laura Slattery, Ken Preston, and myself—that created the original *Engage* book. A native of Argentina who grew up during that country’s Dirty War, she has crisscrossed the globe for two decades facilitating nonviolence trainings in Asia, Australia, South America, the Caribbean, Europe, the United States, and Canada, where she now lives. Koevoets, a citizen of the Netherlands, is part of a new generation of nonviolence educators who are spreading the message of nonviolent change in a new and powerful way around the planet. With masters degrees in both global studies and conflict resolution and governance, Koevoets has trained in the United States and fine-tuned her skills by working for a number of social change organizations in different countries, including India, and performing voluntary service in Israel-Palestine. We are grateful for the experience and insights from multiple contexts that the authors have brought to this work.

This book is offered as a powerful resource for the critically important engagement we are all called to in this time of crisis and opportunity. Its publishing coincides with the growth and acceleration of Campaign Nonviolence, Pace e Bene’s long-term movement to foster a culture of nonviolence free from war, poverty, racism, and environmental destruction. Launched in 2014, this effort has spawned a number of projects: The Nonviolence Training Hub; the Nonviolent Cities Project; and the Campaign Nonviolence Action Week, an annual week of thousands of marches, rallies, and events worldwide connecting the dots between monumental forms of structural violence and working for a new, nonviolent culture. All these long-term initiatives, designed to mainstream nonviolence and to support a nonviolent shift in our lives and across the planet, will not succeed without being rooted in practice and reflection—without, indeed, “engaging nonviolence.”

Ken Butigan

A Word From the Authors

In 2005, Pace e Bene published *Engage: Exploring Nonviolent Living*. While Nina was using parts of the book for training courses she held in Europe for youth leaders and social workers, she realized the need for a revision. People wrote to her from Africa, Asia, and the Middle East requesting training and it became clear that a global audience was emerging. The interest in nonviolence has increased in many areas of the world in recent years and knowledge of its dynamics has expanded. The revision had to include these realities.

The term “nonviolence” needs some clarification: nonviolence and pacifism are not interchangeable. The latter addresses direct physical violence. The former is about actively taking a stance and creating a different paradigm for life and living. Ahimsa, the Hindi term Gandhi used for nonviolence, encompasses more than not harming; it is eminently about peaceful means, because means are ends in the making. The essence of nonviolence is a culture of peace that includes reverence for all of life and relationships, a restoration of what it means to be truly human. This is a journey of discovery, training, embracing, and committing.

Nonviolence offers powerful methods for opposing violence and injustice and for building just and peaceful alternatives. *Engaging Nonviolence* is designed to build your capacity to use these methods to address the direct, structural, or cultural violence that matters most to you. While this book necessarily touches on specific examples of violence—it is not possible to learn the ways of nonviolence without grappling with the realities of violence—its primary focus is to equip you with the tools of nonviolent change so that you, in turn, can tackle the particular type of violence that you want to see changed.

In short, *Engaging Nonviolence* is not a manual for addressing a particular issue or structural violence—such as racism, sexism, homophobia, economic injustice, militarism, nationalism, and many others. Instead it provides a framework for responding to any violent policy, issue, or social structure. With this framework and its tools—principles, models, stories, strategies, methods, and tactics of active nonviolence—you will be able to address the specific social issues in your community that cry out for change, or to build a movement geared toward opposing the structures of violence that plague our entire world.

In the first part of the curriculum, we explore the ranges of violence and nonviolence. Direct violence is obvious; what is not so visible in our culture are the impacts and long-range effects of structural and cultural violence. Connected to this is our understanding of power—which is normally viewed as power-over or control over something, or someone, else. But power in its broadest sense is the heightening of our capacity to act together creatively, strengthen our skills and knowledge, and build a society that is compassionate and inclusive.

We begin to use role-playing in the second part of the book to engage conflicts creatively. We then exercise communication skills to practice nonviolence in our direct environment, and learn how to apply nonviolence towards ourselves. Connecting with (self) compassion, we can grow towards the goal of rehumanization, going from supremacy of the self and inferiority of others to an attitude of seeing the equality and uniqueness of human beings. We also turn our skills to the environment, such a crucial topic in this day and age. The planet is crying out for us to shift from destruction and indifference to positive regenerative nonviolent action. We offer examples and stories of nonviolent environmental movements and campaigns in order to inspire us to go forward in the third part of the book.

In part three we move into envisioning, preparing, analyzing, and planning so that participants can implement nonviolent actions strategically. People change by doing; the process from knowing to understanding to internalizing cannot take place without action. We envision this book to contribute to changing the world *through you*, through the changes in your thinking and actions that we anticipate you will experience by following the exercises in this book. Now is the time to take the next step in this journey of nonviolence, replacing cultural and structural violence with skillful means rooted in respect for all creation.

When we combine the understanding of the mind with the inner truth and wisdom of the heart, nonviolence follows naturally. As said before: we need to educate ourselves, understand, and creatively engage. This book offers a basic toolkit, an introduction to the nonviolent journey. It is the hope of Pace e Bene that it will provide a useful guide that will help turn the tides.

In solidarity with all those who are willing to be part of the new reality.

Nina Koevoets and Veronica Pelicarić