



Satya

truthfulness in
thought, speech, and action

Yes! We Can Peace Builders April 2022

"We must accept finite disappointment but never lose
infinite hope."
Martin Luther King, jr.

We Live in Confusing Times - Is Nonviolence the Answer? by Ruth Ann Angus

It is said we live in anxious times. It really is that we live in confusing times. We view what is happening in our world and know not where to turn nor how to deal with things.

April 4th is the anniversary of the death of Martin Luther King, Jr., remembered as the last great nonviolence hero of our times. While he brought about needed changes for Black residents of this country, and he did so without firing a single shot or causing any physical harm, he was in the end a martyr. His story begs the question for those of us who adhere to trying to live a nonviolent life, whether nonviolence is truly possible?

When the invasion of Ukraine began, I knew I would be asked how nonviolence stands with this. I answered that we do not kill people. It is as simple as that. Yet, of course, it is not simple, is it?

Once a conflict escalates into warfare it becomes almost impossible to find a way out of it without responding with violence. We want in our heart and souls to stop the aggressor. If I suggest to those who ask me this question that we cannot return violence to wipe out violence, my questioners become astounded. "Then we would die," they say.

Yes.

This tells them nonviolence means sacrifice, even possibly the sacrifice of our lives. It is a bitter pill to swallow. How can I suggest this?

We are returning to "normal" now although I am quite sure we cannot retrieve what is lost and the normal we enjoyed prior to the pandemic is gone forever. The new normal grapples with loss. We return to activities with caution almost waiting and expecting the next trauma.

We watch the destruction of cities very much like our own on the nightly news. We can imagine ourselves suffering in the same way the people of Ukraine are suffering. The buildings and homes look too much like our own. We have rushed to the defense of Ukraine in our hearts,

suffered silently along with them as we watch their cities burn, and wish for the destruction of the Russian troops and their leader. We revile the enemy even though our enemies are the ones who need our love the most. We offer prayers. We hang yellow sunflowers and blue banners on our doors. We identify completely.

But why is it we haven't felt the same way about the destruction of cities in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Palestine, and others in the Middle East who suffer the same way with weapons we supply. Is it because their people do not look like us? Theirs homes are not like ours. Their cities not the same. How easy it is for us to empathize with what is familiar and how difficult to face the sameness of what is different. They are "them." We are "us."

Aren't all people "us?"

I cling to my neighbors and my neighborhood that thrives despite our political differences. It does not cross our minds not to care for each other. We are neighbors.

As we remember the loss of Martin Luther King, Jr., and all we have lost recently we finally realize that we harbor fear inside ourselves and our minds burn with anger. But this is not anger that we experience. It is grief.

Nonviolence tells me we do not kill people. Either we accept this or we will live in fear, anger, and grief forever.

For those of you who receive this that are local to the Central Coast of California, I invite you to join us on Tuesday, April 6th at 2 PM at the Estero Bay Methodist Church Hall, 3000 Hemlock Avenue, Morro Bay. We will drink the tea of peace and gather around the table to talk about grieving and our helplessness, our anger, and what to do with it, our fears and how to dispel them.



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