

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Six Principles and Steps to Nonviolent Social Change

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was embraced by Americans during the late 1950s and early 1960s because he spoke about the importance of a loving, nonviolent society at a time when social and racial conflict was escalating out of control.

Today, as far as we have come, we still see signs of unhealthy conflict in our communities. Perhaps it is time to revisit and embrace the nonviolent principles in which King believed. These principles are based on his interpretation of Christian doctrine, as well as the teachings of Mohandas Gandhi.

Principle 1: Nonviolence is a way of life for courageous people.

Principle 2: Nonviolence means seeking friendship and understanding among those who are different from you.

Principle 3: Nonviolence defeats injustice, not people.

Principle 4: Nonviolence holds that suffering can educate and transform people and societies.

Principle 5: Nonviolence chooses loving solutions, not hateful ones.

Principle 6: Nonviolence means the entire universe embraces justice.

In addition to the six principles, Dr. King developed a six-step process to help people bring about social change in a nonviolent way.

Step 1: Gather Information

Learn all you can about the problems you see in your community through the media, social and civic organizations, and by talking to the people involved.

Step 2: Educate Others

Armed with your new knowledge, it is your duty to help those around you, such as your neighbors, relatives, friends and co-workers, better understand the problems facing society. Build a team of people devoted to finding solutions. Be sure to include those who will be directly affected by your work.

Step 3: Remain Committed

Accept that you will face many obstacles and challenges as you and your team try to change society. Agree to encourage and inspire one another along the journey.

Step 4: Peacefully Negotiate

Talk with both sides. go to the people in your community who are in trouble and who are deeply hurt by society's ills. Also go to those people who are contributing to the breakdown of a peaceful society. Use humor, intelligence and grace to lead to solutions that benefit the greater good.

Step 5: Take Action Peacefully

This step is often used when negotiation fails to produce results, or when people need to draw broader attention to a problem. it can include tactics such as peaceful demonstrations, letter-writing and petition campaign.

Step 6: Reconcile

Keep all actions and negotiations peaceful and constructive. Agree to disagree with some people and with some groups as you work to improve society. Show all involved the benefits of changing, not what they will give up by changing.

Over the years, the King Center has developed training materials to assist people in the application of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s principles of nonviolence. By adopting these principles, Intellectual Properties Management, Inc., manager for the King Estate, hopes people will be inspired to keep the dream alive: The dream that all people are created equal.

Copied from <http://www.thegao.org/mlk6prin.htm> MUCH more can also be found at TheKingCenter.org