

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

There is a sense, in this fourth issue of our journal, that InnerPeace/WorldPeace is settling in for the long haul. A number of the articles have to do, in one way or another, with method. We are getting down to concrete matters, to the kinds of things that determine whether or not nonviolent measures are effective.

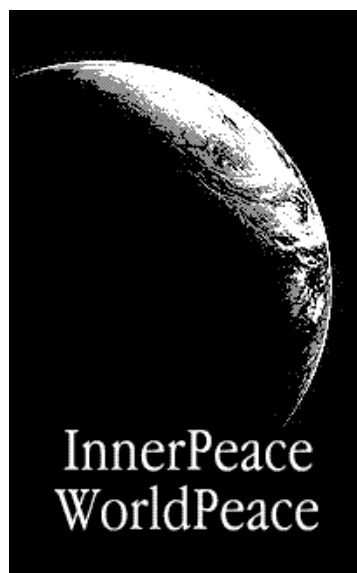
Mary Erkins talks about one kind of method in her article on RESULTS. I have a review of Marshall Rosenberg's method of Nonviolent Communication and the story in the L.O.V.E.

Works section has to do with the application of that method. Jeff Olson has drawn up a carefully—thought-out list of talking points to keep in mind when trying to talk with someone who holds a different point of view.

Margaret Von Ebers writes about how a priest helped her to see that being critical of our country is not incompatible with patriotism. In each of these there is an intriguing dialectic between method and spirit, consistent with our mission, which is to always foster the link between inner work and activism.

Something else is evident in this issue—joint effort. The meditation on lamentation came out of a Saturday morning session. The Barack Obama article is the product of brainstorming on the part of the editorial team. We are learning how to work together, to cultivate a common mind which is enriched by differences, another kind of dialectic.

—Bud Hayes, *Editor*



Journal

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A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS ?

In a contentious political season when that needed combination of leadership qualities equal to the times seems so elusive, a new figure has appeared on the horizon who is attracting a lot of interest—Barack Obama, Democratic candidate for U.S. Senate in IL. He does not yet hold office on the national level though many are beginning to think of him almost as if he did. It is, of course, very early, and there is no telling what he will look like after more exposure to the corrupting pressures of American politics. Granting that, the editorial team thought it might be worth attempting to highlight some of the qualities which are prompting such a hopeful response from so many.

The first thing that jumps right out at us is Obama's declared intention to avoid what he has called "scorched earth politics." Negative campaigning has become like an addictive drug. Campaigns depend on it more and more because it can be effective in the short run, but it is a spreading disease in the body politic. What a fresh, welcome and desperately needed path he will open up if he can continue to make good on his intention.

Another thing is the ability he is showing to connect with a diversity of groups and points of view. Even when he disagrees, he looks for common ground, shared values and interests. Is not that what politics is all about? We speak glibly of politics as the "art of compromise," but it is more easily mentioned than practiced, particularly in an ideologically inflamed age such as ours. Obama brings new life to that cliché.

People say that he is approachable. Demetrios Pappageorge and Mary Erkins from our editorial team, have met him and found him to be so. Many political figures have that quality. Obama is not unique in that regard. What may set him apart is the ability to retain that quality even if he rises in power. Accessibility is often a casualty of high office. Obama seems like someone who might be able to resist that temptation.

—cont. pg. 2

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He also seems to embody the American dream with a new authenticity relevant to our time. He is of mixed race, from humble origins and has achieved what he has by virtue of hard work, education and natural gifts. He comes on the scene at a time when there is deep and growing discontent with those who enter politics from privilege. He seems like the kind of person who will not forget what it is like to be the little guy, even in high office. Are we getting our hopes and dreams and wishes all mixed up with him in this? Probably so, but it's not all just us. He has awakened something in us that is real and worthy of our hope.

—The editorial team

RACHEL WEeping FOR HER CHILDREN

Always hovering in the background of our Friday night vigils and our Saturday morning meetings is an uneasy awareness of all the suffering wrought by violence. Atrocities assault us on a daily basis. What we are reacting to today will be replaced, long since, by something else by the time this journal gets out. Past atrocities still haunt us. Even those of us who attempt to take in the full magnitude of suffering occasioned by violence are tempted to turn away. It is too much.

The tradition of lamentation has, since biblical times, afforded us a way to face overwhelming grief.

A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping.

Rachel is weeping for her children;

She refuses to be comforted for her children,

Because they are no more.

—Jeremiah 31:15

Dee Dee Risher writes in **Roots & Branches**: *"Rend heaven with your cries!" commands the Lamentation tradition. 'Rage at God! Weep for the senseless loss of holy, irreplaceable lives. Seek no platitudes that provide cheap comfort. Let the grief of the world shatter you. Rachel, weep for your children—all your children.'*"

For the opening meditation at one of our recent Saturday morning meetings Forest Ormes presented what he called an American lamentation in the form of a song sung by Buffy Saint Marie, a Native American. It is a bitter song. It made some of us uncomfortable because it reminded us that rage and agony still flash vividly from our nation's treatment of Native Americans. That time is less distant from us than we would like to think. In his meditation, Forest raised the question of distance. Is it even possible for those of us who have not known the ravages of war to imagine what it must be like? And he raised an even more difficult question: Can we imagine how impossible it must seem for enemies, consumed with the desire to avenge unspeakable losses, to initiate a healing dialogue?

If there is ever to be such a dialogue, perhaps it will begin only in a mutual acknowledgment of loss and a mutual grieving. In grief there is solidarity. Sorrows clasp hands across the centuries, across otherwise unbridgeable chasms. The tradition of lamentation reaches down into the abyss of grief and finds hope. Anyone can enter that tradition who will open their hearts to those who suffer, to the disenfranchised, the oppressed, the wretched of the earth. Dee Dee Risher wrote her meditation just after the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. She ended it with these words:

"May our broken hearts join us with weeping hearts around the world. May our slow healing emerge from our common cries to God, from the fragile, fibrous roots that interweave our lives in common soil, and from the wrenching pangs that will birth a new vision of compassion and peace."

—Bud Hayes

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—Dee Dee Risher "Roots & Branches"

Love Overcomes Violence Everywhere

Mission Statement

InnerPeace/WorldPeace
advocates for nonviolence by
means of spiritual disciplines,
group meetings, education
and activism.

We believe there is a necessary
connection between inner
transformation and finding
effective alternatives to violence
in the world.

We welcome dialogue
with others.

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L.O.V.E. Works

(The L.O.V.E. Works story for this issue is taken from an article by Miki Kashtan which appears on the Center for Nonviolent Communication website. An abbreviated version appeared in the Sept/Oct 2002 issue of *Tikkun Magazine*. Miki is trained in Marshall Rosenberg's Nonviolent Communication Method. (See "What Is Nonviolent Communication?" in this issue.) The article contains an excellent example of what Rosenberg calls "empathic listening." (Some names used are fictitious.)

Following are some excerpts from a conversation which took place in the mid 1990's between a Jewish settler in the West Bank, whom we shall call Judy, and Arnina, a CNVC trainer in Israel. Secular, left-wing Jews in Israel tend to see Jewish settlers as fanatics, oblivious to the plight of others, and who can be removed from the West Bank only by force.

Judy: People forget who we are, and our history. (The Jewish people) go back thousands of years. We were chosen by God and given this land. How can they forget this?

Arnina: So you are feeling devastated because you would really like to know that the deep meaning of 'settle in this land' is understood and preserved?

Judy: The secular leftists think we are blind and obstinate, while we are holding onto the most precious symbol of our existence.

Arnina: Are you in pain because you so much want to find a way to dissolve the separation between you and leftists, because for you we are all one people?

The conversation between Judy and Arnina continued, with Arnina reflecting back to Judy's own pain, anger and fear. Finally, when Arnina was confident that Judy was fully heard, she stopped, looked at Judy for a long while, then asked gently: "Would you be willing to hear what's going on for me now, and how I see all this?" Judy nodded silently.

Arnina then told Judy how much she shared with her the deep wish to see Israelis living in unity, bringing gifts to the world. Then she added: "I want you also to hear just how frightened I am when I see the price we are paying for this. I am wondering if you could conceive of the thought that, if we all really united in our wish, and not against each other, we might find other means of keeping this legacy, while at the same time saving so many lives?" In responding to that question Judy said that if others in the left could listen to her the way she had just been heard by Arnina, she would be ready, for the first time, to consider leaving a land to which she had felt an unshakeable attachment.

Listening with empathy to those with whose positions we disagree increases the chances that they will want to listen to us. Until Judy's needs were acknowledged, she would not have been able to hear and consider Arnina's request. When we use force, blame, and self-righteousness..., even if we manage to create the outcome we want in the short run, we distance ourselves from those whose actions we want to change. This is true for all peace work...Success that comes from intimidation rather than dialogue, or arguing rather than listening, will not lead to the transformation we so wish for, neither in ourselves nor in those we are trying to change."

Miki's example leads to an understanding of social activism based on "mutuality, trust, compassion, and nonviolence," which requires a continuing effort to change ourselves as we work to change external structures.

We thank Miki Kashtan for permission to reprint this condensation of her full article "No Enemies, No Demands" located at <http://www.cnvc.org/noenemies.htm>.
You may contact her at miki@baynvc.org.

TALKING WITH IDEOLOGICAL ADVERSARIES

I am fascinated and often perplexed about how to be an effective advocate for peace when talking with people who have a different view of the world than I. This is a recurring issue in our InnerPeace/WorldPeace Saturday morning group discussions that resonates for me in relationships with friends, family and work colleagues.

Too often I am able to see only “fight or flight” choices, which result in either dead-end, polarizing arguments or avoidance of conflict by not bringing up the topic of suspected disagreement. Both reactions are ineffective and dissatisfying.

Here are a few recent experiences and observations...

n I got hit last week with a “drive-by” put down from an acquaintance who knew we disagreed about Iraq. “These bone-headed liberals don’t understand,” he said and then was off down the hall in another direction. My frustration was tempered by an uncomfortable memory of my once making a sarcastic joke about American leaders to another pro-war colleague. The resulting conversation did not go well.

n The slightest sign of disrespect, blaming, or ridicule of President Bush immediately puts many people on the defensive. The very people whose opinions I’d like to influence, those whose opinions are not set in stone, end up arguing instead of listening or instead of discussing because on some level they feel I am ridiculing *them*, not President Bush.

n When I feel defensive in a conversation, it is an excellent sign that the person with whom I am talking may also feel defensive.

n After hearing a colleague’s long and impassioned discussion about why anything the U.S. does to defend itself is legitimate, recognizing his fear for our country and his desire for a better world, I then asked if I could tell him my perspective. “It seems to me,” I said, “that whenever we try to control or manipulate someone, it usually comes back to bite us in the butt.” “Always!” he emphasized. I continued, “My hope is that we will find a way as a country to express and demonstrate our caring, our sorrow, our apologies, our generosity to all.”

For the first time in our long relationship, he nodded his head and was silent.

n I was impressed when an evangelical Christian columnist, who had long condemned gay & lesbian sexuality, and an openly gay columnist from the same paper, *Wednesday Journal* of Oak Park, reported their meeting together in weekly discussion. Their intention was not to try to change each other, but to understand each other.

Although

neither renounced any of their previous statements, their attitude of tolerance and appreciation for each other in subsequent co-authored articles is so obvious, it is impossible to believe that they were not significantly changed by the experience.

n My lunchtime colleague that day had zealously defended American military power and the invasion of Iraq. “What do you think it would take,” I asked, “for peoples and nations not to have this kind of violence against each other?” To my surprise he detailed a world government plan that was democratic and respected everywhere both because of its strength and fairness. I think we tend sometimes to pigeon-hole people into friends or opponents, when we are all much more complex.

n I find questions like “Are you against or for the war in Iraq?” or “Who is most at fault for the violence in Palestine/Israel?” to be non-productive and divisive. I am more interested now in the question, “How can we together heal the wounds to reach a safe and peaceful solution for all?”

n My criteria now for determining direction in handling any conflict, personal or political, is not moral rightness, but “How well does it work?” Moral judgment more often blocks communication and comes across as divisive arrogance.

I am just beginning to figure out who I am and who I want to be with my so-called “adversaries.” I am looking forward to hearing more stories from us all as we experiment with this in our daily lives.

— Jeff Olson

“Too often
I am able
to see only
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— Jeff Olson

**GETTING RESULTS
WITH RESULTS**

I was talking the other day with a friend who was feeling overwhelmed by the relentless stream of bad news and was close to despair over whether anything at all could be done. I often feel that way myself, but hearing this from her made me think of one organization that has not been stopped by all the bad things that are happening. It has found a way to work around ideology, spin and the vested interests of the powerful. My reaction to what she was saying prompted the following conversation.

"Have you ever heard of RESULTS?"

"What do you mean?"

"RESULTS is an acronym which means Responsibility for Ending Starvation Using Legislation, Trim-tapping and Support, and it's no pie-in-the-sky operation."

"Tell me more."

"About twenty years ago a high school music teacher, after learning that 43,000 people a day die of starvation and preventable diseases, decided to dedicate himself to ending poverty in the world."

"Sounds pretty pie-in-the-sky to me."

"Well, he and a handful of friends started driving around the country in his van recruiting like-minded people. They built an organization from the ground up that now has over 100 chapters in the United States and affiliates in Great Britain, Japan, Australia, Germany, Canada and Mexico."

"What do they do?"

"They lobby their respective governments, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund on behalf of the poorest people in the world, those who can't lobby for themselves."

"What do they lobby for?"

"That a certain portion of foreign aid monies be spent on basic health, basic education and on microcredit programs that serve the poorest."

"It sounds worthy but what's so special about RESULTS? Aren't there other advocacy groups doing that as well?"

"Not in the way RESULTS does it. The method is totally positive. That's why it works."

"How so?"

"We work by identifying common

ground. (I'm a RESULTS partner, as you might have guessed.) Whether it's senators or representatives, members of the World Bank or the IMF, we approach them as partners, not adversaries. If promises are made and not kept, we never go into attack mode, as in, "You promised and didn't deliver!" Instead we review our joint goal. In noting what was not accomplished, we ask what obstacles they encountered and how we might work with them to overcome those obstacles. We never criticize them for their stand on other issues with which we may disagree."

"Sounds good in theory. Can you give an example of an actual success?"

"Sure. When Senator Ted Stevens (R Alaska) was chairing the Senate Foreign Operations Committee, he was approached by my RESULTS partners about supporting legislation that would help fight global tuberculosis. Alaska had become the leading state in the reoccurrence of TB. After listening to us, he contacted RESULTS headquarters in Washington D.C. for more information. That week he went on the floor of the Senate and asked that \$200 million be budgeted to fight global T.B. That stimulated many editorials, op ed pieces and letters to editors which helped to educate the population about the T.B. pandemic. This past year President Bush has called for \$15 billion to be spent over the next five years to fight T.B. It's important to note that Senator Stevens is in favor of opening the Arctic National Wildlife Reserve (ANWR) to oil drilling. Those of us who approached him about T.B. are not, but we chose not to make an issue of it with him. We thought it was more important to work in partnership on an issue we knew he could support, than to oppose him on an issue where he was not likely to change his mind."

I would not say that my friend was an instant convert to the RESULTS way, but what I told her definitely brightened her gloomy outlook. RESULTS is testimony to what can be accomplished with a consistently positive approach that also involves good organization, professionalism in dealing with legislators and community figures and persistent hard work, over time.

—Mary Erkins

"We thought it was more important to work in partnership on an issue we knew he could support, than to oppose him on an issue on which he was not likely to change his mind."

—Mary Erkins

WHAT IS NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION ?

There is a growing body of literature drawn from various disciplines on the theory and practice of nonviolence. In this issue I want to review one of the books from this literature, *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Compassion*, by Marshall B. Rosenberg, Ph.D. Other books will be reviewed in future issues, particularly ones that the Saturday morning InnerPeace/WorldPeace group is working with, as it has been with this one. A novice to this emergent field might wonder what there is to say about nonviolence other than to promote it. This book takes us well beyond inspiration. It opens up dimensions of violence in our language of which of we may have been only dimly aware. It also sees a potential for a powerful and compassionate kind of communication which connects us with one another in meaningful and deeply satisfying ways.

I would like to begin my answer to the question in the title with a counter question. What is violent communication? You may assume you know. It's yelling at people, saying things that hurt their feelings, putting them down, using vulgar language, threatening them, etc. Yes, it is all those things, but there is much more. Rosenberg says that violence, or the potential for violence, is built into the structure of our language. The way we talk with one another much of the time is violence-genic, and it may not involve any of the things mentioned above. Language that is polite, civil and restrained, free of any vulgar vocabulary, can carry the potential for violence. In Chapter Two Rosenberg says, "Long before I reached adulthood, I learned to communicate in an impersonal way that did not require me to reveal what was going on inside of me." (p.16)

Why is that a problem? Isn't it better to keep your needs and feelings to yourself? Rosenberg says that communication is basically about getting needs met. The way we ordinarily communicate gets in the way of that. Often we don't even know what our needs are and fail to pick up on the needs of others. We don't know how to find out about needs, and we don't even know that it's important. A

level of frustration begins to build up. Then something else happens that is even more damaging. Instead of getting clear about what our own needs are, and taking the necessary steps to get them met, we find wrongness in what other people say and do. Rosenberg's terminology for this is that we get evaluation mixed up with observation. Every criticism, every insult and put-down is the tragic expression of an unmet need. Sometimes it is more covert. We make "diagnoses" under the guise of objectivity. The result is the same. The needs don't get met. When language fails to communicate need and drives us away from one another, it becomes what he calls "jackal language" which tries to get needs met by coercion or power over, rather than collaboration or power with.

The method Rosenberg has developed for rescuing us from jackal language is called nonviolent communication, a rather bland and deceptively simple term for a series of interconnected components which are not always but can be very difficult to apply.

The first component involves observing without evaluating. "For most of us, it is difficult to make observations of people and their behavior that are free of judgment, criticism or other forms of analysis." (p.29) The tendency, instead of describing a specific behavior, is to make negative generalizations about that behavior. Rosenberg gives lots of examples to show how we get evaluations mixed up with observations.

The second component involves accurate identification and appropriate expression of what we are feeling. You might be surprised at how many things people call feelings which are not. For example, someone says, "I feel rejected." Rosenberg would say that "rejection" is something you think someone else is doing to you. It is not a feeling. It may be connected with a feeling, but it is not a feeling. Someone who thinks she has been rejected might be feeling some kind of pain or fear at the thought of being alone.

The third component involves taking responsibility for feelings once they have been identified.

The fourth involves making clear

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“Every criticism, every insult and put down is the tragic expression of an unmet need.”

—Marshall Rosenberg
*Nonviolent Communication:
A Language of Compassion*

“It is our light,
not our darkness,
that scares us
the most.”

—Marshall Rosenberg

requests in what he calls “positive action language.” He has exercises for each of these components. They are to be applied along two axes. One is identifying and giving expression to what we want from others. The other is discerning what others want from us through what he calls “empathic listening.” While many of the examples under each of the four components are pretty obvious and based on common sense, others are more difficult. Those of us who are trying to use this method are finding that it requires a fairly major shift in orientation. Twice our Saturday morning group has read through Rosenberg’s book in its entirety and found that it has not really begun to make a difference in the way we communicate. We are making a third attempt, this time with the help of supplementary material which features expanded exercises, activities and other aids to using the method.

Group members who have tried to practice any of the four components during the week are encouraged to ask for a “Rosenberg moment” to report on the experience, whether it was successful or not, and get input from other members. I recently attended a school conference and met the teachers that Christopher, my step grandson, has for his sophomore year. Vickie, my wife, was out of town. When she got back, I was conscious, while describing each teacher to her, of wanting to separate evaluation from observation. I found myself groping for words with awkward silences, and I had to think more about what I was about to say. At a recent social gathering, when the conversation turned, as it often does, to people not in the room, I was uncomfortably aware of how many of the comments were evaluative. I was mostly silent. Even though I have worked as a therapist for many years, it seems as though I am entering unfamiliar territory.

You might begin to wonder whether all this is worth it. Some of our most triumphant moments come with the catty things we say about others, and the laughs they bring. Do we really want to examine our patterns of communication that closely and work that hard to change? The answer to that question will be determined by how much we are aware of what we

lack, and how appealing our vision is of what a less evaluative, more feeling and need sensitive form of communication might be like. I had an opportunity to attend a workshop conducted by Rosenberg. In person he uses a lot of humor. He had us laughing most of the night. But the humor overlay a great sadness about the price we pay for missed opportunities in communication, and about the deprivation we suffer from not connecting with more people at a deeper level. Reducing the violence in our world will not come just from urging others to change. It starts with me, and, yes, you. It’s a little bit scary and strange. I am going to make a lot of mistakes, and I will never be perfect, but Rosenberg has opened a door for me. I have crossed a threshold, and I don’t think I will be turning back. Of all the eye-opening things that Rosenberg said in the workshop that night, the one that really seized me was this: “It is our light, not our darkness, that scares us the most.”

—Bud Hayes



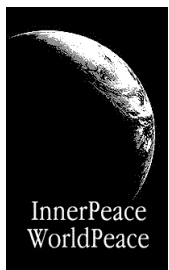
PEACEMAKING AND PATRIOTISM

On the fourth of July weekend I attended a small church near the Wisconsin Dells. It was jammed because of the holiday weekend. Early in his homily the priest said, "We are here to celebrate. I see how many of you are wearing red, white and blue colors." I thought, "Oh, No! Not another talk about God and country!" But I was wrong. The priest began to talk about how a nation like the United States can make a mistake like a human being can. "Like us, our country makes many mistakes. Many of us don't agree with what it is doing. Many of us sitting here right now may be ashamed of what our country is doing, but it has also done great things in the world and will do so again. These are the things we can celebrate today."

He went on to say that even the people we love and respect the most can do things that offend us. We do not refuse to celebrate their birthdays. We go on loving them. We go on relating to them. The priest's message helped me. It reminded me that one can hate the sin but still love the

sinner. I don't have to stop loving my country because I don't like what it is doing. The priest also helped me to understand that patriotism is a deep, not a superficial thing. It doesn't get blown away just because there is disagreement. I left that little church feeling that the priest had helped me find a way to celebrate the fourth of July.

—Margaret Von Ebers



Fyi

From Our Readers

We would like to hear from you. This journal is about conversation and dialogue about the things that matter most. All responses will be acknowledged. Some, with your permission, will be included in our journal as space allows.

Editorial Group

Mary Erkins
Bud Hayes, *Editor*
Emory Mead, *Design*
Jeff Olson
Amy Abbott Pappageorge
Demetrios Pappageorge

budhayes@innerpeaceworldpeace.org

Journal Sign-up

Sign up at our *website*:
www.innerpeaceworldpeace.org, or
phone: 312-720-1171 or write to:
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319 South Harvey Avenue
Oak Park, Illinois 60302

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