

Be the change you wish to see. Be peace.

BECAUSE

Because one person can change the world.



Extremist for LOVE

Was not Jesus an extremist for love — “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you.” Was not Amos an extremist for justice — “Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.” Was not Paul an extremist for the gospel of Jesus Christ — “I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.” Was not Martin Luther an extremist — “Here I stand; I can do none other so help me God.” Was not John Bunyan an extremist — “I will stay in jail to the end of my days before I make a butchery of my conscience.” Was

not Abraham Lincoln an extremist — “This nation cannot survive half slave and half free.” Was not Thomas Jefferson an extremist — “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.” So the question is not whether we will be extremist but what kind of extremist will we be. Will we be extremists for hate or will we be extremists for love? Will we be extremists for the preservation of injustice—or will we be extremists for the cause of justice?

Martin Luther King, Jr., from Letter from Birmingham Jail, April, 1963

The hunger for love is much more difficult to remove than the hunger for bread. Mother Teresa

Life has taught us that love does not consist in gazing at each other but in looking outward together in the same direction.

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

Love is our Mother and the way of our Prophet. Yet it is in our nature to fight with Love.

We can't see you, mother, hidden behind dark veils Woven by ourselves. Rumi

He drew a circle that shut me out-- Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.

But Love and I had the wit to win: We drew a circle that took him in. *Edwin Markham, Outwitted*

There is no remedy for love but to love more. Thoreau

“Son, I’d say you were going at it the wrong end first,” said the Judge, turning up his coat-collar. “How could you care about one girl? Have you ever cared about one leaf?” Riley, listening to the wildcat with an itchy hunter’s look, snatched at the leaves blowing about us like midnight butterflies; alive, fluttering as though to escape and fly, one stayed trapped between his fingers. The Judge, too: he caught a leaf; and it was worth more in his hand than in Riley’s. Pressing it mildly against his cheek, he distantly said, “We are speaking of love. A leaf, a handful of seed—begin with these, learn a little what it is to love. First, a leaf, a fall of rain, then someone to receive what a leaf has taught you, what a fall of rain has ripened. No easy process, understand; it could take a lifetime, it has mine, and still I’ve never mastered it—I only know how true it is: that love is a chain of love, as nature is a chain of life.” *Truman Capote, A Glass Harp*

All you need is LOVE

by Susan Ives, San Antonio peaceCENTER



I imagine St. Valentine and Martin Luther King Jr. hanging out in heaven, leaning against the pearly gates, trading war stories — no, make that peace stories. The two martyrs had much in common.

Like being thrown in jail for civil disobedience.

King's use of nonviolent resistance is well known; Valentine's story is less familiar.

According to legend, Valentine was a Christian priest in Rome during the third century. The Emperor Claudius II, so it goes, forbade his soldiers to marry, believing that wives and children distracted his men. Why, some married men refused to go to war at all!

Valentine married soldiers in defiance of the emperor's edict. He was executed Feb. 14, 269, for this brazen act.

Maybe King and Valentine are swapping tales about their time in jail.

"Brother, you might think that Roman dungeon was nasty, but just try being a black man in Bull Connor's jail ..."

Both men wrote famous letters from jail. King wrote "Letter from Birmingham Jail," earning the undying gratitude of freedom-loving people everywhere.

Valentine, as he was escorted to his beheading, slipped a farewell note to Julia, the jailer's daughter. He signed it "from your Valentine," earning the undying gratitude of Hallmark.

But where their lives intertwine is in the matter of love.

St. Valentine's name has become associated with a particular form of love: eros, or romantic love.

King observes that the Greek New Testament uses three separate words for love. Eros is sexual love, he wrote, and you will find it in the root of the word "erotic."

Philia is affection — it lingers in philanthropy and in my hometown, Philadelphia, the city of brotherly love. This is the love of friends and family, of mutual affection.

The third kind of love is agape (pronounced ah-gah'-pay), unconditional love, love that expects nothing in return. Agape, King believed, is the key to nonviolence.

"Nonviolence," he wrote, "means avoiding not only external physical violence but also internal violence of spirit. You not only refuse to shoot a man, but you refuse to hate him."

He explained agape this way: *"It is an overflowing love which is purely spontaneous, unmotivated, groundless and creative. It is not set in motion by any quality or function of its object. It is the love of God operating in the human heart."*

He gave this example: *"Since the white man's personality is greatly distorted by segregation, and his soul is greatly scarred, he*

needs the love of the Negro. The Negro must love the white man, because the white man needs his love."

Agape means loving the unlovable. That's some kind of a powerful love. King acknowledged that this was a radical position.

In his "Letter from Birmingham Jail" he explained, *"Was not Jesus an extremist for love: 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.'"*

And he concluded: *"So the question is not whether we will be extremists, but what kind of extremists we will be. Will we be extremists for hate or for love?"*

Valentine was an extremist for love, too. He befriended his jailer, loved his enemy. He would have been familiar with Paul's letters to the Corinthians, perhaps the most eloquent tribute to selfless love:

"Love is patient and is kind; love does not envy; love does not boast itself, is not arrogant; does not behave rudely, is not selfish, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in truth; it bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails."

Valentine's Day has been co-opted by commerce, but we don't have to buy into it. We can use this day to celebrate love in all its extremes: eros, philias and agape.

St. Valentine and Martin Luther King Jr. would love that.

*Where there is not
Love; there is Fear:
But perfect Love casts
out Fear.
William Penn*



"We want with all our hearts to love, to be loved."

Dorothy Day was founder of the Catholic Worker Movement.

LOVE

by Mohandas Gandhi

I accept the interpretation of ahimsa, namely, that it is not merely a negative state of harmlessness but it is a positive state of love, of doing good even to the evildoer. But it does not mean helping the evildoer to continue the wrong or tolerating it by passive acquiescence. On the contrary, love, the active state of ahimsa, requires you to resist the wrongdoer by dissociating yourself from him even though it may offend him or injure him physically. Thus if my son lives a life of shame, I may not help him to do so by continuing to support him; on the contrary, my love for him requires me to withdraw all support from him although it may mean even his death. And the same love imposes on me the obligation of welcoming him to my bosom when he repents. But I may not by physical force compel my son to become good. That in my opinion is the moral of the story of the Prodigal Son.

Noncooperation is not a passive state; it is an intensely active state—more active than physical resistance or violence. Passive resistance is a misnomer. Noncooperation in the sense used by me must be nonviolent and, therefore, neither punitive nor vindictive nor based on malice, ill-will, or hatred. It follows therefore that it would be sin for me to serve General Dyer and cooperate with him to shoot innocent men. But it will be an exercise of forgiveness or love for me to nurse him back to life, if he was suffering from a physical malady. I would cooperate a thousand times with this government to wean it from its career of crime, but I will not for a single moment cooperate with it to continue that career. And I would be guilty of wrongdoing if I retained a tie from it or "a service under it or supported its law courts or schools." Better for me a beggar's bowl than the richest possession from hands stained with the blood of the innocents of Jalianwala?. Better by far a warrant of imprisonment than honeyed words from those who have wantonly wounded the religious sentiment of my 70 million brothers.

Noncooperation and civil disobedience are but different branches of the same tree called Satyagraha. It is my Kalpadruma—my Jam-i-Jam—the Universal Provider. Satyagraha is search for Truth; and God is Truth. Ahimsa or non-violence is the light that reveals that Truth to me. Swaraj? for me is part of that truth. This Satyagraha did not fail me in South Africa, Kheda, or Champaran and in a host of other - cases I could mention. It excludes all violence or hate. Therefore, I cannot and will not hate Englishmen. Nor will I bear their yoke. I must fight unto death the unholy attempt to impose British methods and British institutions on India. But I combat the attempt with nonviolence.

In theory, if there is sufficient nonviolence developed in any single person, he should be able to discover the means of combating violence, no matter how widespread or severe, within his jurisdiction. I have repeatedly admitted my imperfections. I am no example of perfect ahimsa. I am evolving.

Love is the Measure

by Dorothy Day

Whenever I groan within myself and think how hard it is to keep writing about love in these times of tension and strife which may, at any moment, become for us all a time of terror, I think to myself: what else is the world interested in? What else do we all want, each one of us, except to love and be loved, in our families, in our work, in all our relationships? God is Love. Love casts out fear. Even the most ardent revolutionist, seeking to change the world, to overturn the tables of the money changers, is trying to make a world where it is easier for people to love, to stand in that relationship to each other. We want with all our hearts to love, to be loved. And not just in the family, but to look upon all as our mothers, sisters, brothers, children. It is when we love the most intensely and most humanly that we can recognize how tepid is our love for others. The keenness and intensity of love brings with it suffering, of course, but joy, too, because it is a foretaste of heaven.

When you love people, you see all the good in them. There can never be enough thinking about it. St. John of the Cross said that where there was no love, put love and you would draw love out. The principle certainly works. I've seen my friend Sister Peter Claver with that warm friendliness of hers which is partly natural, but is intensified and made enduring by grace, come into a place which is cold with tension and conflict, and warm the house with her love.

Be the change you wish to see. Be peace.

BECAUSE

Because one person can change the world.

Since 1995, the all-volunteer and interfaith peaceCENTER continues to be a significant community catalyst for peace in San Antonio, Texas. Compassion and Justice are our strong guiding lights. Contemplative Practices, Experiential Education, and Nonviolent Actions are our working expressions throughout the community at large.

The peaceCENTER is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization

285 Oblate Dr., San Antonio, TX 28216
www.sanantoniopeace.center

LOVING-KINDNESS

in the Buddhist Tradition

Compassion and love are not mere luxuries. As the source both of inner and external peace, they are fundamental to the continued survival of our species.

This idea of universal responsibility is rooted in a very simple fact—in general terms, all others' desires are the same as mine. Every being wants happiness and does not want suffering. If we, as intelligent human beings, do not accept this fact, there will be more and more suffering on this planet. If we adopt a self-centered approach to life, and constantly try to use others for our own self-interest, we may gain temporary benefits but, in the long run, we will not succeed in achieving even personal happiness; and world peace will be completely out of the question.

Individual happiness can contribute in a profound and effective way to the overall improvement of our entire human community. Because we all share an identical need for love, it is possible to feel that anybody we meet, in whatever circumstances, is a brother or sister. No matter how new the face or how different the dress and behavior, there is no significant division between us and other people.

It is foolish to dwell on external differences, because our basic natures are the same. Ultimately, humanity is one and this small planet is our only home. If we are to protect this home of ours, each of us needs to experience a vivid sense of universal altruism. It is only this feeling that can remove the self-centered motives that cause people to deceive and misuse one another. If you have a sincere and open heart, you naturally feel self-worth and confidence, and there is no need to be fearful of others. I believe that at every level of society -- familial, tribal, national and international - successful world is the growth of compassion.

We do not need to become religious, nor do we need to believe in an ideology. All that is necessary is for each of us to develop our good human qualities. I try to treat whoever I meet as an old friend. This gives me a genuine feeling of happiness. It is the time to help create a happier world.

by His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama

*If we have the energy
of compassion and loving
kindness in us, the people
around us will be influenced
by our way of being and
living.*

Thich Nhat Hanh

The Pali word *metta* is a multi-significant term meaning loving-kindness, friendliness, goodwill, benevolence, fellowship, amity, concord, inoffensiveness and non-violence. The Pali commentators define *metta* as the strong wish for the welfare and happiness of others (*parahita-parasukha-kamana*). Essentially *metta* is an altruistic attitude of love and friendliness as distinguished from mere amiability based on self-interest. Through *metta* one refuses to be offensive and renounces bitterness, resentment and animosity of every kind, developing instead a mind of friendliness, accommodativeness and benevolence which seeks the well-being and happiness of others. True *metta* is devoid of self-interest. It evokes within a warm-hearted feeling of fellowship, sympathy and love, which grows boundless with practice and overcomes all social, religious, racial, political and economic barriers. *Metta* is indeed a universal, unselfish and all-embracing love.

Metta makes one a pure font of well-being and safety for others. Just as a mother gives her own life to protect her child, so *metta* only gives and never wants anything in return. To promote one's own interest is a primordial motivation of human nature. When this urge is transformed into the desire to promote the interest and happiness of others, not only is the basic urge of self-seeking overcome, but the mind becomes universal by identifying its own interest with the interest of all. By making this change one also promotes one's own well-being in the best possible manner.

Metta is the protective and immensely patient attitude of a mother who forbears all difficulties for the sake of her child and ever protects it despite its misbehavior. *Metta* is also the attitude of a friend who wants to give one the best to further one's well-being. If these qualities of *metta* are sufficiently cultivated through *metta-bhavana* — the meditation on universal love — the result is the acquisition of a tremendous inner power which preserves, protects and heals both oneself and others.

Apart from its higher implications, today *metta* is a pragmatic necessity. In a world menaced by all kinds of destructiveness, *metta* in deed, word and thought is the only constructive means to bring concord, peace and mutual understanding. Indeed, *metta* is the supreme means, for it forms the fundamental tenet of all the higher religions as well as the basis for all benevolent activities intended to promote human well-being.

The author, the Venerable Acharya Buddharakkhita, is founder and president of the Maha Bodhi Society in Bangalore, India.