

Approaches to Peace and Non-Violence for Modern Quakers

Notes from Adult Discussions, January 2005, at

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York Friends Meeting

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Overview

Part I, Two Assumptions and Three Tools

(Part I does have more Tools available, but we are focusing on these three for the sake of simplicity, ease of use, and because they are so useful. If you're interested in other Tools, let us know.)

Part II is an approach to learning how to co-create Peace and be Non-Violent through a process of deep inquiry and co-creation.)

Two useful, practical assumptions:

1. The *experience* of the Inner Light, the Presence of God in you or among you or near you, Consciousness of Being, or of Christ – helps change your motivations, perspective and general level of resourcefulness. Co-creating peace and being non-violent is then much easier, with or without any of the tools we'll be reviewing.
2. Your positive, pro-active *intentions* to co-create Peace or Non-Violence have a powerful effect on what you do and make the Tools work more effectively. They'll have a useful effect even without using the Tools.

Peace and Non-Violence are positive experiences or states, not merely the absence of violence, and are created as a by-product to who you are, how you are, and what you do.

So your intentions have a powerful effect.

These simple assumptions are powerful, rich, and not simple – so we'll review these in each of our sessions to help you remember, assimilate, practice and use them.

Three Tools to Practice, Explore and Learn with:

1. Some states of consciousness, some ways of being – help promote Peace and Non-Violence. (How *you* are being.)
2. Rapport helps you co-create Peace and Non-Violence. (How you relate to another.)
3. Some patterns of speaking tend to help produce Peace and Non-Violence. (How you speak to another.)

Remember – these all work better with your positive intentions and experience of the Sacred.

The rest these notes will review some of the high points and particulars of

these Tools.

Key Points for Learning and Practice:

1. The good news is that these things are easy to do, and often are very powerful and effective in co-creating good results.
2. The bad news is that it's awfully easy to forget to use these, easy to forget "how to be", and in the midst of pressure – easy to forget how to do it.
3. Expect to sometimes forget to apply these Tools, especially at first. Expect to sometimes forget how to apply these.
4. When review how you did – when and how you got distracted or forgot, and intend to do better next time - and if you repeat this process several times, it's my experience that even in tough circumstances, you'll start to get it right after 3-5 tries. It's not unusual to fail several times before you succeed.
5. So enjoy your constructive (you can make them that way) forgetting and "failures" as you learn and practice. Once you master the use of these tools you'll be *much, much* better at utilizing them.

Notes on the Tools

(We have not yet covered the third Tool, Patterns of Speaking which tend to produce Peace and Non-Violence, as of January 9, 2005)

Tool #1: Some states of consciousness, some ways of being – help promote Peace and Non-Violence.

When we are unresourceful or feel "stuck", we're likely to be caught up in a single attitude, feeling and idea.

When we're resourceful, we're more likely to be in touch with and able to choose and express ideas, attitudes and feelings that seem paradoxical.

Some paradoxical thoughts and ideas, when others recognize them in us, tend to co-create Peace as a by-product and Non-Violence as a side effect. Some of these include:

- Harmlessness: the ability and willingness to be harmful, cranky or mean, and the active *choice* not to.
- Being totally and deeply present to where you are and who you are with, while also being present and in touch with who you are (including what you think and feel).
- Humor – Not taking yourself too seriously, and enjoying yourself and others – having a good laugh at what is happening. (Not laughing at others, but laughing at yourself and the situation.) This probably means having awareness of yourself, the situation, *and* awareness of that awareness (of yourself and the situation).
- Be willing to embrace opposites in yourself, especially qualities you see in

the other person., such as carelessness or anger – *and* it's opposite.

Tool #2: Rapport tends to help you co-create Peace and Non-Violence.

A useful key to relating to others in ways that co-create Peace and are Non-Violent is to **be in rapport**.

Here are some pointers:

- Remember to intend to be in rapport. Then take steps to be in rapport.
- Meet the other person “where they are”, approximating their attitude, but with constructive and respectful intent. For example, if they are angry and sound tough, you can sound tough, maybe 80% as tough as they – but with constructive intent, rather than with angry or harmful intent.
- Have an intention and willingness to be able to perceive from the other persons point of view, whether or not you agree. Talk *to* them and their attitudes, not just from your own point of view.
- Relationships tend to be similar or opposite. You can utilize this, constructively.
 - When someone else wants to victimize, you don't have to be an easy victim.
 - Anyone can be victimized, from time to time; it happens probably to everyone. Being a victim is different – and while you may be victimized, you do not have to have the attitude and self-image of a victim.
 - Meet them how they are, with constructive intent (with a slightly less amount of feeling so escalation does not occur)...then gradually move towards how you want to be.
 - If the relationship is similar, with both being the same (such as angry) – then join them (with constructive intent and slightly less strength of feeling) before changing to how you want to be. Simply be *with* the other person first, meeting them where they are and how they are. Then, gradually lead and co-create towards a more peaceful and non-violent attitude.
 - If the relationship is based on being opposite, be more like them. This changes the dynamics of the situation.

Please remember that lots of practice, review of how you did, and mental rehearsal may be needed before you remember to do these things with skill, under pressure.

It's worth trying and spending the time to learn. If you try, don't succeed, and keep on learning – you can expect that success will come. Even if success doesn't come as quickly and as easily as you'd like. It's worth some time and energy to learn these skills!

Tool #3: Some patterns of speaking tend to help produce Peace and Non-Violence.

Some ways of speaking encourage strife and violence, others tend to

promote Peace and Non-Violence.

Here is a meta-pattern, consisting of a number of other patterns. The more of these patterns that you use – all other things being equal – the more likely you are to have the good results that you want.

First, the elements of the pattern:

- Begin with a statement about what's current and real, related to what the other person is doing or saying – so they know it's in relation to them.
- Tell the truth, especially about what you feel in a real and vulnerable way, based on a fresh perception in the moment. People tend to easily sense the truth of what you say, and to be profoundly effected.
- Begin with what you feel in your body, it's harder to argue with.
- Then continue with the emotions that are related to what you feel in my body.
- State your basic truth of your understanding of the situation.
- Ask for what you want.
- Explain your values or why you think and feel this way, so they understand your perspective and can easily relate to it.

Here's an example: “When you talk to me in that tone and with that attitude, I feel a tightness in my stomach, I feel vulnerable and afraid, and I want more than anything to be right and to convince you of how right I am. I become defensive. What I'd rather you do is simply tell me the truth of how you are feeling, what you want...rather than speak in terms of how I'm at fault or to blame. That's because when you focus on telling the truth about how you are and what you want, I can focus on how I can be helpful to you and how I contributed to your feeling this way, instead of wanting to try to prove I'm right.”

Even parts of this pattern can be very helpful, and it's especially powerful when you are using the other tools, being in rapport and when you are experiencing your own strength, wholeness and value.

Please experiment with these patterns. You can do so in several ways:

- Mentally rehearse how you might have applied them in past situations.
- Mentally rehearse how you might apply these in future situations.
- Practice with a friend who is safe to practice with.
- Practice with someone you want to communicate more effectively with – tell them the truth about what you are doing and enlist their help in giving you constructive feedback so you can do this well. When someone is on your side helping you do well, they are on your side.

Please be careful and considerate of yourself and others, and compassionate. Joking or using these tools against others while “appearing” to be constructive can be tempting, but it's not only dishonest, it tends to make things worse rather than better.

These patterns take time and practice to learn to use, especially when you need them most. Its worthwhile. You can change your life and inspire others.