

WHAT IS VICTORY OVER VIOLENCE?

LAUNCH YOUR PERSONAL PEACE MOVEMENT TODAY!

Victory Over Violence (VOV) is a movement to help inspire young people throughout the world to identify and root out violence in their daily lives and in their communities and is in support of the United Nations "Culture of Peace" initiative.

VOV is inspired by universal principles of nonviolence and respect for all living beings. Its goal is to contribute to a culture of peace through awareness, introspection, individual empowerment and a courageous and creative commitment to dialogue. It encourages respect, trust and friendship among young people, families, schools and communities across all boundaries such as race, religion and culture.

The VOV movement begins with you. Starting on the personal level, we will collectively build a culture of peace worldwide. Visit the VOV.com website and launch your personal peace movement today!

www.vov.com



WHAT IS THE ROOT CAUSE OF VIOLENCE?

LACK OF SELF- IDENTITY

"When I discover who I am, I'll be free."

Ralph Ellison
American Author and Educator

"Friendship with oneself is all-important, because without it one cannot be friends with anyone else."

Eleanor Roosevelt
Social Activist and First Lady

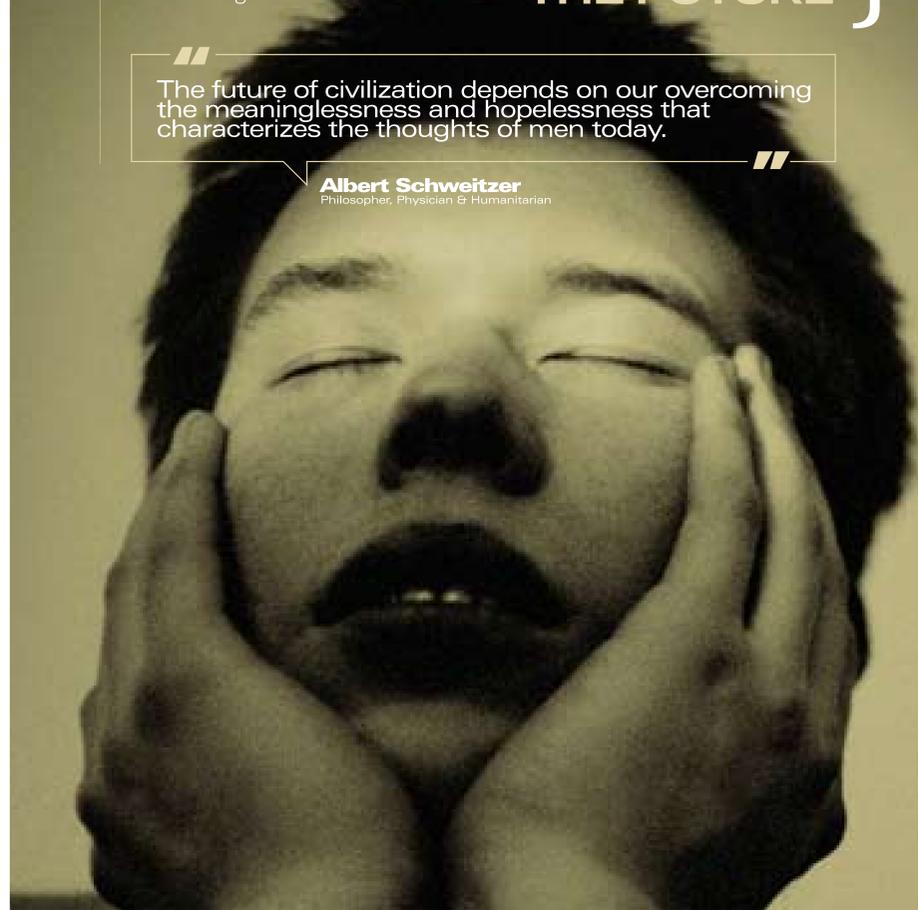
PEOPLE WHO LACK CONFIDENCE in who they are can develop an insecurity complex. They may compare themselves to others and criticize or judge them because they are different. A sense of worthlessness can lead to violence.

PEOPLE WHO FEEL THAT they cannot improve their lives and are sunk in hopelessness may commit violent acts in order to gain a sense of control.

LACK OF HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

"The future of civilization depends on our overcoming the meaninglessness and hopelessness that characterizes the thoughts of men today."

Albert Schweitzer
Philosopher, Physician & Humanitarian



WHAT IS PASSIVE VIOLENCE?

PASSIVE VIOLENCE } PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

PASSIVE VIOLENCE fuels the fire of physical violence. If we want to put out the fire of physical violence we have to cut off the fuel supply.

If we know how much passive violence we perpetrate against one another, we will understand why there is so much physical violence plaguing societies and the world.

Mahatma Gandhi
Great Nonviolence Leader

PASSIVE VIOLENCE IS:

Verbal/Psychological/Emotional Abuse

– A message intended to undermine the fundamental dignity of a human being.

Oppression/Suppression

– The unjust use of force or authority.
– Oppression can come in many forms including economic, cultural, social, religious and political.

Apathy/Indifference

– Choosing to do nothing when there is violence in our environment.



VERBAL PSYCHOLOGICAL EMOTIONAL ABUSE

PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE—ranging from propaganda to teasing—is intended to undermine the fundamental dignity of a person or group.

Kids who feel powerless and rejected are capable of doing horrible things.

Larry Brendtro
Education Professor, Augustana University

Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold were frequently picked on and excluded by other students at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado. Apparently this cruelty occurred every day and nobody tried to stop it. On April 20, 1999, the two boys shot and killed twelve students, a teacher and themselves.

When we are continually subjected to passive violence, including being excluded from cliques, we can resort to physical violence.



OPPRESSION /SUPPRESSION

OPPRESSION is the unjust use of force or authority. Inhumane laws and behaviors based on economics, gender, race, culture, religion or politics are some of the forms oppression can take.

Anti-Black laws operated primarily in the American South from the 1870s to the 1960s. Under this racial caste system, Whites could mistreat, beat, rape and even lynch Blacks with little fear of legal recourse. Such violence maintained the social order. Today Jim Crow laws have been eliminated, but racism continues to thrive.

It is the first responsibility of every citizen to question authority.

Benjamin Franklin
American author, diplomat, philosopher, and scientist



APATHY /INDIFFERENCE

CHOOSING TO DO NOTHING when there is injustice or violence in our environment is a common form of passive violence.

Many German religious leaders, fearing persecution by the Nazi state, swore allegiance to Adolf Hitler. Those that protested were arrested. Because Hitler was successful at creating jobs, revitalizing the economy and restoring military strength to the country, most Germans were indifferent to this religious persecution.

Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.

Martin Luther King, Jr.
American Civil Rights Leader

Indifference to injustice empowered Hitler's reign of terror.



WHAT IS PASSIVE VIOLENCE IN THE HOME?

My self-esteem is so low. I hurt so badly inside. I honestly believe that at least with physical abuse, there's something concrete to show an outsider. How do I extract my broken will and damaged psyche and show anyone how I feel?

Letter to Internet support site

Emotional, psychological and financial abuse are forms of passive violence that can lead to criminal violence. Passive domestic violence includes intimidation, withholding money or resources, name-calling and put downs.

Verbal and Emotional Abuse:

Constant criticism, belittling, destruction of personal property, accusations and threats erode self-esteem. Such behaviors can generate feelings of anger, uncertainty and hatred.

Threats to hit or kill another person, to leave, to take away children or to withdraw financial support can cause a victim to live in constant fear.

CYCLE OF ABUSE

Tension Building

Tension increases, breakdown of communication, victim feels the need to placate the abuser.

Incident

Verbal and emotional abuse, anger, blaming, arguing, threats, and intimidation.

Reconciliation

Abuser apologizes, gives excuses, blames the victim, denies the abuse occurred or says it wasn't as bad as the victim claims.

Calm

Incident is "forgotten," no abuse is taking place.



WHAT IS PASSIVE VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS?

PASSIVE VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS includes various forms of disrespect and forced exclusion. Bullying, teasing, intimidation, conning a student out of money, ignoring a request for help, protecting a student for a fee and sabotaging a friendship are only a few examples. Teenagers are particularly vulnerable to mistreatment from schoolmates.

A government study says that 71 percent of students responsible for violent school attacks felt bullied or persecuted by classmates.

What is the little stuff? The little stuff is gossiping, eye-rolling, name-calling, teasing, taunting and trash-talking. If the little stuff is allowed at home, at school, on the court or on the field, it will lead to the big stuff, like shoving, punching, and fighting.

Drew Passalacqua
Dean of Students at Colina Middle School

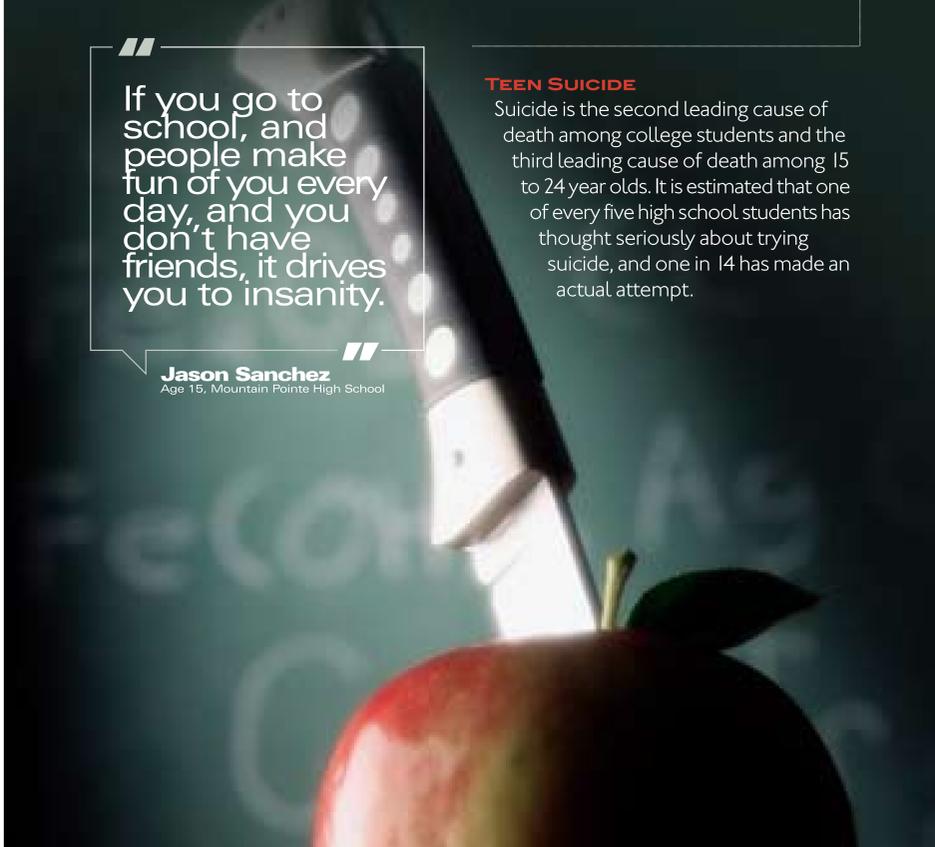
There is a 28% dropout rate among gay, lesbian and bisexual students due to harassment and verbal attacks. A 1995 Health and Human Services study shows that gay and lesbian youth account for 30% of all teen suicides.

If you go to school, and people make fun of you every day, and you don't have friends, it drives you to insanity.

Jason Sanchez
Age 15, Mountain Pointe High School

TEEN SUICIDE

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among college students and the third leading cause of death among 15 to 24 year olds. It is estimated that one of every five high school students has thought seriously about trying suicide, and one in 14 has made an actual attempt.



WHAT IS PASSIVE VIOLENCE IN THE COMMUNITY?

EXAMPLES OF NON-PHYSICAL violence in the community include certain kinds of hate crime, road rage, and threats. Indifference towards the violence in one's environment is also passive violence.

ROAD RAGE: Some people feel free to release their internal anger while driving. Incidents range from shouts and hand gestures to attempting to run another motorist off the road. In its most extreme form, road rage can lead to death.

"I'm generally a mild-mannered guy, but the moment I hit the road I'm one tiny step from being consumed by rage. Any encounter with the stupid behavior of fellow drivers releases the inner beast in me. And that beast has a filthy mouth."

Motorist
quoted by *New York Times*

INDIFFERENCE to the violence in our environment is widespread. In 2002, a fifteen year old Santa Monica, California high school student was stabbed to death at a party, in a fight watched by about a hundred teenagers. Nobody stopped the fight or called for help until the girl was dead.

"It is a flash point where you forget that the other person is a person. It reduces us to our primitive animal level: flight or fight."

Thom Cavalli
Psychologist, discussing road rage

HATE CRIMES are acts against people, property, or organizations because of the group they belong to or identity with.

In 1998, former University of California, Irvine student, Richard Machado, 21, became the first person in the United States convicted of an e-mail hate crime. Machado had sent threatening e-mails to dozens of Asian students.



WHAT IS THE ROLE OF DIALOGUE IN ENDING VIOLENCE?

"Genuine dialogue is the key that will open the door of true understanding and communication between humanity. Through dialogue we will be able to transform confrontation into harmony, prejudice into sympathy, and conflict into peace."

Daisaku Ikeda
Buddhist Peace Activist and Founder of the Soka Education System

REAL DIALOGUE involves both truthful speech and active listening. Through dialogue we can cut through superficial differences and come to recognize our common humanity. When we see ourselves in other people it is hard to take violent action against them.

If we want to live in a peaceful environment, free of violence, we must actively reach out to others. We cannot live in isolation thinking only of ourselves. The actions we take in our lives will affect the way the people in our environment respond to us.

Throughout the United States, grassroots Jewish-Palestinian dialogue circles aim to educate each other and promote peace. One organizer says, "We couldn't stand reading the paper and feeling like we weren't doing anything about it."



CAN ONE PERSON REALLY MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

A school shooting in San Diego, California, inspired Adam Schiffer, a high school senior, to develop a non-violence youth seminar. Other Southern California youngsters have begun anti-bullying and tolerance groups.

18 year old Kimmie Weeks was born in the war-torn West African nation of Liberia. At age 10, he decided to make a difference. He founded two children's organizations to fight for the rights of children. In 1996, he launched a successful campaign to get guns out of the hands of child soldiers.

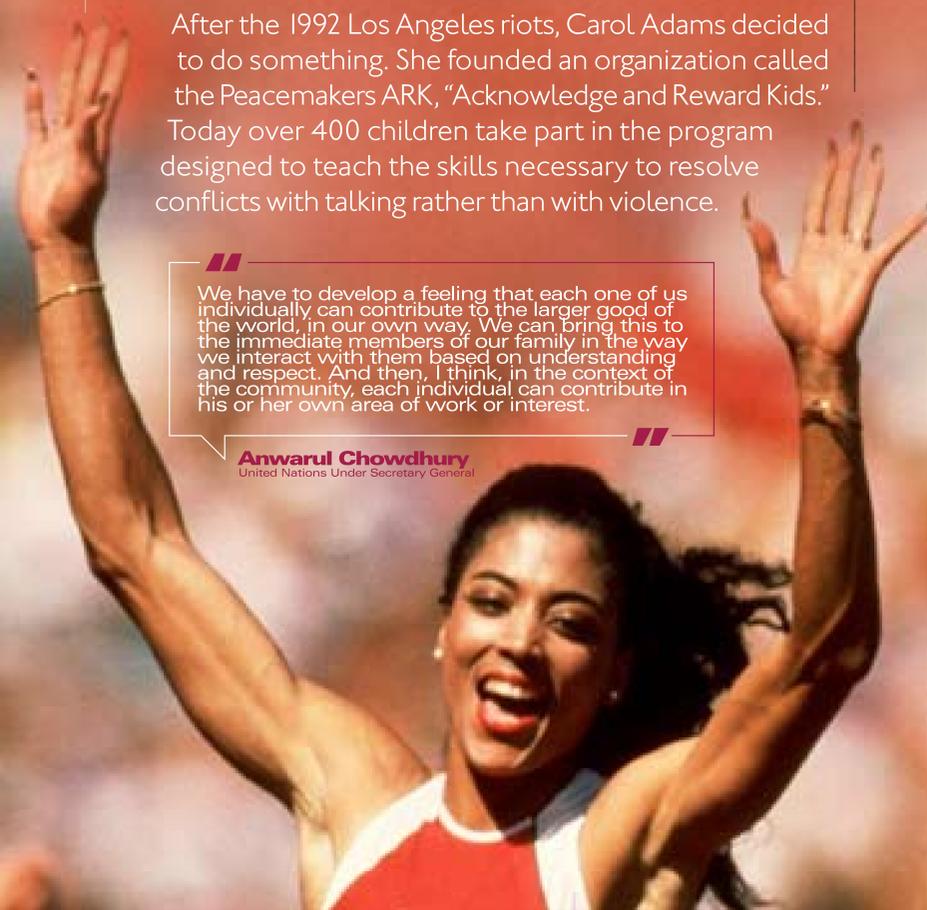
“We have to be the change we wish to see. Unless we change individually, no one is going to change collectively. For generations, we have been waiting for the other person to change first. A change of heart cannot be legislated; it must come out of personal conviction.”

Arun Gandhi
Director of the MLK Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence

After the 1992 Los Angeles riots, Carol Adams decided to do something. She founded an organization called the Peacemakers ARK, “Acknowledge and Reward Kids.” Today over 400 children take part in the program designed to teach the skills necessary to resolve conflicts with talking rather than with violence.

“We have to develop a feeling that each one of us individually can contribute to the larger good of the world, in our own way. We can bring this to the immediate members of our family in the way we interact with them based on understanding and respect. And then, I think, in the context of the community, each individual can contribute in his or her own area of work or interest.”

Anwarul Chowdhury
United Nations Under Secretary General



VOV PLEDGE FOR NONVIOLENCE

I will value my own life. Today, again, I will reach beyond my doubts, taking concrete steps to uncover my unlimited potential. Recognizing that a lack of self-identity and hope for the future are at the root of all violence, I will fight to realize my dreams, even if they seem impossible.

I will respect all life. Through understanding, tolerance and respect for diversity, I will see beyond superficial differences. I will awaken to a deeper sense of interconnectedness with those around me by reflecting on the common humanity I share with all people.

I will actively pursue dialogue. With care and consideration for the dignity inherent in others, I will make continual efforts to reach out to people each day, especially those different from myself. Through genuine friendship, I will break through feelings of isolation and hopelessness that can lead to acts of violence.

I will inspire hope in others. With courage, I will resolutely stand up against violence, be it passive or physical and teach others through my own example. I will support others and encourage them to follow their dreams.

www.vov.com



In Support of the 1999 United Nations Declaration and Program of Action on a Culture of Peace

VOV
victory over violence

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VOV is provided as a public service of the Soka Gakkai International-USA as part of its ongoing commitment to build a culture of peace through dialogue, mutual respect and altruistic action.

