



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

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Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was embraced by the world 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.

