

## **Foreward by Colman McCarthy**

**I**f it's true that all governments say they want peace and if it's true that all human hearts yearn for peace, a question arises: why isn't peace education given a place in our lives, whether our academic lives, our political lives or our spiritual lives?

Susan Ives is in the front ranks of peace educators who are answering that question by making available the literature of peace in a form that is both creative and practical. Her "Facilitator's Manual" is a book guaranteed to open minds, uplift spirits and inspire action. Her diligence brings to mind the memorable line of Eleanor Roosevelt: "*Some people are dreamers and some people are doers, but what the world really needs are dreamers who do and doers who dream.*"

"Facilitator's Manual" appears at a moment when peace education is seeing signs of success. Nationally, more than 300 colleges and universities are offering majors or minors in peace studies. Graduate schools such as American University in Washington, the University of Notre Dame and the University of San Diego are flooded with applications. The Rotary World Peace Fellowship annually provides some 60 students with all-expenses paid grants in a master's degree program at selected universities. High school and elementary schools are increasingly adding courses in peace studies and conflict resolution.

My own involvement began in 1982 when I volunteered to teach a course on nonviolence at a Washington D.C. high school not far from my office at the Washington Post. The students were able to grasp intellectually what they already absorbed emotionally: the haunting awareness that their future is threatened and their present swamped by military, family, verbal, institutional and environmental violence. The course went well, with plenty of time for debate and discussion. Soon after, I took the course to Georgetown University Law Center, American University, the University of Maryland and two more high schools. In 25 years, I've had more than 7,000 students in my courses. As a lifelong pacifist, I've had my hunches confirmed. Yes, peacemaking can be taught, the literature is large and growing. Yes, our schools should be offering academic courses on alternatives to violence. Yes, parents and teachers are realizing that unless we teach our children peace, someone else will teach them violence.

Based on those positives, my wife and I in the mid-1980s founded the Center for Teaching Peace, a non-profit that helps schools to get courses on peace studies into the nation's 78,000 elementary schools, 32,000 high schools and 3,100 colleges and universities. We operate on the belief that it is easier to build a peaceful child than repair a violent adult.

I'm both grateful and honored that Susan Ives has taken the readings from my text, "The Class of Nonviolence," and bolstered them with the richness of meaningful exercises that range from films to classroom simulations. With her "Facilitator's Manual," Susan Ives has created a work of art. But a work of art is first of all work.

As you read through these pages, I am betting that you will be energized by the author's efforts to work hard—and then either begin or expand your commitment to peacemaking, whether across the ocean or across the living room.

Washington, D.C. August, 2007

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## **Class of Nonviolence Lesson 2 Gandhi**

### **Essays for Lesson Two**

- Doctrine of the Sword** by Mohandas Gandhi  
**Gandhi in the 'Postmodern' Age** by Sanford Krolick and Betty Cannon  
**Family Satyagraha** by Eknath Easwaran  
**Ahimsa** by Eknath Easwaran  
**My Faith in Nonviolence** by Mohandas Gandhi  
**Love** by Mohandas Gandhi  
**A Pause From Violence** by Colman McCarthy

### **Questions for Lesson Two**

What do you think Gandhi would say or do if he showed up in the United States at this time?

Gandhi believed that "poverty was the worst form of violence."  
What do you think he meant?

Why did Gandhi totally reject the notion of making anyone an "enemy"?  
Who was the "enemy" in Gandhi's mind?

Do you think the U.S. government in El Salvador mirrored the treatment of India by the British during Gandhi's time?

The book, "Salvador Witness" by Ann Carrigan, on the life and death of Jean Donovan, will help you answer this relevant question.

Describe what Gandhi meant by ahimsa and satyagraha. Do these Gandhian doctrines jibe with his notion that it is better to resort to violence than cowardly retreat from nonviolently confronting unjust aggression?

## Who are the authors in this session?

**Eknath Easwaran:** was an Indian-American professor, author, translator, and religious teacher. He was influenced by Gandhi, whom Easwaran met when he was a young man.

## Gandhi display/altar

For this session we like to bring a picture of Gandhi into the room so he can be with us as we gather wisdom and inspiration from him. (The famous Margaret Bourke-White photo of Gandhi and his spinning wheel at [www.kamat.com/mmgandhi/wheel.jpg](http://www.kamat.com/mmgandhi/wheel.jpg) is a good choice.) If you feel comfortable doing so, you can create a little display, or altar, in the center of the circle. Artistically lay out a yard of unbleached muslin (about \$1 at a fabric store) to represent Indian home-spun (called *khadi*) and place upon it a couple of pictures of Gandhi, a bowl of salt to recall the salt march, perhaps a map of India. Add a picture of an Indian flag, print out a couple of quotations — use your imagination. You can light a candle or a simple oil lamp. “*When the inner lamp burns,*” Gandhi once observed, “*it illuminates the whole world.*”

You can make the candle or lamp the focus of today’s opening meditation. Eknath Easwaran, who wrote two of this lesson’s essays, once said that a flame from a lamp, when placed outside, will flicker and may even go out in the wind. When we bring it inside and place it in a quiet alcove the flame burns steady, bright and true. When we meditate, he continued, we try to get our mind into that calm, quiet, windless place where it does not flicker and burns straight and true.

## Reflective Exercise: Gandhi Said . . .

**Time:** 10-15 minutes

**Supplies:** A Gandhi quote on a slip of paper for each person

Maureen suggested this gentle way to start the session. You can cut up a copy of the readings and give each person a sentence or a short paragraph or use the pithy quotations on the next page.

Hand everyone a quotation or have them draw one from a basket. Give everyone a minute to read over his or her quotation. Then, have each person stand up and slowly and thoughtfully read their portion out loud to the group. Do this without discussion, one after another.

When all have read, provide a minute or so of reflective silence. Then, ask if anyone would like to have anything repeated, or if they found something especially memorable, confusing, inspiring, profound or meaningful to their lives. Continue the discussion for as long as it is productive.

## Gandhi Said . . .

An eye for eye only ends up making the whole world blind.

A coward is incapable of exhibiting love; it is the prerogative of the brave.

An ounce of practice is worth more than tons of preaching.

As human beings, our greatness lies not so much in being able to remake the world — that is the myth of the atomic age — as in being able to remake ourselves.

Be the change that you want to see in the world.

First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win.

I am prepared to die, but there is no cause for which I am prepared to kill.

I claim that human mind or human society is not divided into watertight compartments called social, political and religious. All act and react upon one another.

I suppose leadership at one time meant muscles; but today it means getting along with people.

It is any day better to stand erect with a broken and bandaged head than to crawl on one's belly, in order to be able to save one's head.

An error does not become truth by reason of multiplied propagation, nor does truth become error because nobody sees it.

Nearly everything you do is of no importance, but it is important that you do it.

Nobody can hurt me without my permission.

Non-cooperation with evil is as much a duty as is cooperation with good.

Poverty is the worst form of violence.

Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will.

There is a sufficiency in the world for man's need but not for man's greed.

Those who say religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion is.

To believe in something, and not to live it, is dishonest.

Truth never damages a cause that is just.

You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty.

Even if you are a minority of one, the truth is the truth.

Fear has its use but cowardice has none.

A 'No' uttered from the deepest conviction is better than a 'Yes' merely uttered to please, or worse, to avoid trouble.

Honest disagreement is often a good sign of progress.

## Reflective Exercise: Namaste

**Time:** about 5 minutes

**Supplies:** None required; music (CD and player) optional

Namaste is a Sanskrit greeting that has been given various meanings:

*I greet that place where you and I are one.*

*I salute the Light of life in you.*

One that is especially meaningful in this class is:

*I recognize that within each of us is a place where peace dwells, and when we are in that place, we are One.*



*namaste  
gesture*

Namaste is said with a gesture: bring both hands together, palms touching, in front of the person — usually at the chest/heart level, and bow slightly.

There is an extensive and beautiful explanation of Namaste online at <[www.flex.com/~jai/articles/namaste1.html](http://www.flex.com/~jai/articles/namaste1.html)>.

Namaste is how Gandhi would have greeted people. Explain its significance and demonstrate the gesture. It is helpful to write the definition on a chalk board or tack it to the wall on a big piece of paper. Ask everyone to mill around and greet everyone else in the class with "Namaste."

It adds to the atmosphere to have meditative music playing in the background during this exercise, although it is not required. Some suggestions: Veena Prasad's "Raghupati Raghava," available on "Increase the Peace," available at <[www.songsforpeace.org](http://www.songsforpeace.org)> (this was reportedly Gandhi's favorite hymn), or "Raga Madhu Kauns," on "Music from the Heart: A Collection of Spiritual, Ritual and Meditative Music."

## Fun Reflection: An Eye for an Eye . . . . makes the whole world blind

**Time:** 2 minutes

**Supplies:** chocolate eyeballs

It is a Hindu custom for the birthday child to give a gift of chocolate to his or her guests. In 2006 we offered this session on Gandhi's birthday, October 2, and without thinking through the implications, handed out chocolate eyeballs because they were on sale at the discount store. One student held hers up and quipped "an eye for an eye makes the whole world blind . . ." which resulted in a big laugh and a lively conversation. We'll do it again.

## Reflective Exercise: Seven Deadly Social Sins

**Time:** about 15 minutes

**Supplies:** a copy of the 7 deadly social sins for everyone (or post them in large print)

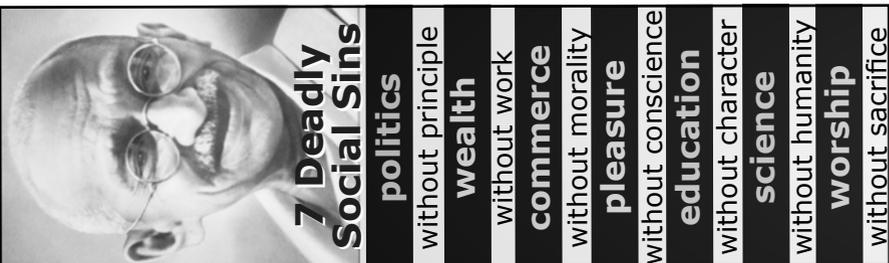
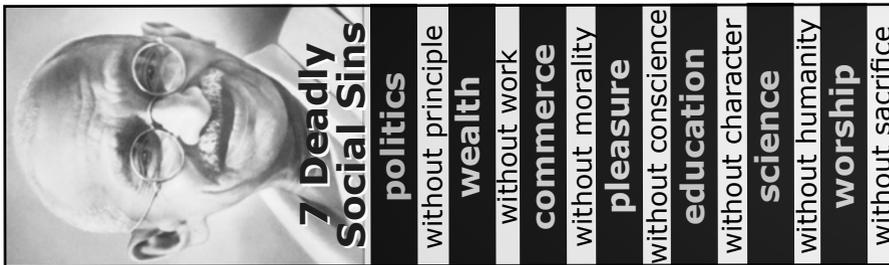
### 7 Deadly Social Sins

**politics** without principle  
**wealth** without work  
**commerce** without morality  
**pleasure** without conscience  
**education** without character  
**science** without humanity  
**worship** without sacrifice

Gandhi said, "Nonviolence is not a garment to be put on and off at will. Its seat is in the heart, and it must be an inseparable part of our being." This exercise helps bring us to a deeper understanding of the centrality of nonviolence in our everyday lives.

It is helpful to first describe the more familiar Christian list of seven deadly sins: Wrath, Avarice, Sloth, Pride, Lust, Envy and Gluttony. (To remember them, use the mnemonic WASPLEG, taken from the first letter of each sin.) These are often described as sins (or, violations of moral laws) that separate us from god, or wholeness. (Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw had his own list of the seven deadly sins: food, clothing, firing, rent, taxes, respectability and children. "Nothing," he said, "can lift those seven millstones from Man's neck but money; and the spirit cannot soar until the millstones are lifted.")

Break into smaller groups if the class is a large one. Some questions you might ask about Gandhi's seven: what makes them different from the traditional Christian sins? (one possible answer is that they are transgressions against the community.) Can you think of some examples of social sins that fall into each category? On the next page is a laid-out copy of the 7 deadlies. We print these on cardstock, cut them into strips, punch a hole in the top and tie on a short ribbon. These bookmarks are a gift to your students.



You can print this page on cardstock and cut it into individual book-marks. For extra zing, punch a hole in the top and thread through a piece of colorful ribbon or yarn. It would be considered "bringing in the circus elephants" to laminate them but we have been tempted.

The peaceCENTER often puts pithy yet important information like this in a hand-made bookmark format — we've run into people who have carried theirs for years.

## Films for this session

Reading about Ahimsa and Satyagraha can be theoretical and abstract.

SEEING the Satyagrahi's heads bashed in brings forth gasps of shock and outrage. SEEING the Tibetan monks shed tears over endangered worms makes people laugh, then pause and think about the limits of their own compassion.

To illustrate **Ahimsa**:

**Seven Years in Tibet** (1997) – On the DVD, show scene 15, from the first meeting with the young Dalai Llama through the end of the second worm sequence (about 5 minutes). The Tibetan monks are unwilling to continue digging the foundation for a movie theater because worms may be hurt. The Dalai Llama explains to the European engineer (Brad Pitt) the concept of “doing no harm to any sentient being” and they find away to work around it. We use this film clip to introduce the *Circle of Caring* exercise (page 36.)

To illustrate **Satyagraha**:

**Gandhi** (1982) – On the VHS tape, show 10:30 - 25:20 of tape 2 (about 15 minutes), starting with the word “SALT” and ending with the reporter phoning in his story about the Dharasana Salt Works action. On the DVD, this comprises scenes 18 (Salt March) & 19 (Dharasana Salt Works.)

We have found that the Indian's opposition to the salt tax requires explanation. After all, what's wrong with a tax? We pay taxes. These points help put it in context:

Britain was a colonial power that exploited the Indian land and people for their own self-ish benefit. The Indians had no vote about the taxes imposed on them. One of the rallying cries of our American Revolution was “no taxation without representation,” which is the same situation that the Indians faced.

Salt was plentiful and cheap in India, especially compared to the cost of extracting salt from the mines in Cheshire, England. The purpose of the tax was to make Indian salt artificially more expensive than English salt so that the English salt mine owners could continue to make profits.

**\*A Force More Powerful** (2000): If you have time, show episode 2, about Gandhi's role in Indian independence, about 25 minutes. (The DVD can be purchased from <[www.aforcemorepowerful.org](http://www.aforcemorepowerful.org)>, or it may be available through your public library.)

## Exercise: Circle of Caring

**Time:** 15-20 minutes

**Supplies:** Paper, crayons

In his book "Lost Boys," author James Garbarino describes a "circle of caring." For most of us, some living things lie within our circle of caring, some fall outside the circle. Some people have very small circles, some have very big ones. We call people whose circles include only themselves "sociopaths."

Garbarino describes a scene from the movie "Seven Years in Tibet" where a group of Buddhist monks take great care while digging the foundation for a new building not to kill any worms. Worms were inside their circle of caring. Where would a worm be in yours?

If the group is large enough it is more engaging to form groups of two or three and work this exercise as a team, discussing each choice among themselves. If you work in groups, provide each person with a crayon so they each have their own colors. Start with each group or person drawing a big circle on a blank sheet of paper. Ask each person to write inside the circle those beings that are inside their circle of caring. Ask them to write outside the circle those that are outside the circle. They might want to place the beings that they care about most closest to the center of the circle and beings they are ambivalent about closer to the outer edge. To start the conversation, start by quickly naming some animals: Worms. Mosquitoes. Wasps, Horses. Cows. Pigs. Deer. Cats. Dogs. Spiders. Snakes. Hamsters. Rats. Pigeons. Dolphins. A thousand year old redwood tree, the endangered northern spotted owl. Encourage them to talk about their choices among themselves. There are no right or wrong answers – this is about what YOU think.

As you go along, ask clarifying questions. Can you have compassion for an animal if you eat it? What makes us place some animals on par with family members while others fall completely outside the circle? Can there be degrees of Ahimsa (I eat chickens, but only free-range, organic ones) or is it all-or-nothing?

Now, ask each person to place these inside or outside their own circles: your family, your neighbors, the people in this room, people who live in Sweden, a drug addict, the President, an inmate on death row, a child who lives in Iraq, Osama Bin Laden, an undocumented immigrant.

Ahimsa is usually defined as the avoidance of doing harm to any sentient (having sensation of feeling) being. Is compassion the same thing as Ahimsa? Is it enough for you to avoid *doing* harm – being an active participant in harm – or could ahimsa include preventing or alleviating the harm that is done by others, by circumstances or by systems? (for example, hunger, poverty, lack of clean water or health care.)

What do our **actions** tell us about our compassion? The environmentalist Edward Abbey said, "*Sentiment without action is the ruin of the soul.*" Or Gandhi: "*Action expresses priorities.*" What do you think they meant?

In the Christian tradition it is not considered enough just to do good deeds – they must be done with love, as described in 1Corinthians 13:3: "*And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor. . . and have not love, I gain nothing.*" Is love required for ahimsa?

## Theater: Call My Bluff Game

**Time:** About 10 minutes, not including the films

**Supplies:** None

This is a fun way to introduce the definitions of Ahimsa, Satyagraha and Mahatma. You need three “ringers” and an emcee, so it works best with a large group.

Assign each “ringer” a number, 1, 2 or 3 (that will be the number of the definition they will present) and give them enough time to absorb the definitions and make them their own. Sit them together in the circle or at the front of the class.

The emcee explains the game: each of the three “experts” will give a convincing definition of a term from the readings, but only one of the “experts” will be telling the truth — the other two are faking it. Your job is to listen to the definitions closely and at the end we will vote — by cheering, booing, stamping our feet, shouting out “true” or “false” — on which definition is correct.

After each of the actors has presented his or her definition, the emcee will call for the vote. We step behind each person; hover our palm over his or her head, summarize the definition and call for the vote (“does satyagraha mean half-naked? Let hear it!”)

We start with defining Ahimsa, show the *worm* excerpt from “Seven Years in Tibet,” then discuss it. After this discussion, we conduct the “Circle of Caring” exercise. Next, we define Satyagraha, show the Salt March/Salt Works clip from “Gandhi,” then discuss it. Finally, we define Mahatma. After this, if there is time, you can show the Gandhi clip from “A Force More Powerful,” but in a two-hour session it is unlikely that there will be time.

Our whacky definitions are on the next page; the correct definitions are in bold. As always, feel free to adapt them or to create your own.

## **Ahimsa** (*pronounced ah-HIM-sah*)

(1) This was a popular term during Gandhi's time in South Africa and it describes people who are not native to South Africa, especially people like Gandhi, who came from India. It comes from the Latin and literally means "He is not from South Africa." It is considered a derogatory term. If we deconstruct the Latin root, "A" means "not," just like a-moral means not moral. Him means just what it sounds like – "him." The feminine version is "aherssa." SA is short for South Africa.

(2) Ahimsa is an Indian song – we get our word "hymn" from the Sanskrit work ahimsa. Singing was very important in the Indian struggle for independence. When people marched in protest marches or attended rallies they sang liberation ahimsas. This was a tradition carried on by Martin Luther King when he translated nonviolence for the American struggle; hence, such great civil rights songs as "We Shall Overcome" and "Ain't gonna let nobody turn me 'round."

**(3) Ahimsa is Sanskrit for avoidance of *himsa*, or violence. It is most often interpreted as meaning peace and reverence toward all living things. Ahimsa is an important doctrine of Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism. Its first mention in Indian philosophy is found in the Hindu scriptures called the Upanishads, the oldest of which date to about 800 BCE**

## **Satyagraha** (*pronounced sat-YAH-grah-hah*)

**(1) Satyagraha is the philosophy of nonviolent resistance most famously employed by Mohandas Gandhi in forcing an end to the British Raj in India and also during his struggles in South Africa. Satya means "truth" and graha means "force," so satyagraha literally means "truth-force," or the power of confronting oppressors with the truth to eliminate injustice.**

(2) A satyagraha is the white loincloth that Gandhi wore in his later years. Satya means "half" in Sanskrit and "graha" means naked, so the term literally means half-naked. This simple method of dress irritated British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who spoke fluent Sanskrit; in 1931 he caused an international incident by calling Gandhi "a half-naked fakir."

(3) Satyagraha in India means the same thing as apartheid in South Africa: segregation of the races. Gandhi campaigned against satyagraha, which was implemented by the British rulers, known as the Raj. Satyagraha came to an end with Indian independence.

## **Mahatma** (*pronounced mah-Hot-mah*)

(1) Mahatma was the name that Gandhi affectionately called his mother-in-law. His wife Kasturba was from the prominent Hatma family and the prefix MA is an honorary term meaning Mother. It means "Mother Hatma." Confused Western journalists started calling Gandhi "Mahatma" and it stuck. His real name was Mohandas.

**(2) Mahatma is Sanskrit for "Great Soul." The closest Western equivalent is probably "saint."**

(3) Mahatma is a variety of rice grown in the Punjab area of India. It is long grain white rice that is especially good with curry.

## Exercise: What is truth?

**Time:** About 20 minutes

**Supplies:** A copy of *The Blind Men and the Elephant* **or** *The Emperor's New Clothes* **or** *A Fable by Mark Twain* **and** a "truth slip" for each person (following 7 pages)

If we were to distill the wisdom of this session into one word, that word would be TRUTH. In Sanskrit, *Satya* (as in *Satyagraha*) has a deeper meaning than English typically assigns to "truth": factual, not a lie. *Satya* means "unchangeable", that which has no distortion, that which is beyond distinctions of time, space, and person, that which pervades the universe in all its constancy. It is not surprising to learn that its root word, "sat," means "almighty god."

This exercise is designed to have the class think more broadly and deeply about what we mean by truth so as to better understand satyagraha.

The handouts for this exercise are on the following seven pages. The first handout consists of 20 quotations about truth. These should be cut up into individual slips and each person should have one (if you have more than 20 people it's OK for two people to have the same quote.) Three classic stories are on the next six pages. You just need one copy of these. There are two ways to conduct the exercise.

**One way:** Before you start the reading, ask each person to read their quotation to his or her self and silently reflect on what it means for a minute. They are going to listen to a story, and think about the story in relation to their own quotations. After the story, let them know that there will be time to discuss the meaning of the story. Read one of the stories — pick your favorite — to the entire group (this should take about 10 minutes.) Pass it around so that a few people get to read. Ask people to reflect on the story in light of their assigned quotation.

**The other way:** If your group is large, it can be more engaging to divide into three groups and give each group a different story to read. Give each person a quotation, as described above (it can be interesting when people in all three groups have the same quote, as both the story and the quote might take on a different meaning.) Give them 15-20 minutes (keep your eye out for the point when the conversation just begins to flag) to read the story aloud and discuss it amongst themselves. Then, have them report back to the group what they learned.

If you have a VERY ambitious group, all three of these stories could quite easily be adapted into little plays.

## TRUTH SLIPS

"In a time of universal deceit, telling the truth becomes a revolutionary act."

*George Orwell*

"The great enemy of the truth is very often not the lie — deliberate, contrived and dishonest — but the myth — persistent, persuasive and unrealistic."

*John F. Kennedy*

"As long as people believe in absurdities, they will continue to commit atrocities."

*Voltaire*

"The world is too dangerous for anything but truth and too small for anything but love."

*William Sloane Coffin*

"Speak truth to Power."

*Society of Friends (Quakers)*

"It is error alone which needs the support of government. Truth can stand by itself."

*Thomas Jefferson*

"Most truths are so naked that people feel sorry for them and cover them up, at least a little bit."

*Edward R. Murrow*

"Believe those who are seeking the truth; doubt those who find it."

*Andre Gide*

"Such is the irresistible nature of truth that all it asks, and all it wants, is the liberty of appearing."

*Thomas Paine*

"Truth has not special time of its own. Its hour is now—always and indeed then most truly when it seems unsuitable to actual circumstances."

*Albert Schweitzer*

"It is one thing to show a man that he is in error, and another to put him in possession of the truth."

*John Locke*

"The most dangerous untruths are truths slightly distorted."

*G. C. Lichtenberg*

"The truth is violated by falsehood but outraged by silence."

*Old adage*

"All truth passes through three stages. First, it is ridiculed. Second, it is violently opposed. Third, it is accepted as being self-evident."

*Arthur Schopenhauer*

"Justice is truth in action."

*Disraeli*

"If you seek Truth, you will not seek to gain a victory by every possible means; and when you have found Truth, you need not fear being defeated."

*Epictetus*

"The first casualty when war comes is truth."

*Senator Hiram Johnson, 1917*

"The opposite of a correct statement is a false statement. The opposite of a profound truth may well be another profound truth."

*Niels Bohr*

"It takes two to speak the truth — one to speak and another to hear."

*Henry David Thoreau*

"Say not, 'I have found the truth,' but rather, 'I have found a truth.'"

*Kahlil Gibran*

# The Blind Men and the Elephant

Long ago six old men lived in a village in India. Each was born blind. The other villagers loved the old men and kept them away from harm.

Since the blind men could not see the world for themselves, they had to imagine many of its wonders. They listened carefully to the stories told by travelers to learn what they could about life outside the village.

The men were curious about many of the stories they heard, but they were most curious about elephants. They were told that elephants could trample forests, carry huge burdens, and frighten young and old with their loud trumpet calls. But they also knew that the Rajah's daughter rode an elephant when she traveled in her father's kingdom. Would the Rajah let his daughter get near such a dangerous creature?

The old men argued day and night about elephants. "An elephant must be a powerful giant," claimed the first blind man. He had heard stories about elephants being used to clear forests and build roads.

"No, you must be wrong," argued the second blind man. "An elephant must be graceful and gentle if a princess is to ride on its back."

"You're wrong! I have heard that an elephant can pierce a man's heart with its terrible horn," said the third blind man.

"Please," said the fourth blind man. "You are all mistaken. An elephant is nothing more than a large sort of cow. You know how people exaggerate."

"I am sure that an elephant is something magical," said the fifth blind man. "That would explain why the Rajah's daughter can travel safely throughout the kingdom."

"I don't believe elephants exist at all," declared the sixth blind man. "I think we are the victims of a cruel joke."

Finally, the villagers grew tired of all the arguments, and they arranged for the curious men to visit the palace of the Rajah to learn the truth about elephants. A young boy from their village was selected to guide the blind men on their journey. The smallest man put his hand on the boy's shoulder. The second blind man put his hand on his friend's shoulder, and so on until all six men were ready to walk safely behind the boy who would lead them to the Rajah's magnificent palace.

When the blind men reached the palace, they were greeted by an old friend from their village who worked as a gardener on the palace grounds. Their friend led them to the courtyard. There stood an elephant. The blind men stepped forward to touch the creature that was the subject of so many arguments.

The first blind man reached out and touched the side of the huge animal. "An elephant is smooth and solid like a wall!" he declared. "It must be very powerful."

The second blind man put his hand on the elephant's limber trunk. "An elephant is like a giant snake," he announced.

The third blind man felt the elephant's pointed tusk. "I was right," he decided. "This creature is as sharp and deadly as a spear."

The fourth blind man touched one of the elephant's four legs. "What we have here," he said, "is an extremely large cow."

The fifth blind man felt the elephant's giant ear. "I believe an elephant is like a huge fan or

maybe a magic carpet that can fly over mountains and treetops," he said.

The sixth blind man gave a tug on the elephant's fuzzy tail. "Why, this is nothing more than a piece of old rope. Dangerous, indeed," he scoffed.

The gardener led his friends to the shade of a tree. "Sit here and rest for the long journey home," he said. "I will bring you some water to drink."

While they waited, the six blind men talked about the elephant.

"An elephant is like a wall," said the first blind man. "Surely we can finally agree on that."

"A wall? An elephant is a giant snake!" answered the second blind man.

"It's a spear, I tell you," insisted the third blind man.

"I'm certain it's a giant cow," said the fourth blind man.

"Magic carpet. There's no doubt," said the fifth blind man.

"Don't you see?" pleaded the sixth blind man. "Someone used a rope to trick us."

Their argument continued and their shouts grew louder and louder.

"Wall!" "Snake!" "Spear!" "Cow!" "Carpet!" "Rope!"

"STOP SHOUTING!" called a very angry voice.

It was the Rajah, awakened from his nap by the noisy argument.

"How can each of you be so certain you are right?" asked the ruler.

The six blind men considered the question. And then, knowing the Rajah to be a very wise man, they decided to say nothing at all.

"The elephant is a very large animal," said the Rajah kindly. "Each man touched only one part. Perhaps if you put the parts together, you will see the truth. Now, let me finish my nap in peace."

When their friend returned to the garden with the cool water, the six men rested quietly in the shade, thinking about the Rajah's advice.

"He is right," said the first blind man. "To learn the truth, we must put all the parts together. Let's discuss this on the journey home."

The first blind man put his hand on the shoulder of the young boy who would guide them home. The second blind man put a hand on his friend's shoulder, and so on until all six men were ready to travel together.

# The Emperor's New Clothes

Long ago there lived an emperor who loved beautiful clothes so much that he spent all his money on being finely dressed. He had a different costume for every hour of the day.

One day two swindlers came to the emperor's city. They said that they were weavers, and knew how to make the world's finest cloth. This beautiful material had the magical property of being invisible to anyone who was stupid.

"It would be wonderful to have clothes made from that cloth," thought the emperor. "Then I would be able to tell clever people from stupid ones." So he immediately gave the two swindlers a great sum of money to weave their cloth for him.

They set up their looms and pretended to go to work, although there was nothing at all on the looms. They worked on the empty looms, often late into the night.

"I would really like to know how they are coming with the cloth!" thought the emperor, but he worried because anyone who was stupid would not be able to see the material. He decided to send someone else to see how the work was progressing.

"I'll send my honest old minister to the weavers," thought the emperor. "He is very sensible."

So the good old minister went into the hall where the two swindlers sat working at their empty looms. "Goodness!" thought the old minister, opening his eyes wide. "I cannot see a thing!" But he did not say so.

The two swindlers invited him to step closer, asking him if it wasn't a beautiful design. They pointed to the empty loom, and the

poor old minister opened his eyes wider and wider. He still could see nothing, for nothing was there. "Gracious" he thought. "Is it possible that I am stupid? No one must know this."

"Oh, it is magnificent! The best!" said the old minister, peering through his glasses. "Yes, I'll tell the emperor that I am very satisfied with it!"

The emperor sent other officials to observe the weavers' progress. They too were startled when they saw nothing, and they too reported back to him how wonderful the material was, advising him to have it made into clothes that he could wear in a grand procession. The entire city was alive in praise of the cloth. "Magnifique! Excellent!" they said.

The swindlers stayed up the entire night before the procession was to take place, burning more than sixteen candles. They pretended to take the material from the looms. They cut in the air with large scissors. They sewed with needles but without any thread. Finally they announced, "Behold! The clothes are finished!"

The emperor came to them with his cavaliers. The two swindlers raised their arms as though they were holding something and said, "Just look at these trousers! Here is the jacket! This is the cloak!" "They are as light as spider webs!"

"Yes," said the cavaliers, but they couldn't see a thing, for nothing was there.

"Would his majesty kindly remove his clothes," asked the swindlers. "Then we will fit you with the new ones, here in front of the large mirror."

The emperor took off all his clothes, and the swindlers pretended to dress him, piece by piece. Then the emperor turned and looked into the mirror.

"Goodness, they suit you well! What a wonderful fit!" they all said. "What a pattern! What colors! Such luxurious clothes!"

"Don't they fit well?" asked the emperor.

The chamberlains who were to carry the train held their hands just above the floor as if they were picking up the cloth. As they walked they pretended to hold the train high, for they could not let anyone notice that they could see nothing.

The emperor walked in the procession, and all the people in the street said, "The emperor's new clothes are wonderful! What a beautiful jacket. What a perfect fit!" No one wanted to admit that he could see nothing, for then it would be said that he was stupid.

"But he doesn't have anything on!" said a child.

"Good Lord, let us hear the voice of an innocent child!" said the father, and whispered to another what the child had said.

"A child said that he doesn't have anything on!"

Finally everyone was saying, "He doesn't have anything on!"

The emperor shuddered, for he knew that they were right, but he thought, "The procession must go on!" He carried himself even more proudly, and the chamberlains walked along behind carrying the train that wasn't there.

*by Hans Christian Andersen*

# A FABLE

## by Mark Twain

Once upon a time an artist who had painted a small and very beautiful picture placed it so that he could see it in the mirror.

He said, "This doubles the distance and softens it, and it is twice as lovely as it was before." The animals out in the woods heard of this through the housecat, who was greatly admired by them because he was so learned, and so refined and civilized, and so polite and high-bred, and could tell them so much which they didn't know before, and were not certain about afterward. They were much excited about this new piece of gossip, and they asked questions, so as to get at a full understanding of it. They asked what a picture was, and the cat explained.

"It is a flat thing," he said; "wonderfully flat, marvelously flat, enchantingly flat and elegant. And, oh, so beautiful!" That excited them almost to a frenzy, and they said they would give the world to see it.

Then the bear asked: "What is it that makes it so beautiful?"

"It is the looks of it," said the cat.

This filled them with admiration and uncertainty, and they were more excited than ever.

Then the cow asked: "What is a mirror?"

"It is a hole in the wall," said the cat. "You look in it, and there you see the picture, and it is so dainty and charming and ethereal and inspiring in its unimaginable beauty that your head turns round and round, and you almost swoon with ecstasy."

The ass had not said anything as yet; he now began to throw doubts.

He said there had never been anything as beautiful as this before, and probably wasn't now. He said that when it took a whole basketful of sesquipedalian adjectives to whoop up a thing of beauty, it was time for suspicion.

It was easy to see that these doubts were having an effect upon the animals, so the cat went off offended. The subject was dropped for a couple of days, but in the meantime curiosity was taking a fresh start, and there was a revival of interest perceptible. Then the animals assailed the ass for spoiling what could possibly have been a pleasure to them, on a mere suspicion that the picture was not beautiful, without any evidence that such was the case. The ass was not, troubled; he was calm, and said there was one way to find out who was in the right, himself or the cat: he would go and look in that hole, and come back and tell what he found there. The animals felt relieved and grateful, and asked him to go at once—which he did.

But he did not know where he ought to stand; and so, through error, he stood between the picture and the mirror. The result was that the picture had no chance, and didn't show up. He returned home and said: "The cat lied. There was nothing in that hole but an ass. There wasn't a sign of a flat thing visible. It was a handsome ass, and friendly, but just an ass, and nothing more." The elephant asked: "Did you see it good and clear? Were you close to it?" "I saw it good and clear, O Hathi, King of Beasts. I was so close that I touched noses with it." "

This is very strange," said the elephant; "the cat was always truthful before—as far as we could make out. Let another witness try. Go, Baloo, look in the hole, and come and report."

So the bear went. When he came back, he said: "Both the cat and the ass have lied; there was nothing in the hole but a bear."

Great was the surprise and puzzlement of the animals. Each was now anxious to make the test himself and get at the straight truth. The elephant sent them one at a time.

First, the cow. She found nothing in the hole but a cow.

The tiger found nothing in it but a tiger.

The lion found nothing in it but a lion.

The leopard found nothing in it but a leopard.

The camel found a camel, and nothing more.

Then Hathi was wroth, and said he would have the truth, if he had to go and fetch it himself. When he returned, he abused his whole subjectry for liars, and was in an unappeasable fury with the moral and mental blindness of the cat. He said that anybody but a near-sighted fool could see that there was nothing in the hole but an elephant.

#### **MORAL, BY THE CAT**

You can find in a text whatever you bring, if you will stand between it and the mirror of your imagination. You may not see your ears, but they will be there.

## **Prayer: Gandhi's Peace Prayers**

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Supplies:** copy of the prayers for everyone

Because the peaceCENTER is an interfaith organization we often incorporate prayer, when appropriate, into our classes. These are prayers that Gandhi wrote and often used in his daily prayer meetings at his ashram. They make a fitting ending meditation for this session.

### **Hindu Peace Prayer**

I desire neither earthly kingdom, nor even freedom from birth and death. I desire only the deliverance from grief of all those afflicted by misery. Oh Lord, lead us from the unreal to the real; from darkness to light; from death to immortality. May there be peace in celestial regions. May there be peace on earth. May the waters be appeasing. May herbs be wholesome and may trees and plants bring peace to all. May all beneficent beings bring peace to us. May thy wisdom spread peace all through the world. May all things be a source of peace to all and to me. Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti (Peace, Peace, Peace).

### **Islamic Peace Prayer**

We think of Thee, worship Thee, bow to Thee as the Creator of this Universe; we seek refuge in Thee, the Truth, our only support. Thou art the Ruler, the barge in this ocean of endless births and deaths. In the name of Allah, the beneficent, the merciful. Praise be to the Lord of the Universe who has created us and made us into tribes and nations. Give us wisdom that we may know each other and not despise all things. We shall abide by thy Peace. And, we shall remember the servants of God are those who walk on this earth in humility and, when we address them, we shall say Peace Unto Us All.

### **Christian Peace Prayer**

Blessed are the PEACEMAKERS, for they shall be known as The Children of God. But I say to you: love your enemy, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. To those who strike you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from those who take away your cloak, do not withhold your coat as well. Give to everyone who begs from you; and, to those who take away your goods, do not ask them again. And as you wish that others would do unto you, do so unto them as well.

### **Jewish Peace Prayer**

Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, that we may walk the paths of the Most High. And we shall beat our swords into ploughshares and our spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation - neither shall they learn war any more. And none shall be afraid, for the mouth of the Lord of Hosts has spoken.

### **Shinto Peace Prayer**

Although the people living across the ocean surrounding us are all our brothers and sisters why, Oh Lord, is there trouble in this world? Why do winds and waves rise in the ocean surrounding us? I earnestly wish the wind will soon blow away all the clouds hanging over the tops of the mountains.

## **Bahá'í Peace Prayer**

Be generous in prosperity and thankful in adversity. Be fair in thy judgment and guarded in thy speech. Be a lamp unto those who walk in darkness and a home to the stranger. Be eyes to the blind and a guiding light unto the feet of the erring. Be a breath of life to the body of human-kind, a dew to the soil of the human heart and a fruit upon the tree of humility.

**I offer you peace.  
I offer you love.  
I offer you friendship.  
I see your beauty.  
I hear your need.  
I feel your feelings.  
My wisdom flows from the Highest Source.  
I salute that Source in you.  
Let us work together for unity and love.**  
*Mahatma Gandhi*

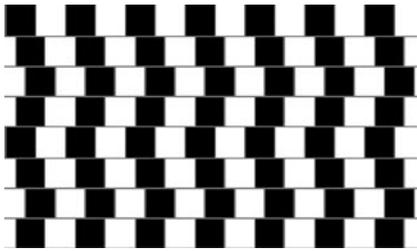
## **Fun reflection: Optical Illusions**

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Supplies:** a copy of the optical Illusions on the following page

Optical illusions are a fun way to introduce the concepts of truth and perception. Hand out the illusions as people arrive to get them thinking about the nature of truth and use them as a common frame of reference as you discuss satyagraha.

# OPTICAL ILLUSIONS



1

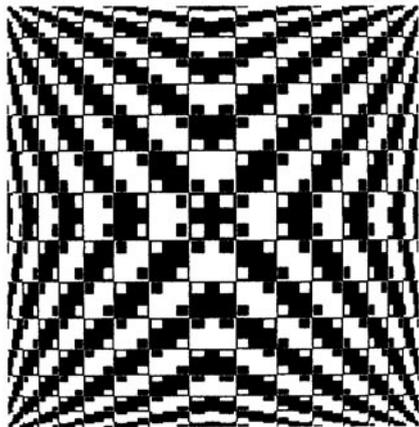
An illusion is a distortion of a sensory perception. Each of the human senses can be deceived by illusions, but visual illusions are the most well known. Different people may experience an illusion differently, or not at all.

Many illusions work because **we see what we expect to see.**

Others work because they are ambiguous: **there are many truths.**



2



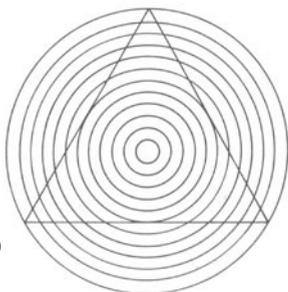
9



One woman - or two?

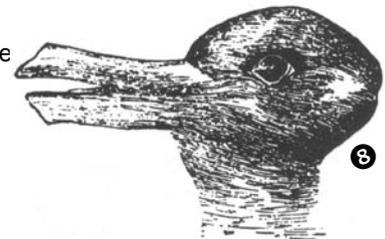


3

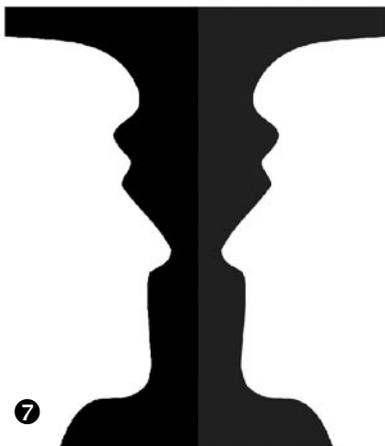


5

1. Are the lines parallel?
2. Do you see a young or an old woman?
3. Do you see a musician or a women's face
4. Do you see a face, or a word?
5. Do the triangle side bow in?
6. How many prongs?
7. Faces or a vase?
8. Duck or bunny?
9. Does the image bulge?



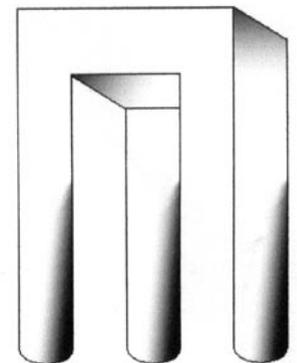
8



7



4



6

