

THE TURNING THE TIDE CURRICULUM: A Core Collection Of Material On Nonviolence

Why?

- to give Turning the Tide Resource People a common/ shared body of knowledge and/or experience
- to introduce new Resource People to the founding myths and narratives of Turning the Tide - i.e. the key concepts/ principles on which Turning the Tide operates.

So That –

- Turning the Tide Resource People can be familiar with and be able to articulate for themselves - and offer to others - a useful body of knowledge.

From the start, the Turning the Tide Programme referred to this body of knowledge as a kind of “Gandhi/ Martin Luther King package” – while recognising, of course, that the ‘package’ has been shaped by many more practitioners, groups and movements than just those two famous individuals. It contains the values, frameworks of analysis, and practical experience of generations of nonviolent activists over the past century, which the Programme aims to articulate and hand on for use and development by nonviolent activists today.

THIS USEFUL BODY OF KNOWLEDGE INCLUDES:

- Certain core concepts and principles of nonviolence – including some expressed in religious or faith-based language (though some Resource People may prefer to deal with these 'in translation');
- Certain assumptions and paradigms about social change and how it comes about;
- A particular understanding of social and political power;
- The existence of an extensive, though hidden, history of nonviolent social movements from which we can learn;

- An understanding of and commitment to revolutionary change rather than (or at least in addition to) reform, and strategic, rather than reactive, action to bring that about; and
- A vision of a practical, possible future which is radically egalitarian/ just, and where conflict is handled creatively and without recourse to violence.

Turning the Tide Resource People should have encountered this core of material and worked out their attitude towards it. They need to be familiar with it – and be willing to operate from it or at least commit to wrestle with it – in order to act in the name of the Turning the Tide Programme i.e. you can't be a Turning the Tide Resource Person if you don't accept that 'the means are the ends in process'.

HOW?

We know that people do not do most of their learning about nonviolence from books and films; and any really useful engagement with the material in this curriculum needs to rest on - and illuminate - actual, practical, lived experience. Such experience includes reflecting on their own actions/ activism and discussion, argument, threshing with, and listening to others and probably needs to include workshops (Turning the Tide workshops, but also others, such as Alternatives to Violence, mediation, 'deep ecology', etc.), participant observing, interviews and listening to activists' stories.

This curriculum/ core collection of material remains open to change and amendment in the light of experience brought by Resource People, and by the engagement of the Turning the Tide Programme as a whole with contemporary nonviolent campaigns and thinking, and with radical movements for social change more generally. New books will be published and new videos made. It remains an open question whether new ideas become 'core' to the Programme, or whether existing 'core' concepts/ principles may change.

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