

Musings on Affecting Thought Processing with Goodness

15 July 2020

In the Introduction to *The Goodness Field*, I established that our opponent is not a person, or an organization, or any other type of physical entity. Our opponent is thinking influenced by the ego – by ourselves and by others. Our opponent is *egothink*.

Global Satyagraha – which I equate to global proactive nonviolence – means getting to the root cause of *egothink* and replacing the flow of ego-driven thoughts with good thoughts. It means influencing the thought process to actualize goodness thoughts. (See <http://www.plrc.org/docs/210423.pdf>)

We should develop lesson plans on how to do that, and make them part of nonviolence training. We really, really need to understand the thinking process in order to pursue Global Satyagraha. *The Goodness Field* is a guidebook, but novel goodness-thought stimuli must be invented for local conditions.

All of this does not mean changing what any organization is doing now except to focus more on thought processing – using techniques that get people to think about the conflict between their values, attitudes, and behavior. That is called raising cognitive dissonance.

I discuss cognitive dissonance in Chapter 14 of *The Goodness Field*. The dictionary definition is a “psychological conflict resulting from incongruous beliefs and attitudes held simultaneously.” It is the uncomfortable feeling experienced when individuals become aware of a contradiction between beliefs and behavior.

It is not the hardline neocons who will first develop cognitive dissonance. We should initially focus on ordinary people who are open-minded about culture and politics (those with low cultural prejudice) As they become goodness-influenced they will influence others who have a stronger cultural prejudice, and so on up.

An example was brought to my mind a few days ago after breakfast when Janet and I do inspirational reading together. We were reading Pema Chödrön’s *Start Where You Are*. She referred to a famous 1970s photograph showing a woman placing a flower in the barrel of a National Guardsman’s rifle. There is more to that story. Pema wrote:

I read a report in which the soldier who had been holding that gun – who later became a peace activist – said that he had never before experienced anything as aggressive as that young woman coming with her flower and smiling at everybody and making this big display. Most of those young guys in the National Guard were already questioning how they got on that particular side of the fence anyway. And then along comes this flower child. She never looked in his eyes; she never had any sense of him as a person. It was all for display, and it hurt. So that’s part of the point of this slogan. You have to question what’s behind your action, especially if it is making a big splash. (p. 112)

Pema explained: “If you have the ideal of yourself as a hero or helper or doctor and everybody else as the victim, the patient, the deprived, the underdog, you are continuing to create the notion

of separateness.” (p. 111) Likewise, practitioners of nonviolence cannot be smug about their position. Our actions must be carefully planned to vividly exhibit our caring and compassion. That goodness will then penetrate deep enough to engage our opponent – *egothink*.

Had that flower child been truly compassionate – had she been communicating from the heart – she could have influenced the thought processes of those young soldiers.

Putting a cognitive-dissonance twist on our organization’s activity planning requires a lot of coloring outside the lines. It must be inventive, original, and unpredictable. It needs to put common things in a new light – that’s what stirs questions in one’s conscience.

My observation is that planning sessions are too patterned; actions are too repetitive; and the nonviolence movement is too predictable. *Egothinkers* know what to expect. They know the annual calendar of commemorative events. And they know that mass mobilizations such as the first-hundred-days marches during the Trump administration cannot endure because they don’t have sustaining resources. *Egothinkers* merely have to sit back and wait us out.

As a guide to innovative planning I recommend Srdja Popovic’s book *Blueprint for Revolution: How to Use Rice Pudding, Lego Men, and Other Nonviolent Techniques to Galvanize Communities, Overthrow Dictators, and Simply Change the World*. It is stuffed with ideas on how to use common, everyday things to stimulate cognitive dissonance.

Popovic is co-founder of Otpor! (Resist!); the organization that brought down the ‘Butcher of the Balkans’ (Serbian dictator Slobodan Milošević). He recommends comedy and laughter – what he calls Laughtivism – to stimulate goodness thinking. Sociologist Todd Gitlin commented: “As long as you want to change the world, why not do it joyfully? It’s not just funny. It’s seriously funny. No joke.”

Laughtivism is all about injecting thought-provoking humor into nonviolent resistance to create cognitive dissonance. Virtually everything important is expected to be conducted seriously. What is expected is predictable. Humor upsets that balance.

I’ve rambled enough but I wish to remind everyone that we need more visibility as a Global Satyagraha Movement. A logo and motto will help. But more than that is needed. I have seen the Declaration of Global Satyagraha posted on only one web page. I have seen nothing about Global Satyagraha in any newsletter, email, or other means of communication. If we want to build a movement we have to tell more about it..

Dangerous things are happening while people are distracted by COVID-19. The South China Sea, for instance, is becoming a very tense military confrontation. Read Michael Klare’s wake-up article in *The Nation* (Available at <https://www.thenation.com/article/world/south-china-sea-military>). I’ve known Michael since 1978 and can say he is no alarmist. He is an accurate and thorough researcher.

If the US does invade the disputed islands occupied by the Chinese, we will be in an active hot war with China. That can't be stopped by helter skelter activities by organizations with many separate allegiances, undirected by a Global Constructive Program.

So I ask: are we serious about higher unity? ... about Global Satyagraha? Do we have the commitment to nonviolence to do what is necessary?

In peace and love, Bob Aldridge

3 September 2020

As I was writing *The Goodness Field*, I came to realize that proactive nonviolent actions are those that are specifically designed to stimulate goodness thoughts to overcome egotism. In the Introduction and in Part-I of the guidebook, I developed that our true opponent is the ego-generated thoughts (egotism) that create havoc in the world.

I also laid out in Chapters 7 and 14 the scientific/psychological/philosophical groundwork for the unconscious activity that guides our thinking process – that is, preconscious thought processing. It is my hope that this process be better understood and factored into the planning of all nonviolence activity. I believe it is necessary to make a nonviolent action successful.

What takes place in our conscious mind is already history. It cannot be changed. To be proactive we must change the actualization of history. To be proactive we must influence the preconscious processing of thoughts in many, many people so that goodness enters consciousness.

Some may call this propaganda. They may say it is the same activity the invisible government knows so well and uses so expertly to control our minds for self-serving purposes.

The technique may be similar but the outcome is different. Malicious propaganda generated by the neoconservative thought manipulators is designed to energize the ego while at the same time obstructing the influence of the Goodness Force. When the ego dominates our thinking process, the wrongful thoughts of greed, racism, lust for power, and much more actuate to consciousness and lead to the wrongful actions that corrupt society today.

Proactive nonviolence is designed to empower the Goodness Force – our inner goodness – in thought development. When good thoughts actualize, goodness dominates our consciousness and benevolent action results.

I am convinced that if we are to save this planet we must tailor our nonviolent activity to guide the preconscious thought processing of a vast number of people. The first to respond will be those with lower cultural prejudice toward entertainment and everything that supports it. As goodness grows, others will follow.

In peace and love. Bob Aldridge

28 February 2021

I want to say a few words about the ‘Daily Gandhi’ that Gilda posted. I am very impressed by it because it is proactive nonviolence in pure form. Why is it proactive? It is proactive because the daily – or even periodic – reading of ‘Daily Gandhi’ influences our thinking process. It introduces new concepts of goodness. It stifles the ego’s influence and enhances the ability of our inner goodness to control our minds. Sharing ‘Daily Gandhi’ with others spreads goodness thinking. It is true Satyagraha – Proactive Nonviolence. Of course we won’t immediately reach those who are dogmatically addicted to money and pleasure, but we can begin the process that will.

By adopting the Satyagraha Resolution we announced “that we have joined together in higher unity as a Global Satyagraha Movement; and that we here and now declare Global Satyagraha on egocentric thinking (*egothink*) to free the flow of goodness on Planet Earth.” We are still struggling to achieve the higher unity part – that higher allegiance to a global movement rather than many separate allegiances to our organizations. One need not exclude the other because they are merely different phases in our journey to achieve peace on Earth. We are still struggling with that higher unity phase.

Some of us have hoped that a triggering event would crystalize higher unity. I thought perhaps the ‘storming of the capitol’ might do some triggering. But what I have seen of nonviolence activity since that stormy day is, for the most part, merely addressing history. We cannot transcend selfish thinking by reacting to conscious thoughts, and the consequences of those thoughts. Once consciously recognized, thoughts become history. We can’t change history. We need to proactively prevent the actuation of *egothink* in the first place – we need to encourage goodness thinking instead. ‘Daily Gandhi’ is a tangible way of doing that.

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I also want to address another possible misunderstanding. Information does not need my approval before being posted on this Global Satyagraha Forum. I am not the leader of this Movement. At the age of 95 (almost) I do not aspire to leading anything. The Global Satyagraha Movement is a solidifying force emanating from higher unity. But when certain issues come up, or a course of action is pursued, those with the expertise will rise up to guide and lead the way. But they will not be permanent leaders. The next venture may require expertise in another area. And so it goes. This can be a model for a world without political borders.

What I do aspire to is being a catalyst for higher unity. That is why I compiled *The Goodness Field*, and why I keep writing on this Forum that evolved from that *Guidebook*. I will continue to work for that goal, and I’ll be bugging all of you on that issue as long as I have the strength to pound on a computer keyboard.

In peace, love, and solidarity, Bob Aldridge

23 April 2021

I have written an essay on 'thoughts' that I'd like to share with you. A PDF copy is available at <http://www.plrc.org/docs/210423.pdf>

I hope it will be useful.

For those who may be wondering, Pacific Life Research Center (PLRC) is my own two-person organization. Members are my son Mark (who is the web designer) and me. A researcher needs access to web pages and publications. For some you must be affiliated with an organization so I started PLRC. PLRC.org is my personal website.

Please let me know what you think of this essay.

Peace, love, and solidarity to all of you, Bob Aldridge