

Musings on Triggering Goodness

23 March 2020

Almost simultaneous with my completion of *The Goodness Field: A Guidebook for Proactive Nonviolence*, we were assailed by COVID-19. In *The Goodness Field* I explain ‘trigger events’ and how they can be used to create goodness or harm. I am convinced that COVID-19 is a trigger event that can be used for much goodness.

Our daughter, Mary, is sheltering-in-place with us during this crisis. At our age it is a comfort to have a well-experienced nurse to help us. She is currently working as a school nurse in Lake County of California and her schools are closed. She does a lot of work on-line from our home.

Mary and I are working together to take advantage of these horrible times as a trigger event for greater global consciousness leading to Global Satyagraha. There is much we can do under Lockdown. Hidden in the quiet of the COVID-19 pandemic is a current of the collective unconscious that crosses political boundaries, and widens the focus of human connection. Ironically, within social distancing comes the benefit of reconnecting with ourselves and each other simply by slowing down.

As the world comes to a halt in normal activity and isolation abounds, the US government seizes the opportunity (trigger event) to enact policies that are likely to be the new status quo. However, the same trigger event allows for a response of *contagious nonviolence* (K. Butigan) to reshape the priorities of our planet that has no precedent in the history of humankind. Given the current social isolation, the technological talents of the younger generations, for instance, can redirect the protectory of government policy through innovative on-line connectivity and action. *The Goodness Field – A Guidebook for Proactive Nonviolence* engages nonviolent warriors in a global constructive program through the lens of historic pitfalls and successes and the required measured actions moving forward.

In some manner we have to quickly raise all nonviolence organizations to that ‘higher unity’ that MLK Jr. so passionately desired of his many organizational leaders; and meld together a Global Satyagraha Movement. Let us unblock the goodness force by pooling our knowledge and cobbling together a strategy to do that.

In peace and love, Bob Aldridge

1 April 2020

Peter Dougherty suggested we should know the gravity of what we are being asked to buy into. Global Satyagraha is something that has never been attempted in the history of humankind. It is a profound undertaking that requires thousands of nonviolence organizations working together in ‘higher unity’ under an overarching global vision – the Global Constructive Program. It is BIG and audacious; and it will happen if we take advantage of what COVID-19 is triggering.

Satyagrahis must be alert and respond quickly to opportunities or those opportunities will fade away. Bob Dylan's new song-poem, *Murder Most Foul*, depicts how the 1963 JFK assassination failed, until recently, to unmask the machinations of America's invisible government:

The day they blew out the brains of the king
Thousands were watching, no one saw a thing
It happened so quickly, so quick, by surprise
Right there in front of everyone's eyes
Greatest magic trick ever under the sun
Perfectly executed, skillfully done
Wolfman, oh Wolfman, oh Wolfman, howl
Rub-a-dub-dub, it's a murder most foul

Gandhi's 1930 Salt March Satyagraha was enhanced by the shock from the Great Depression, which distracted Britain's attention and motivated Indians to be self-sufficient. It was the 'trigger event' for the Salt March Satyagraha. I discuss trigger events in Chapter 6 of *The Goodness Field*. Bill Moyer's "Movement Action Plan" discusses trigger events in greater detail. (<http://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/moyermap.html>)

These events can be used by the power holder to justify new policy; as 9/11 triggered the 'War on Terror.' Or, they can trigger social action. The arrest of Rosa Parks triggered the Montgomery bus boycott. The meltdown of Three Mile Island triggered the strong anti-nuclear-power Clamshell and Abalone Alliances. Trigger events can be deliberately planned (the arrest of Rosa Parks) or not (Three Mile Island).

Trigger events are powerful tools for mass mobilization – "a shocking incident that dramatically reveals a critical social problem to the general public in a new and vivid way ... [it] instills a profound sense of moral outrage in the general populace. ... [it] is also a trumpet's call to action ..." (Moyer) The advantage of trigger events is that they make people *think* about life in a new way. Randy Kehler noted in a recent email:

And from what I'm seeing on the internet, reading in newspapers, hearing on the radio and from friends, this COVID-19 "event" is already triggering all kinds of "GOODNESS!", yes, **goodness** — heartfelt, heart-motivating, heart-moving goodness on a scale rarely seen: people helping people (especially those most vulnerable) in myriad ways, helping them deal with their fears, their isolation, their vulnerability, their suffering of all kinds (whether from poverty, discrimination, drugs, or whatever). And it seems to be happening everywhere, and on an unprecedented scale (extrapolating from the relatively little, which is relatively a lot, that I'm aware of just sitting here at home in our little town of Colrain, Massachusetts).

COVID-19 is indeed triggering Goodness. While sheltering-in-place we have time to study and think, and to think critically. We can develop ways to help others think Goodness thoughts. Goodness is present in all aspects of nature with all her cycles and balances – nature is beautiful and awesome, and good. Goodness is all around us, all the time. This pervasive goodness can be described by the 'field' theory of science. A scientific 'field' emanates from a force and every object in that field is acted upon by that force. Earth is a region where every person is being acted upon by the Goodness Force. Earth exists in a *goodness field*. I give a brief explanation of the Goodness Field Theory in the Introduction of *The Goodness Field* (attached), and prove it as a scientific theory in Appendix-A.

Regarding thinking, the mind prepares thoughts before we are conscious of them. The scientific name for this phenomenon is ‘preconscious thought processing.’ When the mind is guided by goodness we have good thoughts. It is when our selfish ego controls the mind that evil thoughts actualize. Once actualized, thoughts cannot be changed any more than a rock can be changed to an apple. To help a person generate good thoughts requires an understanding of how thoughts are formed. I introduce preconscious thought processing in Chapter 7 and delve into it in more detail in Chapter 14.

In this blurb I have briefly addressed trigger events, the Goodness Force, and the generation of thoughts. A working knowledge of the latter two (Goodness and thought processing) is essential for exploiting the first (trigger event) to the fullest. I have also given references for further information. Let us take advantage of sheltering in place to thoroughly understand the monumental task we are being asked to undertake. Once the references I have presented (on trigger events, the Goodness Force, and thought processing) are checked out, I hope each of you will share your ideas. Just press “reply all” and tell us what you think and how it can be accomplished.

Yesterday I received Michael Nagler’s new book – *The Third Harmony: Nonviolence and the New Story of Human Nature*. I read a good deal of it this morning. It is excellent and inspiring. I wholeheartedly recommend it as another guidebook for Global Satyagraha.

In peace and love, Bob Aldridge

17 April 2020

There needs to be a revival of democracy through "people power". The increasingly centralized power of the state and other social institutions, combined with the new use of the mass media to carry out the political process, has all but eliminated effective citizen participation in the decision-making process. Centralized powerholders now make decisions in the interests of a small minority, while simultaneously undermining the common good and aggravating critical social problems.

Bill Moyer, *Movement Action Plan*¹

Bill Moyer presents his *Movement Action Plan* (MAP) in eight stages, as illustrated in the chart below. I believe we are in Stage 4 in our struggle for Global Satyagraha, and will present my interpretation of our current situation in that light.

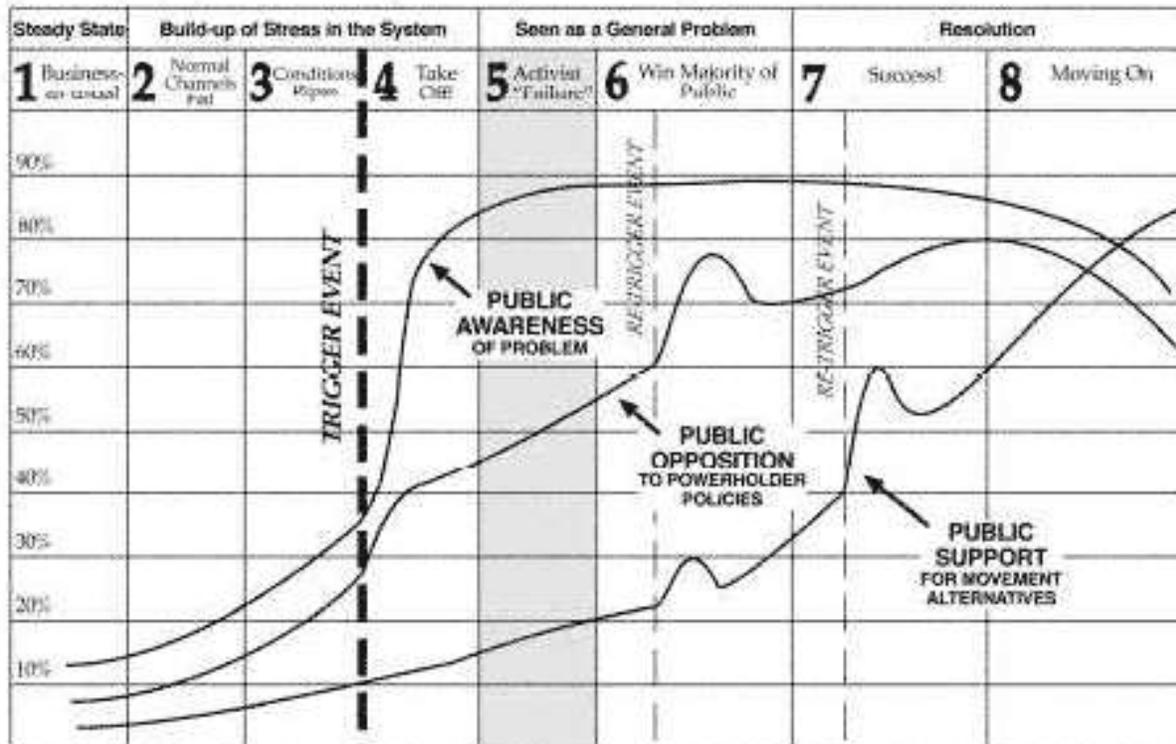
Background. During the last two decades of the 20th century the neocons quietly gained strength with little public awareness.² The labor movement was quashed, aid to impoverished families and dependent children was seriously curtailed, and the War on Drugs led to militarization of

¹ Available at <http://historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/moyermap.html>

² See *Democracy in Chains: The Deep History of the Radical Rights Stealth Plan for America* by Nancy MacLean. A good review of that book is available at https://www.ineteconomics.org/perspectives/blog/meet-the-economist-behind-the-one-percents-stealth-takeover-of-america#disqus_thread

police and mass incarcerations of the poor and minorities when there was no increase in the crime rate.³

During this period the Nonviolence Movement continued with “nonviolent demonstrations, rallies, pickets, and occasional civil disobedience actions. These groups are usually small, little noticed, and ineffective at achieving their demands. Through their symbolic actions, however,



the principled dissent groups are a shining moral light in the darkness.” (MAP) 20th century nonviolent resistance activities had developed the infrastructure for Global Satyagraha.

During the first sixteen years of the 21st century (the Bush Jr. and Obama administrations) neoconservatives stripped the US Constitution with the PATRIOT Act, realigned the government’s executive branch to fulfill their agenda, politicized the judicial branch by appointing sympathetic judges, and manipulated the voting system to assure elected officials of their choice.

During the first two years of the Trump administration, all the gains in environmental, economical, and social issues, achieved over decades of struggle, were wiped out so as to allow unfettered profiteering by corporations. Numerous marches and demonstration sprang up during the first 100 days of that administration but, except for the Indigenous Movement, they soon faded away.

Then COVID-19 hit and we entered Stage 4,

³ See Chapter 3 of *The Goodness Field*, Also see *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by Michelle Alexander.

Stage 4 of the MAP. This “is an exciting time of trigger event, dramatic actions, passion, a new social movement, public spotlight, crisis, high hopes and output of energy. Both a previously unrecognized social problem and official policies become a public issue, and within two years a majority public opinion is won.” (MAP)

The three curves in the above chart portray the public support garnered by three strategies. The top one represents Clamshell Alliance activities beginning in the 1970s. The trigger event was the March 1979 partial meltdown of reactor #2 at Three Mile Island, Pennsylvania. “More than 100 orders for nuclear power reactors, many already under construction, were canceled in the 1970s and 1980s, bankrupting some companies.” (Wikipedia, Nuclear Power in the United States)

Following the trigger event, public support for eliminating nuclear power rose dramatically from 35% of the populace to 85%; then gradually leveling off at almost 90%. People didn’t understand nuclear power and they were scared. What if there had been a complete meltdown; or what if more than one reactor melted down. Chernobyl and Fukushima – the two nuclear disasters rated ‘maximum severity’ – had not yet happened. But as information was supplied, the public opposition to nuclear power was close to total.

*See what we bought in '47, was a little piece of heaven
Just enough to plant some hopes and raise some dreams
We was never in it for the money, some folks thought that was a little bit funny
But it ain't right to turn a profit from your dreams*

*So now we're left possessin' some land that ain't worth messin' with
Who'd want a hundred acres of this dirt?
Metropolitan Edison, you say it's hurt your business
But let me tell you what hurtin' really means*

-- Jay Dudgeon, “Along the Susquehanna”

COVID-19 and Global Shutdown. With the entire planet on lockdown we have a substantial trigger event and an unsurpassable opportunity to stimulate massive public support. We can’t get out in the streets to raise consciousness but we can agitate in place. We can do that right now. We don’t need planning meetings. We don’t need fundraising. Modern technology allows us to work from home to save the planet.

Many of you represent organizations with chapters or affiliated groups. Pass information to them in a chain reaction. Others of you are journalists or have media contacts. Flood them with information. If COVID-19 can spread exponentially, so can Global Satyagraha.

Most people believe we are fighting a natural virus. The media, however, is getting hints that it might have escaped from a biological laboratory. We can fill in the rest of the story that what we are fighting is one of the ABC⁴ weapons of mass destruction. Planet Earth has been attacked by a biological warfare agent genetically engineered to be very contagious and resist vaccines. The people have much to learn.

⁴ ABC is an acronym for Atomic, Biological, and Chemical.

I have put together in simple, layperson's language information on COVID-19 that we can use as a lesson plan (See <http://www.plrc.org/docs/200501A.pdf>) It should define gain-of function and include a timeline on when it was started, why its development was banned in 2014, and how the Trump administration lifted that ban in December 2017. Please also trace the development of COVID-19 from its development in North Carolina, its transfer to the Wuhan laboratory, and how it subsequently spread worldwide. The Australian research on adding HIV should also be added. Elaborate on why certain studies and reports provide a 'smoking gun;' as well as the World Health Organization's (WHO's) involvement. That would be a great training guide for the rest of us.

Someone else might chronicle federal government foot-dragging and obstruction in fighting the disease when it reached the US, delaying availability of personal protection equipment and medical supplies/equipment, and stalling on testing and development of a vaccine. Also, how the trillions of dollars in stimulus money has been distributed.

If we don't grab this trigger event, the neocons will. I believe that without Global Satyagraha the United States and many other countries will not emerge from this crisis as democracies. Current restrictions – 'sheltering in place,' 'social distancing,' being led on by unfulfilled promises, fake news, and more – are very close to martial law. The Trump administration Attorney General once mentioned suspension of habeas corpus which is tantamount to declaring martial law. Donald Trump once claimed total authority and threatened to disband Congress. If the neocons get their way, totalitarianism will replace freedom. Resistance will then be much more difficult and dangerous, and life will be miserable. So, please, let us act now.

In peace and love, Bob Aldridge

1 October 2020

*While the heads of each of these organizations
Were able and dedicated leaders
With common aims,
Their separate allegiances made it difficult
For them to come together
On the basis of a higher unity*

-- M.L. King, Jr., *Stride toward Freedom*, p. 21

The leaders King refers to were intellectually aware of the centuries of oppression black people had suffered. But to them desegregation, was an ideology – something they aspired to but seemingly unattainable. Business went on as usual and the various goals of dispersed organizations got priority. There was no higher unity.

That all changed on December 1st of 1955. After a grueling day's work, 42-year-old Rosa Parks wearily climbed aboard the transit bus. She plopped into the first seat behind the white section. As the bus proceeded along its route, the seats filled. When a white man couldn't find a seat, the

driver expanded the white section. Rosa and three others were asked to move but there were no seats to move to. Rosa, dead tired and feet aching, refused. She was arrested.

The news spread nationwide. Blacks and white supporters felt the pathos of oppression. Passions surged. Visceral urges triggered what history recalls as the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Higher unity flourished. Today's Civil Rights movement was born.

That was 65 years ago but there are parallels today. My contact with leaders of nonviolence organizations tells me we are still at the intellectual awareness stage. We sign on to the Declaration of Global Satyagraha, or not, but it still remains an ideology. No pathos is felt. No visceral urges trigger action. Higher unity is missing.

Referring to Rosa Parks triggering the bus boycott, Peter Dougherty (Meta Peace Team) wrote to me: "The effect of her action could not have been foreseen or manufactured. The moment was right for the Blacks in Montgomery – suffering centuries of racism, spending their life not rocking the boat in order to survive in the racist culture – to defiantly start walking to work. They did it together. The solidarity was tangible. The goal was clear: desegregate the city buses. And with the advent of TV, their behavior was electrifying for many whites around the country. It triggered their response supporting, even joining, the movement to end racism in America."

Likewise 'signing on' to the Declaration of Global Satyagraha "does not create the dynamic that sweeps us together in a momentum, a tangible energy, that bonds us together – like the bonds people felt in 1955, with that synergy to dismantle segregation in America."

COVID-19 triggered our email forum. But to go from here we need a re-trigger event. Until then, Peter says, "I see our work as continuing to plant the seeds of this Movement, helping peace/justice organizations make the connections, and making available resources at hand – *The Goodness Field*, Michael Nagler's *Blueprint*, etc." And I would add World beyond War's *A Global Security System*.

So I asked where do we go from here? Peter provided a profound answer. Recalling current movements – 'Black Lives Matter,' violence against peaceful protesters, and preventing a Trump coup – Peter asked in return:

... what will grab minds and hearts of peacemakers and groups to see the way ... ? It is one thing to write and talk about the vision and tools. It is another thing to have a light go on inside many people that says "that's it! That is what we must do now together".

You answered my question eloquently, Peter. And there are more:

- How can we continue to plant the seeds of a movement?
- How do we focus our personal/organizational activity through the lens of higher unity?
- How can we be prepared for that moment when "a light goes on inside many people"?
- Is this a viable project? Is working on it what we personally can and want to do?
- What are the barriers?
- Do we need more clarity on how to proceed?

In peace and love, Bob Aldridge

14 October 2020

*"I will totally accept the results
of this great and historic presidential election
. . . if I win."*

— Donald Trump, October 201

Peter Dougherty pointed out that we may need a trigger event to bring about higher global unity but until then "I see our work as continuing to plant the seeds of this Movement, helping peace/justice organizations make the connections, and making available resources at hand ...". That climatic trigger event may not be far off and there is much planting to do before it happens. Peter's concept of "MOVEMENTS OF MOVEMENTS OF MOVEMENTS = GLOBAL SATYAGRAHA MOVEMENT" is potentially imminent. I will elaborate:

In his recent email, Francis Boyle said "this week some of us are considering the previous proposal by Phil Berrigan before his cancer diagnosis to call for a National General Strike. I also suggested that we tie it into something like The Pledge of Resistance Campaign if Reagan were to invade Nicaragua. Here if Trump were to steal the Nov. election including at the Supreme Court like happened in 2000 and even if the Dems throw in the towel like they did in 2000."

David Hartsough wrote in an earlier email: "I encourage everyone to get involved with choosedemocracy.us to help build a massive nonviolent movement to nonviolently resist if there is an attempted coup in November. George Lakey and Daniel Hunter and others are helping build this movement, organizing nonviolent trainings, etc. If Trump loses the election but refuses to accept the results of the election, this could be a 'trigger event' which could help mobilize millions of people into action."

World Beyond War (a Global Satyagraha pioneer organization) has just announced its "Fifth Edition of *A Global Security System: An Alternative to War* (AGSS) is now available! AGSS is World BEYOND War's blueprint for an alternative security system – one in which peace is pursued by peaceful means." World Beyond War is also circulating a *Declaration of Peace* for signatures.

Waging Nonviolence (a publication for which some of you are on the advisory board or the editorial board) recently published an article titled 'Ten Things You Need to Know to Stop a Coup.' The ten guidelines "are drawn from the wide body of experience and evidence from the many countries that have experienced a coup since World War II."

Daniel Hunter (author of the above-mentioned *Waging Nonviolence* article) refers to fuller case studies by Choose Democracy (mentioned above); whose website states: "Elections work because the public agrees to honor the results. Similarly, coups work only if the public honors them. When the public refuses to accept the coup as legitimate, coups fall apart." Choose Democracy solicits global participation in its pledge.

Hold the Line: A Guide to Defending Democracy (56 pages), “is a step-by-step handbook on how to prepare and what to do in case attempts are made to subvert the election results,” says Choose Democracy. See [https://holdthelineguide.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Hold-The-Line -A-Guide-to-Defending-Democracy.pdf](https://holdthelineguide.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Hold-The-Line-A-Guide-to-Defending-Democracy.pdf)

Joseph Gerson (disarmament coordinator for AFSC) refers to Protect the Results; a coalition of 100 organizations ready to mobilize if Donald Trump refuses to accept the results of the 2020 presidential election. Its webpage states: “We will stand together to ensure that if Trump loses the 2020 presidential election he will not throw our country into a constitutional crisis.” It has a 35-page ‘Protect the Results Event Host Tool Kit’ available at: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1OsDAnLJVXEASVnbdp1oJYipBBfGuGEPuqzmzHFLtq6EA/edit?ts=5f7c810b>

Jim Wallis (founder of Sojourners Community and editor of *Sojourners* magazine) has put out a call for faith-based resistance. The cover of the November *Sojourners* reads: ‘A Roadmap for Moral Resistance: In the Event of a Tainted Election, the Faith Community Must Rise Up’. Jim writes in an email: “After watching the Vice Presidential debate last night, we are convinced that protecting the right to vote and preparing for all election outcomes are more important than ever.”

New calls continue to be sounded and new coalitions continue to spring up. The threat is real and the threat is recognized. All this preparation is good, timely, and complimentary. But it is still splintered and the separate allegiances are palpable. Imagine the clout of a focused energy if all this were “planned through the lens of a Global Satyagraha Movement.” (Mary’s metaphor) Twenty days remain and miracles do happen. A higher unity is achievable if all us Global Satyagraha pioneers set our minds to make it happen.

We don’t need the tedious task of getting people and organizations to adopt a resolution, or to ‘sign-on’ to Global Satyagraha. That was necessary at first to form our pioneer group and to give it visibility. Now is the time to use that visibility. The Global Satyagraha Movement is more ethereal. It is Zeitgeist – the spirit of the times. It is the higher unity of Global Satyagraha. All that people and organizations have to do is adopt it and act. We have 20 days to magnify that spirit through the lens of Global Satyagraha.

Why global for a US election outcome? MLK Jr. rightfully recognized the US as “The Greatest Purveyor of Violence in the World Today.” The tremors of the upcoming US election will reverberate around our planet. Just as a coup won’t work unless the people honor it; so, also, a coup won’t work unless it is recognized internationally. People in other countries can prevent that recognition from happening.

Next month may be a Himalayan turning point in time. The question is: can we transcend our separate allegiances in order to accomplish that miracle?

In peace and love, Bob

