"Applying Nonviolence to Solving Community Problems", part 2

The cases studied will illustrate Ways to resolve Conflict and reduce violence at the community level. We must always remember the following prerequisites of a just society (which reduces violence to a minimum), and also Work for their implementation:

* A clear identity and worthy mission with cultural and other diversity accepted.
* Appropriate power sharing.
* Clearly-defined, flexible, responsive structures and procedures, and
* Equitably distributed resources.

We are not saying this is an easy path to follow. From our earliest years, misinformation, disregarded and slanted history and stereotyping socialize us to reinforce, rather than improve, existing violent cultural patterns.

Our beliefs and perceptions are constantly reinforced by individuals, systems or institutions We know, love and/or trust. These may include our family, our religion, our education, our government and its leaders. The media play a very important, and, too often, unrecognized role`

This socializing to the cultural norm happens to the oppressed as Well as to the oppressor. A collusion strengthens the patterns as those in power see the condition as their due while the powerless see the state, in which they find themselves, to be accepted as their lot in life. Thus, the cycle of oppression continues. To reduce violence, the cycle must be broken.

To break the Cycle, there are certain key elements, which can Work to favor our success:

* Human beings have more in common than they do differences.
* The differences are nm inherent. They are culturally learned which means they can be unlearned. New educational and informational approaches become essential.
* The oppressed, of all kinds, have mutual interests. Those can be used to draw them together to be more empowered for greater impact and effectiveness, and
* From such an improved power position, the oppressor more easily can be induced to join the oppressors in improving Conditions.

To achieve such results, the principles and skills taught in Alternatives to Violence are basic tools. As Arnold Toynbee, the famous historian once said, “The quest for alternatives to violence ought to be given the first place on ’humanity’s’ crowded agenda. It should come first because it is the most urgent of all and is also the most difficult. lt is urgent because . . . violence has become suicidal . . . . "

**This article was Written by John Looney.**