ASSURING NONVIOLENCE: Written by John Looney

This session is intended to give course participants both hope and direction. lf only we might have a true vision, a real understanding, of a school, a community, a world actually practicing peace and justice. In such a paradise everyone is concerned about and cares for each other. If we could just experience this, how much all would be inspired?

Therefore, Session 12 asks that we each create an image in our mind to put ourselves into that more perfect life. It may be a world without weapons, a school or a community without violence, whatever we are seeking to attain together as a group.

How? First we become “futurists.” Now we live in this wonderful new situation with caring and concern for one another. We “experience” how great this new community of human beings really is. Then, we brainstorm as big a list as we can of what is so enjoyably different from all we endured and suffered back in 1995. Write a list of those items in the upper left-hand column of diagram.

Next, we become “historians.” Looking back from our veritable paradise, we try to recall how we arrived where we are from those horrible old times. What was done? When? Those are written into the other appropriate sections. Those group’s responses should be posted for all to see.

Our historic research can cover many areas: education, health care, economic practices, violence, environmental and ecological issues, military operation, status of hunger and homeless problems, crime, budget priorities, etc., etc.

As the data from the group are posted, you will see a plan for reducing or ending violence or helping whatever else we are trying to improve in our organization or world. The specific, incremental steps for reaching our goals need to be defined. Business calls this imaging process; management by objectives.

However, is not something most important still lacking? People throughout history have had marvelous plans. Yet too often they remained just that, plans. Most are never implemented. How can we avoid the same tragic experience here?

For the motivation formula, I go back to the late Charles Wells. He was a professional journalist. After Working for the mainstream media, he began publishing a little newsletter called “Between the Lines*”*. It influenced thousands of people in very constructive ways.

The first requirement, he said, is information or awareness. If you do not know something is happening, you cannot be concerned about it. Concern is the second requirement. If you are not concerned about it, you never do anything about it. Action is the third requirement. If there is no action by the needed numbers of people, there will be no change. From information and awareness comes concern. From deep enough concern comes action. Only from proper action by enough “grass roots” people comes change.

All social change has been slow. History books tend to have us believe that the Civil War, and only the Civil War, ended slavery. Actually, John Woolman, Case No. 10A in this Course, began organizing against slavery in the late 1700s. Anti-Slavery Leagues formed. Public opinion in opposition gradually grew decades until the political climate would support the change. The movement to reduce or eliminate violence is born and growing in the same way. Keep your eyes and ears on the developments and join the bandwagon. Your whole life will change and, eventually, so will schools, communities, nations and world!