



# Words Matter

Communication Skills for Transcending  
Conflict in Daily Interactions



## Principles for Nonviolent Engagement

- Martin Luther King, Jr. provided six principles of nonviolent engagement in times of public confrontation.
  - Engaging these principles adds us to a long line of peace activists who engaged their faith in public.
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# Principles:

- **Nonviolence is a way of life for courageous people.** *As Christians we see the full breadth of our life as an act of faith-**how** we eat, work, shop and relate to the world.*
- **Nonviolence seeks to win friendship and understanding.** *As Christians we open ourselves to the surprising possibility of enemies becoming friends.*

# Principles:

- **Nonviolence seeks to defeat injustice, not people.** *We respond to others recognizing that every person is created in God's image, and that every person can be healed of their hatred.*
- **Nonviolence holds that suffering can educate and transform.** *We believe that God is at work to create communities to confront and end suffering through our nonviolent response to hatred.*

# Principles:

- **Nonviolence chooses love instead of hate.** *Our prophetic anger toward injustice is always rooted in love for the other, even our enemies.*
- **Nonviolence believes that God is on the side of justice.** *Throughout the Bible, we discover a God who comes to the vulnerable and the despised. When we are on the side of the oppressed, we are continuing to tell this story with our lives.*

Notes on each of these principles from **What is Bystander Intervention?** By Joy Shaver and Melissa Florer-Bixler, Mennonite Mission Network, Peace and Justice Support Network



# Skills for Tough Conversations



Skills:

## Active Listening-pay attention, stay in the moment

- Body Language-lean in, look away sometimes (no staring down eye contact)
- Allow silences
- Breathe
- Say more, I'm trying to understand
- Do you mean...?



Skills:

## **Be personable, be a person**

- “I” statements—I wonder, I’m feeling, I’m learning, I’m coming to think, I’m concerned that, for me...
- Hold respect for the person they are bigger than the position they take.



Skills:

Care to  
continue

- Be willing to continue another time-this is a relationship, not a contest
- I hope we can continue another time, I need to think about this, I appreciate your honesty

# RAWPOWer, RAWtools

Mary Sprunger-Froese

Mary@rawtools.org