

# **The Power Within: Reaching Our Highest Potential Through the Practice of Nonviolence**

## ***Teacher guide & suggestions for use***

*Created by Todd Diehl and Stephanie Knox Cubbon  
Metta Center for Nonviolence*

### **Introduction**

What happens when we treat the mind like a muscle that we train and strengthen like any other? The purpose of the Youth Violence Prevention Series is to help your students train their minds like they train for a sport, and to give your students a foundation of skills to develop positive habits of mind for positive outcomes. With a focus on mental health and well-being, and how this affects others, these videos and workbook activities teach that discipline of the mind leads to improved school work, relationships, and personal habits. The workbook is accompanied by a series of videos with NBA star Metta World Peace, who shares his perspective on the worthwhile struggle of self-discipline and practice as he strives toward a higher vision of himself and of the world. Have your students use this workbook to engage in the lifelong practice of personal and social empowerment!

### **General suggestions for use**

The workbook and accompanying video series may be used together, or they may be used separately. If you use the videos, here is a general lesson plan you can follow:

1. Write the key question of the video on the board. Have students freewrite their response for 5 minutes.
2. Show the corresponding video featuring Metta World Peace (each video is less than 3 minutes, features a key question, and closes with an inspiring or thought-provoking quote).
3. As a class, in small groups or in pairs, have students discuss Metta's answers and compare them with their own.
4. Write the closing quote on the board. As a class, reflect on the meaning of the quote. As a follow-up activity, you could have students write about the quote in class or for homework.
5. Have students complete one or several of the workbook sections at their desks. Feel free to use all of the lessons/activities or just the ones that you believe will help your students the most.

### **Part 1: Vision**

This section focuses on creating a positive vision of the future, which provides a foundation for mental health and well-being. Often, when asked to predict the future, students are quick to turn to negative thinking. Instead, help guide students to see positive possibilities in the future. The power of positive thinking is a theme throughout this curriculum. This will allow them to question the media's portrayal of the future and engage their creativity to explore what kind of future they would truly like to see in their lifetime.

**Overall Objectives:**

1. Students will be able to explain what it means to be a visionary and identify important visionaries in history.
2. Students will be able to create a positive vision of their best self.
3. Students will be able to create a vision for their future that is positive, uplifting, and empowers themselves and others.

**California State Health Objectives: Students will be able to...**

- 1.1.M Describe the benefits of having positive relationships with trusted adults.
- 1.2.M Analyze the qualities of healthy peer and family relationships.
- 1.3.M Describe healthy ways to express caring, friendship, affection, and love.
- 1.4.M Describe qualities that contribute to a positive self-image.
- 6.1.M Evaluate how preventing and managing stress and getting help for mental and social problems can help a person achieve short- and long-term goals.
- 6.2.M Set a goal to reduce life stressors in a health-enhancing way.

**National Health Education Standards<sup>1</sup>: Students will be able to...**

- 5.12.4 Generate alternatives to health-related issues or problems.
- 5.12.5 Predict the potential short-term and long-term impact of each alternative on self and others.
- 6.12.2 Develop a plan to attain a personal health goal that addresses strengths, needs, and risks.
- 6.12.3 Implement strategies and monitor progress in achieving a personal health goal.
- 6.12.4 Formulate an effective long-term personal health plan.
- 2.12.7 Analyze how the perceptions of norms influence healthy and unhealthy behaviors.
- 2.12.8 Analyze the influence of personal values and beliefs on individual health practices and behaviors.

**Suggested Videos with Metta World Peace:**

- Why is nonviolence important to you?
- Strategies for our higher vision
- Finding support
- Striving to do our best
- What is your vision for a nonviolent world?
- What are you thankful for?
- How has a mentor influenced your life?

**Supplemental activities to use with the workbook:**

- As Martin Luther King Jr. and Gandhi are both featured in this section, this presents an opportunity to learn more about both of them. The [Metta Center web site](#) has numerous

---

<sup>1</sup> The National Health Education Standards listed in this curriculum are for grades 9-12. Each standard has a parallel standard at the 6-8 grade level and can be met by modifying the activity to correspond to the lower level standard. For a complete list of the National Health Education Standards visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/sher/standards/index.htm>

resources about Gandhi such as [podcasts](#) and videos, and has a [podcast series on the legacy of Dr. King](#) that would fit well with this section. Additionally, you can visit the [Zinn Education Project](#) or [Facing History and Ourselves](#) for additional lesson plans on King and Gandhi.

- Set aside a few minutes at the beginning of each day to allow students to set their daily intention.
- Create a Vision Board on one of the walls in your classroom where students can display their vision statements
- Create a class mural of your collective vision of the world.
- Keep a “gratitude jar” in your classroom. Encourage students to write what they are thankful for on a slip of paper any time they feel inspired. At the end of the semester or year, read all the slips of paper as a class.

## Part 2: Concentration

In this section of the curriculum, students will begin to see some powerful benefits to these practices. Since so much of the lives of teenagers today involves one distraction after another, developing strategies to help with one-pointed attention and concentration are exceptionally useful and powerful. You may find that it’s especially helpful to repeat these lessons several times throughout the unit or even throughout the year. The “Passage Practice” and media fast can be especially powerful if practiced throughout the year. Another useful strategy is to utilize the language of this unit and add it to your classroom vocabulary. Tell your students to have “one-pointed attention” and remind them to “slow down” so they can think clearly. When you have them work in groups or pairs, tell them to practice “active listening.” Having this repetition will make these practices even more powerful and practical for your students.

### Objectives:

1. Students will be able to identify concentration strategies including one-pointed attention, concentration on a passage, and active listening.
2. Students will be able to utilize and practice concentration strategies to reduce stress, improve focus and study skills, and improve personal relationships.
3. Students will be able to determine the consequences of rushing and fast thinking in their lives and practice strategies to help slow down and think clearly.
4. Students will be able to evaluate the impact of the media in their lives by completing a one-evening media fast.

### California State Health Objectives: Students will be able to...

- 1.1.P Discuss the value of actively managing personal health behaviors (e.g., getting adequate sleep, practicing ergonomics, and performing self-examinations).
- 1.4.M Describe qualities that contribute to a positive self-image.
- 1.3.M Describe healthy ways to express caring, friendship, affection, and love.
- 5.1.M Monitor personal stressors and assess techniques for managing them.
- 5.2.M Compare various coping mechanisms for managing stress.

- 6.1.M Evaluate how preventing and managing stress and getting help for mental and social problems can help a person achieve short- and long-term goals.
- 6.2.M Set a goal to reduce life stressors in a health-enhancing way.
- 7.1.M Assess personal patterns of response to stress and use of resources.
- 7.2.M Practice effective coping mechanisms and strategies for managing stress.

**National Health Education Standards: Students will be able to...**

- 1.12.2 Describe the interrelationships of emotional, intellectual, physical, and social health.
- 2.12.2 Analyze how the culture supports and challenges health beliefs, practices, and behaviors.
- 2.12.5 Evaluate the effect of media on personal and family health.
- 2.12.6 Evaluate the impact of technology on personal, family, and community health.
- 7.12.1 Analyze the role of individual responsibility for enhancing health.
- 7.12.2 Demonstrate a variety of healthy practices and behaviors that will maintain or improve the health of self and others.

**Suggested Videos with Metta World Peace:**

- Why is concentration important to you?
- Concentration to reach our goals
- Improving our relationships
- Transforming the competitive drive to do good in the world
- Understanding anger and frustration

**Supplemental activities to use with the workbook:**

- Integrate some quiet time, even just 5 minutes, into your class schedule. At this time, allow students to try passage practice, follow their breathing, or simply sit quietly without distractions.
- Take the media challenge as a class. You can start with one evening, but you may even want to try a [Screen-Free Week](#)! The Screen-Free Week web site has some resources, and these [tips from PBS](#) can help get you started.
- Active listening skills take time to develop. For best results, integrate active listening practice into your weekly class schedule, and try to cultivate a culture of active listening in your classroom. The [United States Institute for Peace Peacebuilding Toolkit for Educators](#) is a great place to start for active listening lesson plans.

**Part 3: Sense Training**

This section aims to help students develop healthy eating, sleeping, and exercising habits. The last thing students may want to hear is how important it is to develop self-discipline, but it's absolutely true, and the sooner they develop the practice, the more strength and discipline they will have as adults. Many of the practices and strategies in this section work well as activities that you can return to repeatedly, during warm-ups or at the end of class, to help students to develop positive habits. Throughout this unit, continue to make connections back to the concentration and mind training from the previous section. The more students make and see these connections, and the more they practice, the stronger their self-discipline will be.

**Objectives:**

1. Students will be able to evaluate the effects of their food and activity choices on their bodies, feelings, and mental states.
2. Students will be able to practice strategies to eat, sleep, and exercise in healthy ways.
3. Students will be able to practice strategies that discipline their senses in order to make positive choices about their health.
4. Students will be able to explore the interrelationships between themselves, their food, and others in their community.
5. Students will engage in these sense-training strategies over time to develop positive, healthy habits.

**California State Health Objectives: Students will be able to...**

- 1.1.N Distinguish between facts and myths regarding nutrition practices, products, and physical performance.
- 1.2.N Research and discuss the practical use of current research-based guidelines for a nutritionally balanced diet.
- 1.4.M Describe qualities that contribute to a positive self-image.
- 1.1.P Discuss the value of actively managing personal health behaviors (e.g., getting adequate sleep, practicing ergonomics, and performing self-examinations).
- 2.5.N Analyze the impact of various influences, including the environment, on eating habits and attitudes toward weight management.
- 2.6.N Analyze internal and external influences that affect physical activity.
- 5.1.M Monitor personal stressors and assess techniques for managing them.
- 7.6.M Practice setting personal boundaries in a variety of situations.

**National Health Education Standards:**

- 1.12.1 Predict how healthy behaviors can affect health status.
- 1.12.2 Describe the interrelationships of emotional, intellectual, physical, and social health.
- 1.12.3 Analyze how environment and personal health are interrelated.
- 1.12.5 Propose ways to reduce or prevent injuries and health problems.
- 5.12.1 Examine barriers that can hinder healthy decision making.
- 5.12.5 Predict the potential short-term and long-term impact of each alternative on self and others.
- 5.12.6 Defend the healthy choice when making decisions.
- 5.12.7 Evaluate the effectiveness of health-related decisions.
- 6.12.1 Assess personal health practices and overall health status.
- 6.12.2 Develop a plan to attain a personal health goal that addresses strengths, needs, and risks.
- 6.12.3 Implement strategies and monitor progress in achieving a personal health goal.
- 6.12.4 Formulate an effective long-term personal health plan.
- 7.12.3 Demonstrate a variety of behaviors to avoid or reduce health risks to self and others.

### Suggested Videos with Metta World Peace:

- What do you strive to become?
- Healthy bodies and healthy lifestyles

### **Supplemental activities to use with the workbook:**

- Expand the “Story of Your Food” activity by having students present their story to the class. One option is to have students create videos about the story of their respective food item that they could then upload online and share with others to raise awareness.
- Read the body scan to the class, and observe the effects of relaxation.
- Have students take what they learn about mindful eating and apply it to mindful listening or mindful viewing. [Mindful Schools](#) has some excellent resources for on integrating mindfulness in education.

## **Part 4: Nonviolence**

This is the most exciting unit in the workbook, where students begin to see firsthand how all their work in the previous units begins to pay off. As a teacher, it is vitally important that you buy in to the power and effectiveness of nonviolence as well. When students see your enthusiasm and positivity, it will make these lessons much more effective. This section can be powerful if you have students discuss their actions in past situations, and brainstorm ways to handle future scenarios. The possibilities are endless once your students begin practicing nonviolence!

### **Objectives:**

1. Students will be able to identify the three faces of power and evaluate the use of integrative power to solve problems, using Gandhi and Karen Ridd as examples.
2. Students will be able to identify and practice the fundamental principles of nonviolence.
3. Students will be able to engage in the five-point plan to develop their person power to practice nonviolence.
4. Students will be able to experience the power of forgiveness in their personal relationships.

### **California State Health Objectives: Students will be able to...**

- 1.1.M Describe the benefits of having positive relationships with trusted adults.
- 1.2.M Analyze the qualities of healthy peer and family relationships.
- 1.4.M Describe qualities that contribute to a positive self-image.
- 1.8.M Explain how witnesses and bystanders can help prevent violence by reporting dangerous situations.
- 3.1.M Access school and community resources to help with mental, emotional, and social health concerns.
- 5.1.M Monitor personal stressors and assess techniques for managing them.
- 7.4.M Practice respect for individual differences and diverse backgrounds.
- 7.5.M Participate in clubs, organizations, and activities in the school and in the community that offer

opportunities for student and family involvement.

7.6.M Practice setting personal boundaries in a variety of situations.

8.1.M Support the needs and rights of others regarding mental and social health.

### **National Health Education Standards:**

4.12.1 Use skills for communicating effectively with family, peers, and others to enhance health.

4.12.2 Demonstrate refusal, negotiation, and collaboration skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.

4.12.3 Demonstrate strategies to prevent, manage, or resolve interpersonal conflicts without harming self or others.

4.12.4 Demonstrate how to ask for and offer assistance to enhance the health of self and others.

8.12.1 Utilize accurate peer and societal norms to formulate a health-enhancing message.

8.12.2 Demonstrate how to influence and support others to make positive health choices.

8.12.3 Work cooperatively as an advocate for improving personal, family, and community health.

### **Suggested Videos with Metta World Peace:**

- How do you define nonviolence?
- Can nonviolence be a personal struggle?
- Transforming the competitive drive to do good in the world

### **Supplemental activities to use with the workbook:**

- You could use a classic nonviolence training technique called a [hassle line](#), where you purposefully put students in scenarios where they practice their nonviolence skills. You can have other students come up with example scenarios, then students practice and act out nonviolent solutions.
- Have students work together to create a service learning project, where they identify a need in the community, develop a plan, and take action to solve it.
- Explore the resources on the [Metta Center web site](#) to deepen your understanding of nonviolence.

### **Contact Metta**

Feel free to share any questions, experiences, or adaptations you have with The Metta Center for Nonviolence! We would love to hear from you about how you used this curriculum. If you come up with additional activities and ways of using it, please let us know, and we can include these in future editions. Send us a message to [education@mettacenter.org](mailto:education@mettacenter.org)!

### **Additional Resources For Teachers**

*Search for a Nonviolent Future* by Michael Nagler

*Passage Meditation* by Eknath Easwaran

*Gandhi the Man* by Eknath Easwaran

*InSideOut Coaching* by Joe Ehrmann

The Metta Center Website at [www.mettacenter.org](http://www.mettacenter.org)