

## Do we want to call our work Nonviolent Communication or Compassionate Communication?

*By Mary Mackenzie*

I've read the following quote over and over and I really love what it says - courage and fierceness. I like the clarity and honesty of this. I also remember Marshall saying something like:  
Murder is the easy way out.

Quote from Miki Kashtan:

"Compassionate" doesn't connote for me the courage, the vulnerability, and the truth-telling aspects of nonviolence. I want that fierceness to be part of what we bring to the world.

Lately, I've been thinking about teaching nonviolence or peace. My work in local peace movements have made me aware how few people share my version of nonviolence. NVC taught me a way to live in nonviolence (or at least to strive for this) AND power (personal power I mean not power-over).

And to be more honest when I'm not living those values.

Deepening layers of the reality of my own violence reveal themselves to me each year as I continue to live in NVC and as I continue my other spiritual practices. I remember Susan Skye telling me once (when I had about a year of NVC and thought I had nearly "arrived" - HA!) that we're all baby giraffes until we've been teaching NVC for 10 years.

As I watch myself year after year become more aware of my own violence that I hadn't recognized as violence before, I begin to understand what Susan might have been referring to. So, I'm intrigued about helping others to dialogue or to understand or to open their minds to a broader interpretation of nonviolence and the power of it. And, from there to commit themselves to living peacefully within their own sphere of influence - to take individual positive action toward world peace.

These days I think of violence as the norm so much so that we don't even think about it except in extreme cases of physical violence. Even then, we are so inured to it - or I'll say that I can be inured to it. So, the term nonviolence sounds so big and gritty and impossible, yet that's my goal. I don't care that it's a negative term because I don't have a better alternative that truly says the bigness of what I strive for which is to be utterly and completely honest about all the ways that I am violent to myself and others and to make different choices. The word compassionate doesn't hold the same "fierceness" for me.

One more quote, from Kit Miller:

"NVC is a way of life that masquerades as a communication technique."

Thanks and love,

Mary