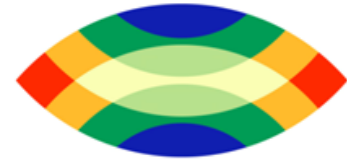


Accepting the power of goodness – the power with the seal of quality



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Albert Schweitzer: “Every conventional form of violence limits itself because it creates counter-violence which sooner or later will equal it, if not be superior to it. Goodness, however, functions simply and constantly. It does not cause tensions which restrict it. Existing tension is eased by it, distrust and misunderstandings are made to disappear into thin air. It strengthens itself by generating goodness. That is why it is the most effective and most intensive power of all.”

Every single person can act in the power of goodness. It often happens in the family and among friends (Egon Spiegel: „Gewaltfreiheit im Alltag“ [Nonviolence in everyday life]), sometimes spontaneously, perhaps in meeting people who are contributing to maintaining a state of injustice.

An example: One afternoon in a tram in Essen, two youths were about to attack an African. The other people in the tram were frightened and nobody moved - except one little girl of 8 or 9, who stepped between the young men and the African. She didn't say a word. The men gaped, taken aback, and moved as if to push her away, but did not touch her. Other people, adults, began to put themselves between the young men and the African. Not a single blow was struck. When the youths got out at the next stop, everybody was relieved. The African thanked the little girl and the other people who had shown their solidarity with him. (www.guetekraft.net > Gütekraftberichte)

A spontaneous or basic decision about certain principles is not a pre-requisite for the application of the power of goodness. They exist independently of each other.

When, with increasing competence, we want to act in the power of goodness, decisions of this kind can however be useful.

Hildegard Goss-Mayr: *“It is vital to give space to love in ourselves, and to let it grow in us.”*

If we want to apply the power of goodness in all awareness, it is useful for us, as individuals as well as for groups, to seek, to “discover” (Goss-Mayr), and to rediscover the power of goodness in our own experience, history and tradition. If you want to become more proficient in the practice of the power of goodness, you can train your personality and learn practical methods of application in various spheres of life (such as nonviolent communication, the no-blame approach, action in the power of goodness/nonviolent action and mediation, etc.). The capacity for action in the power of goodness is as innate in people as language is. Just as we learn how to speak, we are all capable of doing good. This is due to the fact that we are all naturally connected to each other. There is a predisposition in all of us to go to meet other people with goodwill and justice, with empathy and a readiness to work together.

This predisposition can become strength. When you are aware of this, you can more easily apply the power of goodness. This does not mean obeying rules (though recommendations for practical learning can be helpful), but in following that predisposition.

Love is more important than principles

Gandhi: "Each one should start to be good irrespective of what anyone else was doing; and the goodness of one would be reflected in another."

The power of goodness is a strength – not a principle, not a norm or recommendation for acting. Gandhi created a new word for the dealing with conflict which through him became known worldwide. This was satyagraha, "the force born of truth and love, love force, truth force, soul force" (Gandhi). He did not translate satyagraha into English but used the word which is revered in India, "ahimsa" (non-violence), and used it for both terms all over the world. Martin Luther King, Hildegard Goss-Mayr, and other protagonists (www.guetekraft.net > Was ist Gütekraft? > Verwandte Bezeichnungen) speak of a strength using the words "strength to love", "power of nonviolence", "power of goodness" and similar terms. "Power of goodness" („Gütekraft", « force de la bonté ») is an appropriate translation of satyagraha.

The term describing the energy functioning between people, **power of goodness**,

- names the essence of the elements of effectiveness, i.e. *goodness*, in both senses of the word:
 - *Quality*: In a conflict I can smash the other's head or try to conduct conflict fairly to both parties (meeting their fundamental needs). The latter case is better, is of higher quality or goodness", simply for the reason that the desire for revenge is avoided. Higher quality often has the power to demote what is of less quality. That's why the power of goodness can be called "power with the seal of quality".
 - A *humane attitude* of goodwill and justice, which is strong because everyone has this basic attitude and, by acting accordingly, stimulates others to do likewise.
- is open to varying interpretations about the place or origin of this strength, such as, for instance, the soul, a common predisposition to cooperation, the endowment of all human beings with reason and conscience (Declaration on Human Rights), the image of God in man, the gift of the Holy Spirit, "that of God in everybody", or "inner light" (Quaker) etc.
- prompts images which are appropriate to the possible effectiveness of nonviolent action/ action in the power of goodness, or to active nonviolence, civil conflict resolution, constructive conflict resolution, nonviolent communication, mediation etc.
- avoids widespread misunderstandings or incorrect associations of "nonviolence" on account of the wording among people who are not insiders e.g.,
 - as if the essential of Gandhi's mission were inactivity (not using violence);
 - as if the essential of Gandhi's mission were keeping to rules;
 - "Nonviolence" contains the word "violence". Unconsciously, the notion makes violence important. On the contrary, "power of goodness" can arouse the positive powers leading to overcome violence.

A new framework for conflicts. Action undertaken in the power of goodness attains its aim through the participants in the conflict acquiring a new framework (psychological term: re-framing), so that confrontation diminishes and the wrong is overcome by all parties jointly.

Even a grave injustice, due to social structures, such as the Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines in 1986, can be overcome through well planned and organized action in the power of goodness. For when the people's dissatisfaction is very great, the universality of the gift of the power of goodness makes it possible through "infecting" many people to act in vast numbers; more and more people withdraw their support from the system (non-cooperation) – even when this involves costs or risks – until the system collapses.



<http://www.power-of-goodness.net>

http://www.martin-arnold.eu/?page_id=1387

German downloads:

