

# How Gandhiji's value of non-violence influenced the creation of my living educational theory

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## M.K. Gandhi's values as standards of judgment

Mahatma Gandhi or Gandhiji was an Indian lawyer and social reformer who became the leader of the nationalist movement against the British rule of India. All his life was spent in ingeniously creating his life's work following his values, and in transforming others after his high ideals. Justice, equality, empathy, upliftment of the oppressed, truth and non-violence were his *raison d'être*. The extraordinary theory that binds his life's message to my 'living' is the Living Educational Theory. I hold Gandhiji's values as standards of judgment as a link to creating my own living-theory.

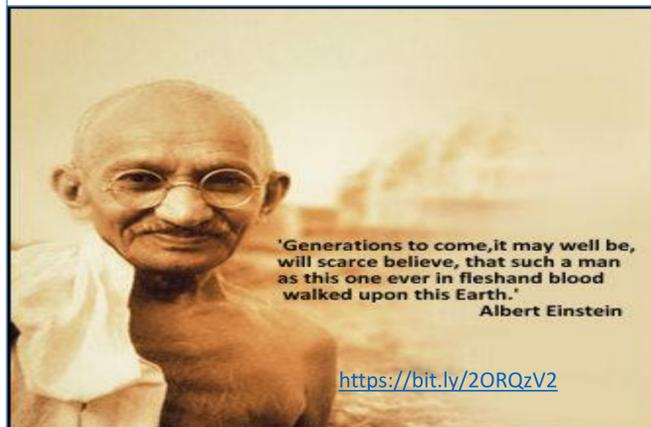
### The source of my life-affirming energy

How do my values continue to energise my life-long learning and influence in the education of myself, others and social formations? What are the values I embody through my practice and my 'living'? My allegiance is to social justice and educational creativity, originality, democracy, equality, love, empathy, truth and *Ahimsa* [non-violence].

I am increasingly aware that the expression of my life-affirming energy also flows through me from the embodied values of others. My grandmother lived by the messages of the Hindu scriptures, and the teachings of the one person to whom she was devoted to - Gandhiji. Through her behaviour and stories of Lord Krishna and Ram, and Gandhiji, she taught me about values. Gandhiji believed '*Ahimsa* or non-violence' is the means; Truth is the end' (Ramchiary, 2013). Non-violence and truth were the values both Gandhiji and my grandmother held in high esteem; so it is not surprising that I value non-violence and truth.

## *Ahimsa* [non-violence] and Truth

Gandhiji believed that humans did not have a natural affinity towards violence; that it was a learned experience. Non-violence is a perfect foil to combat violence. Gandhiji understood non-violence from its Sanskrit root *Ahimsa*. The English translation of *Ahimsa* [non-violence] does not elucidate it correctly, as it means more than just avoidance of physical violence. *Ahimsa* is total non-violence -emotional, physical and passive non-violence. *Ahimsa* is about the intent, rather than the action itself and is an attitude of universal benevolence. Gandhiji equated *Ahimsa* with love. 'because if you have love and empathy towards somebody,' he said, 'then you are not going to do any harm to that person.' The words from one of his daily prayer 'Vaishnav jan to...' epitomised his behaviour and values... and mine from his lessons.



'Vaishnav jan to...' the prayer and translation-  
<https://bit.ly/2VTO2Nt>

## Values that support my living theory

I recognize that a Living Educational Theory is generated by an individual to explain their educational influences in learning in enquiries of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?' (Whitehead, 2018). As an educator who stands for certain values, I believe I have no option but to live them out, embody them in my quest to set an example and influence others to do the same. If my aim as an educator is to work towards a good social order, if I strive for human betterment, then I need, to question: Do I accept and live out my values as fully as I can and am I assisting in the creation of a caring, humane society? Through the Living Theory methodology I share the meanings of my values as they emerge in the course of my practice. *Ahimsa* is a profound value; following it is complex task. To restrict oneself to non-violence alone is not the definition of *Ahimsa*, but to make others truly happy is *Ahimsa*. I believe *Ahimsa* is 'a state of active positivism i.e. being proactively positive' (Rakeshbhai, 2014). To Gandhiji the removal of untouchability was one of the highest attestations of *ahimsa*. My efforts in my practice and my 'living' have been empowered from the value of *Ahimsa*. I believe I followed *ahimsa* when I created my life skills education curriculum out of my love for the 'child in need'. My mission to empower the most marginalised girls which was a search for a social vision of equal education was an act of *Ahimsa* (Ukani and Rawal 2016).

My Video

<https://youtu.be/Fcu3Kk1B9iI>

## Values that support my living theory (continued)

The truth I share is that I am sometimes scared, lazy, non-compliant to negotiation, autocratic, stubborn and these are all the qualities I abhor: the truth that I was shirking, not earnestly following my desire to be original (Rawal, 2006, pg 124); that in spite of valuing dialectics I was not paying heed to another's point of view (Rawal, 2014, pg 75-76) and that my efforts for the rural India children was falling short (Rawal, 2017). When I negated these contradictions which I experienced in my practice I held fast the value 'truth'.

### My values as a standard of judgement

I believe that social change and transformation can be understood in terms of the attempts by human beings to resolve their consciously lived contradictions (Whitehead, 2018). Gandhiji lived his life more fully following his values and he consciously resolved his lived contradictions. By doing so, he transformed society and made it a better place for others. Gandhiji's life and his values like *Ahimsa* [non-violence] and truth instilled the love for humanity in me. As a life skills education teacher his message of *Ahimsa*, love and truth are my maxims. Perhaps the most important lesson I learned from him was believing in one's values and taking every step possible to negate one's contradictory actions; this leads to the generation of my living-theory.

### References

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