

Practical *Spirituality*



*A Q&A Session with
Marshall B. Rosenberg, Ph.D.*

Whenever Marshall Rosenberg speaks about deeply held beliefs—spirituality, concepts of God, views of love—two themes always emerge: 1) the greatest joy springs from connecting to life by contributing to our own and others' well being, and 2) spirituality and love are more about what we do than what we feel.

People frequently ask Marshall how he got to that place, how he relates to the religious beliefs of others, and what his views mean for the practice of Nonviolent Communication. What follows are excerpts of Marshall's unscripted, verbal responses to queries from media interviewers and workshop participants on the subject of spirituality, the concept of the Divine, the spiritual basis of NVC, and applying NVC values to social change.

Q: How do we connect with the Divine through Nonviolent Communication?

A: I think it is important that people see that spirituality is at the base of Nonviolent Communication, and that they learn the mechanics of the NVC process with that in mind. It's really a spiritual practice that I am trying to show as a way of life. Even though we don't make a point of mentioning this, people get seduced by the practice. Even if they practice NVC as a mechanical technique, they start to experience things between themselves and other people they weren't able to experience before. So eventually they come to the spirituality of the process. They begin to see that it's more than a communication process and realize it's really an attempt to manifest our spirituality. I have tried to integrate the spirituality into the practice of NVC in a way that meets my need not to destroy the beauty of it through abstract philosophizing.

The kind of world I'd like to live in will require some rather significant social changes, but the changes that I'd like to see happen probably won't happen unless the people working toward them are coming out of a different spirituality than what has led to the predicaments we're in now. So, our training is designed to help people make sure that the spirituality that's guiding them is one of their own choosing and not one they've internalized by the culture. And that they proceed in creating social change out of that spirituality.