

INTRODUCTION

Everyone in the class gasped; we were stunned by our poignant realization. The Nonviolent Communication trainer had led us through a process in which we identified our greatest need, and every one of us was surprised at what we uncovered. In the next exercise, we had identified all the things we were doing to meet our greatest need. Not one of us could identify a single behavior that would help us! In fact, we were acting in ways that guaranteed failure.

I realized in that moment that I had spent my life protecting myself by building walls between myself and other people, responding to them in a defensive or aggressive manner, and not allowing their love to pass through my tough exterior. All these behaviors were strategies to meet my need for protection. However, they made it impossible for me to meet other, more pressing needs for love, nurturing, caring, community, belonging, and intimacy. Had it not been for this trainer and Nonviolent Communication, I might never have noticed how my behaviors were ensuring my unhappiness.

Nonviolent Communication is also known as Compassionate Communication; you will see these terms used interchangeably as you read through this book. It has taught me how to be present to the moment, to identify my underlying needs in situations, and to consciously choose behaviors that are in alignment with those needs. Today, I live more authentically, more directly, more lovingly, and more peacefully than I ever dreamed possible. I have

transformed my relationships with family members, friends, and business colleagues to such a degree that I can no longer imagine the grief I used to feel in these relationships. I am sincerely and profoundly grateful for how living the Nonviolent Communication process has altered the course of my life towards peaceful living.

Each daily meditation in this book offers an inspiring quote, information on an aspect of Nonviolent Communication, and an action step that you can take each day to integrate these principles into your life.

My hope is that these daily meditations will help you start each day more centered and connected to yourself and your values. For those new to this process, may the daily messages reveal new tools for directing the course of your life toward your deepest values and needs. For those who are familiar with Nonviolent Communication, may the meditations help further ground you in its techniques and reinforce what you have learned. Together, may we fathom a different way of being in the world, a way that allows for everyone's needs to be valued equally.

The more each person lives in harmony with her values, the closer we are to manifesting world peace. It will not happen overnight, but each step we take, each moment that we choose not to snap at our children or the grocery clerk, each time we consider someone else's needs, world peace is closer. It is inevitable.

Peace and blessings on your journey.
—Mary Mackenzie