An action is nonviolent if ...

**Purpose**
To reach a collective understanding about nonviolence.

**Preparation**
This works best if preceded by an activity that opens up the subject, e.g., nonviolence spectrum.

Write up on a flipsheet Turning the Tide’s characteristics of nonviolence

**Description**
Invite people to get into threes or fours and to complete the sentence: "an action is nonviolent if ..." Allow about 10 minutes.

Bring the group back together and list the results on a flip sheet, taking one idea from each small group in turn until they are all up. Mark the disputed ones in some way, and invite a discussion.

Summarise areas of unity and disunity. Emphasise that Turning the Tide doesn’t work to any definition of nonviolence, but we do believe it’s important for a group to know what its basic shared understanding is.

One variant is to allow longer and invite the small groups to complete the opposite sentence: An action is **violent** if ....

**Time**
30 minutes

**Materials**
Flipchart, pens.

**Related tools**
Nonviolence spectrum
Debrief

How was that? Did you find it difficult? Why/why not?

So, what can we say as a group about our understanding of nonviolence?

Share where Turning the Tide has got to in its thinking. Nonviolence characteristics:

- Willingness to take action for justice without giving into or mimicking violence
- Respect and care for everyone involved in a conflict, including the opponent
- Refusal to harm, damage or degrade people / living things / the earth
- Belief that everyone is capable of change and no-one has a monopoly of truth
- Readiness to take inevitable suffering on yourself rather than inflict it on others
- The means used must be consistent with the goal of peace and justice
- Preparation and training, so that our behaviour is nonviolent.

Discuss how far this matches what the group has said.

How useful is this?