



# An action is nonviolent if ...

## Time

30 minutes

## Materials

Flipchart, pens.

## Related tools

Nonviolence spectrum

## Purpose

To reach a collective understanding about nonviolence.

## Preparation

This works best if preceded by an activity that opens up the subject, eg 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 ....





### 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?

