

# 12-WEEK Family Curriculum for Gandhi Searches for Truth

Additional books needed:  
*Nonviolence Daily: 365 Days of Wisdom from Gandhi*

Hi! My name is Stephanie Van Hook. I'm the Executive Director of the Metta Center for Nonviolence and am trained in Montessori Early Childhood Education. I wrote **Gandhi Searches for Truth** because young children (ages 3-6) I knew wanted to learn more about nonviolence and how to practice it in thought, word, and deed. These activities are designed to facilitate meaningful conversation and build our muscles for nonviolence within families and classrooms and between people of all ages. I encourage you to make the activities your own in ways that make the most sense for your context: take on the entire curriculum or just an activity or two a week. Even a little bit of this material goes a long way! Please reach out if you have any questions or ideas! I'd love to hear from you: [info@mettacenter.org](mailto:info@mettacenter.org).



## WEEK 1

# Family Activities

## Co-Create a Peace Altar

Dedicate a special corner in your home for a nonviolence altar. This altar will serve as a go-to space for self-calming; reminders of one's highest ideals; a corner for listening and being heard; and for working out our problems when we want to draw from the tools and principles of nonviolence. Be creative with setting up your altar. Cover a small table with a beautiful cloth, for example. Add to that a picture of some peacemakers who inspire you, along with a piece of nature. Keep a notebook near your altar for self-expression or sharing inspiration. Invite each family member to add something that represents them.

## Hold a Family Meeting

This could take place around your nonviolence altar. Or in a space that you intentionally create for this meeting. Begin the meeting with something beautiful. Maybe a short song, poem, or quote. Allow time for quiet reflection. Then, have each member share their highest values. Ask and answer the questions:

- ♦ Who are we as a family, and what is the purpose of our family?
- ♦ What do we care about in the world?
- ♦ How do we hope to treat one another?
- ♦ What do we wish for one another?

Spark a conversation about how we have a deep power within us for peace as individuals, and how as a family we can expand ourselves into our wider community as a force for goodness. Close the family meeting with some creative expression like coloring, singing, dancing, etc.

## Reading and Discussion

Someone volunteers to read the Introduction and Chapter 1 of *Gandhi Searches for Truth: A Practical Biography for Children* aloud. Everyone should take a few moments to consider how to put the chapter quote into your own words. Suggested discussion prompts:

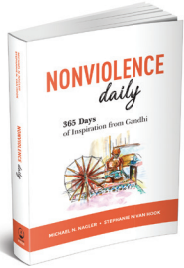
- ♦ What does it mean to tell the truth?
- ♦ What does it mean to search for Truth?
- ♦ What does it mean to live Truth?
- ♦ What can get in our way?

### TIP FOR ALL READING:

You can keep children and younger people engaged by inviting them to lead the discussion (they can take turns with the questions or take turns leading the weekly readings and discussions).

*\*With very young children, you may just want to show the picture, read it through, and then explain in your own words. If the child is able to engage with the material (we believe that if you are patient and creative, this is possible as early as 3 years), ask them to put what they heard into their own words too. Ask the child to "read" it to you—to teach YOU about Mahatma Gandhi when he was a little boy.*





## Journaling for Adults

Read the Day 7 entry from *Nonviolence Daily: 365 Days of Inspiration from Gandhi*. Then open your journal and reflect on your own “education of the heart.” When did it begin? Who has influenced you? How have your experiences, negative as well as positive, guided you?

Also consider: If you could pass on one piece of heart-wisdom to someone in your family, what would it be? And to whom? Why?

## Art Project

Learn a hand-craft or teach it to your child. Simple sewing, knitting, basic weaving. Be patient and start simple.

# Skills Exercise

## Skill-Building Principle and Exercise

BY  
MICHAEL  
NAGLER



*The person is not the problem. The more you respect people, the more readily they will listen to your needs.*

In nonviolence, we can condemn behaviors without shaming, humiliating, or dehumanizing anyone: many of us reach for behaviors that reflect the conditioning we experienced while growing up.

Our own behavior is always the best example. Remember that children in particular are paying attention to how we treat them and others, and they will model their behavior based on what they observe. What we do matters. Lead by example.

It's OK to be imperfect in this practice. As Gandhi said, “**Full effort is full victory.**”

In nonviolence, we believe that there is no problem that cannot be resolved, no need that cannot be met. Everyone's “wants” may not be met, but needs are a different story. Everyone needs respect. Everyone needs to feel worthy of truth, and of trust. Consider:

- ♦ How do we offer these?
- ♦ Why, and in which circumstances, might you find yourself withholding these needs from others?

This principle is rarely if ever represented in mainstream/mass media. Do not be surprised if it is hard to put into practice. Dedicate yourself to it throughout the week.

### FAMILY EXERCISE:

Tell a story about a real or a made-up situation in which:

- ♦ Each party in a conflict believed the problem was the other person; and
- ♦ The conflict ended when they decided to work together to solve the problem without seeking to blame or condemn anyone.



## Drawing, Writing, and Coloring Page

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin purple border, intended for drawing, writing, and coloring.

*I claim to be a votary of truth from my early childhood.*



## WEEK 2

# Family Activities

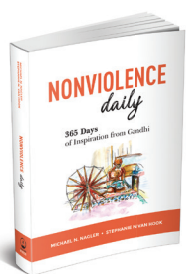
### Visit Your Peace Altar

Consider someone who could use your prayers and meditations. Put that person's name or image on the peace altar. Say your mantram for this person when you pass by the altar.

### Hold a Family Meeting

Take time together as a whole family to commit to the principles of a pledge of nonviolence that you write and agree to as a family.

### Journaling for Adults



Read the Day 208 entry from *Nonviolence Daily: 365 Days of Inspiration from Gandhi*. Reflect in your journal about how your mind responds when something agitates you. What does it feel like? What happens when you get agitated—how do you respond to others?

It is possible to care deeply and to respond to a situation without adding to the chaos of the conflict. Have you seen this done before? Have you done this before?

### Reading and Discussion

The focus for Chapter 2 is the mantram (see the “Mantram” entry in the Big Glossary of Ideas). Questions that might accompany this chapter and help us dig deeper into the concepts of nonviolence are:

- ♦ Why is it important to calm our minds when we practice nonviolence? (Conversely, what does it feel like in ourselves when we are angry and want to lash out at each other?)
- ♦ How might a mantram help Gandhi be a peacemaker?

### Art Project

Take out paper, crayons, colored pencils, markers, paints, watercolors—whatever art supplies you have. Create a family (or class) portrait, with each person representing someone else or themselves. Then, place your family's pledge of nonviolence inside the portrait in some creative way.



# Skills Exercise

## Week 2 Skill-Building Principle



BY  
MICHAEL  
NAGLER

*All of us have the same basic needs.  
It is possible, in principle, to find a win-win solution.*

When you look at basic needs—and not just the physical-biological set or the “basic” needs of food, clothing, and shelter—you find that all of us have needs for belonging, autonomy, and meaning.

The wonderful thing is, the satisfaction of these needs is almost never in conflict: my need for meaning doesn't require that I diminish your need for meaning. In fact, they often feed each other: the more I respect you, the more my dignity increases; the more I love you, the more love I experience in my life.

Having faith in win-win solutions is one of the things that enables us to function nonviolently.

### **FAMILY EXERCISE:**

Every time a conflict arises this week, instead of deciding who is right and wrong, think: What are the needs that seem to be at the root of the conflict?





## Drawing, Writing, and Coloring Page

*When a child, my nurse taught me to repeat Rama whenever I felt afraid or miserable, and it has been second nature with me with growing knowledge and advancing years.*



## WEEK 3

# Family Activities

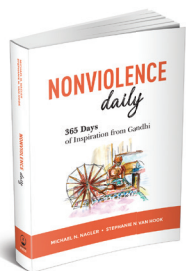
## Sing at Your Peace Altar

Bring a song to your altar this week. Find a song of peace or make one up and share it. Each person may have their own, or you may do one together.

## Hold a Family Meeting

This could take place around your nonviolence altar or in a space that you create intentionally to hold this meeting. Begin the meeting with something beautiful. Maybe a short song or a poem or an inspiring quote. Allow time for quiet reflection. Then, invite one another into the discussion.

## Journaling for Adults



Read the Day 69 entry from *Nonviolence Daily: 365 Days of Inspiration from Gandhi*. Then open your journal and consider the following:

- ♦ How do you define cooperation and non-cooperation?
- ♦ What is one area in your life, or within yourself, where you feel some non-cooperation is in order?
- ♦ What might that look/feel/be like?

## Reading and Discussion

Someone volunteers to read Chapter 3 of *Gandhi Searches for Truth: A Practical Biography for Children* aloud. Before reading for younger children, you may also want to look up the terms “cooperation” and “non-cooperation” in the Big Glossary of Ideas. Suggested discussion questions:

- ♦ What is cooperation?
- ♦ What is non-cooperation?
- ♦ How is cooperation different from coercion?
- ♦ Can we non-cooperate with someone and still love them?
- ♦ Can we think of a time when we knew it was right to non-cooperate with injustice (or what was not fair to someone)?
- ♦ Cooperation does not mean cooperating with a person as much as it does with cooperating with what our hearts tell us. Can you think of a time when you saw something unfair and your heart helped you?

## Art Project

Using what you have around your home, create a mandala for peace on the ground, on a table, or anywhere you have space. You may want to use objects you can glue and keep, or you may only want to make a temporary mandala and decide to put materials away when you are finished.





# Skills Exercise

## Week 3 Skill-Building Principle

BY  
MICHAEL  
NAGLER



*Nonviolence will always make things better, but not always in the short term.  
Violence will always make them worse.*

The goal of nonviolence is to realize our interconnectedness and to value the importance of everyone. One way violence can appear in our day-to-day life is when we consistently replace our own will for the will of others. When we impose our will on others, it can be a subtle, and at times no-so-subtle, form of violence.

### **FAMILY EXERCISE:**

Try to notice when you impose your will on others this week. Think of ways to increase your skill in nonviolence by refraining from feeling you know what is “right” and inviting others to partake in decision-making processes that may involve or affect them.





## Drawing, Writing, and Coloring Page

*The highest honor my friends can do me is to enforce in their own lives the programme that I stand for or to resist me to their utmost if they do not believe in it.*



## WEEK 4

# Family Activities

## Reflect at Your Peace Altar

What reminds you to be gentle to yourself? To others? Add items to your altar that remind you of ahimsa and gentleness.

## Hold a Family Meeting

This could take place around your nonviolence altar or in a space that you create intentionally to hold this meeting. Begin the meeting with something beautiful. Maybe a short song or a poem or an inspiring quote. Allow time for quiet reflection. Then, invite one another into a discussion.

Explore the topic of conflict from the perspective that conflict is normal, even healthy, but that there are ways of engaging in it that do not require us to use violence. While this knowledge about conflict is not understood very well in our media, it is understood by peacemakers.

Find ways of handling conflicts that draw on creativity, not violence. There are no right or wrong answers. The goal is to be honest with one another, to try to go a little deeper as a group, and to share from our hearts.

Your family meeting can also serve as a space to work out problems in a collaborative way (not parents vs. children).

## Reading and Discussion

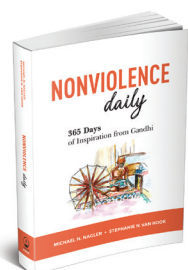
Someone volunteers to read Chapter 4 of *Gandhi Searches for Truth: A Practical Biography for Children* aloud.

Before reading for younger children, you may want to review the term “ahimsa” in the Big Glossary of Ideas. Suggested explorations:

- ♦ Gentleness, Truth, and care for others/ourselves can help us transform conflict. Examine how Gandhi and his father drew from these values.
- ♦ Consider the notion that making mistakes is to be expected as we are learning about life and ourselves, and brainstorm about how we learn from our personal conflicts to transform ourselves.

## Art Project

Gandhi wrote his father a letter to confess a mistake, and his father treated him with gentleness. Write a beautiful letter to someone you love who could use your support in this time, and share yourself and your appreciation with them. Choose beautiful words and ideas—treat this letter like a work of art, and decorate it. Mail it to your loved one, or if they are in your own house, give it to them in a special way.



## Journaling for Adults

Read the Day 224 entry from *Nonviolence Daily: 365 Days of Inspiration from Gandhi*. In your journal, reflect on ways that slowing down the pace of our lives helps us be more nonviolent toward ourselves, our families, our colleagues, etc.



# Skills Exercise

## Week 4 Skill-Building Principle

BY  
MICHAEL  
NAGLER



*Each of us has a piece of the truth. No one, including us, has the whole truth.*

Just because we don't have the whole truth does not mean that we cannot act. It means instead that we have to be humble and aware of our own experiences that lead us to make certain choices (while keeping in mind that others have their own experiences too). That said, we can spend so much time trying to account for reasons behind someone else's actions and motives, that we forget to assess our own.

### **FAMILY EXERCISE:**

This week, train yourself to keep returning to assessing both your own motives for your actions and your efforts to express those motives and intentions. Are they rooted in a commitment to understanding?

We should all be ready to know that our motives at times will need review and even a check: Am I doing something with a negative feeling about the person or group to whom it is directed? The consequences of such actions will lead to further negativity. Try not to choose an action or a word until it can be motivated by gentleness.





## Drawing, Writing, and Coloring Page



*When Ahimsa becomes all-embracing, it transforms everything it touches.  
There is no limit to its power.*



## WEEK 5

# Family Activities

## Nature Sounds at Your Peace Altar

Put your ears to the outdoors, and add something to your peace altar that represents what you can hear outside. It might be an image of a bird or a buzzing bee, something that symbolizes the wind. Show appreciation for those voices that surround us all of the time and that we would miss if they were not there.

## Hold a Family Meeting

This could take place around your nonviolence altar or in a space that you create intentionally to hold this meeting. Begin the meeting with something beautiful. Maybe a short song or a poem or an inspiring quote. Allow time for quiet reflection. Then, invite one another into a discussion.

Ask everyone to share one positive and helpful thing they have learned from everyone else. Practice listening to one another when it's someone else's turn, and practice showing appreciation for what people have shared.

## Art Project

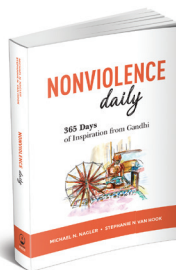
Send us a photo(s) of anything you've created so far, from your family altar to whatever else you may have been inspired to write or craft. When you email us your image(s), be sure to let us know if we can share your photo(s) with others: [info@mettacenter.org](mailto:info@mettacenter.org).

## Reading and Discussion

Someone volunteers to read Chapter 5 of *Gandhi Searches for Truth: A Practical Biography for Children* aloud. Here are a few questions/thoughts that might accompany your discussion:

- ♦ What does friendship really mean?
- ♦ What are some of the deeper purposes of friendship?
- ♦ How can we stay friends with someone while also non-cooperating with them when necessary? In other words, how can we dissociate ourselves from our friends' actions when required without losing love for, or from, our friends?

## Journaling for Adults



Read the Day 67 entry from *Nonviolence Daily: 365 Days of Inspiration from Gandhi*. In your journal, reflect on ways that slowing down the pace of our lives helps us be more nonviolent toward ourselves, our families, our colleagues, etc.

More than words or grand gestures, love is a way of relating to one another with respect and reverence. Reflect on the ordinary ways that love expresses itself in your family, community, work, etc. What key lessons have you learned about that daily, ordinary expression of love over the course of your life? Where do you want to improve in your practice of extending your love to those in your life (and beyond)?



# Skills Exercise

## Week 5 Skill-Building Principle

BY  
MICHAEL  
NAGLER



*No one can really humiliate us or make us hate without our permission.  
Power and freedom lie within us.*

Gandhi, who made a superhuman effort to answer all his voluminous correspondence, once began his answer to a detractor with, “The letter seems to be intended as an insult. But I choose not to take it as such.” The realization that we are not creatures of stimulus-and-response, that we are not under any compulsion to respond to negativity being aimed at us, creates the space for nonviolent action.

This is what activists today mean by “flipping the script”: the often startling (though it must be admitted, occasionally infuriating) response to hate with love that disarms the other and opens the door to having a conversation and a mutually learning experience where what we were offered was a fight. This is why spiritual practices can weigh in so helpfully in nonviolence; in them we learn not to react to our own negative impulses and become, step by step, masters of our lives, our relationships—in the end, our destinies.

One of the ways spiritual practices gives us this capacity is by slowly making us aware of the power and freedom that lie within us. As Martin Luther King said, “I refuse to let anyone bring me so low as to make me hate him or her.”

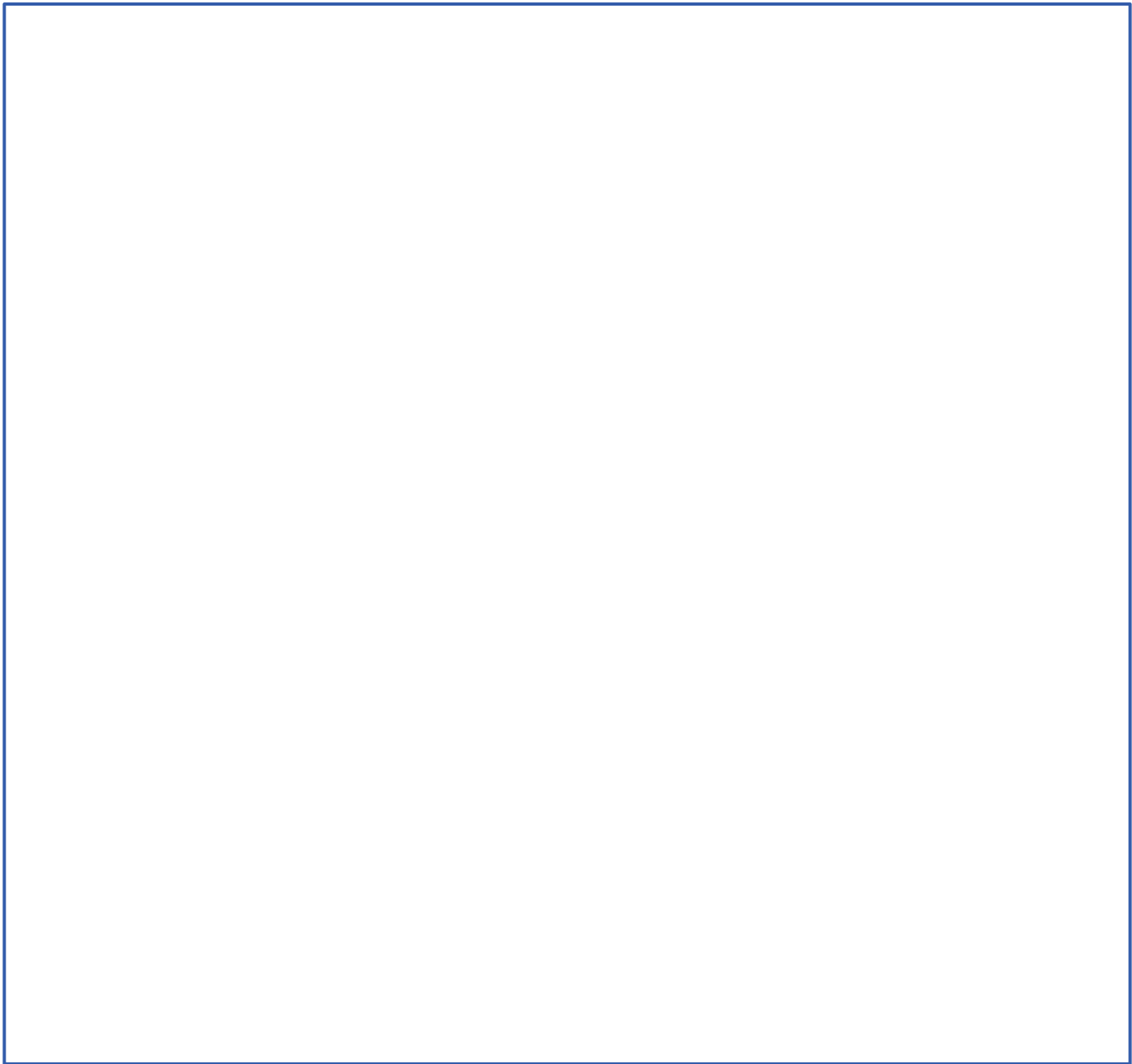
### FAMILY EXERCISE:

Whenever you find humiliation in your media this week, try to turn it off or not watch/engage with it. Be mindful as to whether any of your actions could be interpreted as humiliation towards someone. Brainstorm ideas with your children about how to respond to humiliation without losing one’s sense of dignity or worth.





## Drawing, Writing, and Coloring Page



*Love and exclusive possession can never go together.*





# 12-WEEK ♦ Family Curriculum for Gandhi Searches for Truth

Additional books needed: *Nonviolence Daily: 365 Days of Wisdom from Gandhi*

## WEEK 6

# Family Activities

## Poetry at the Peace Altar

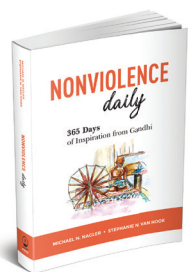
Bring poetry for peace to your altar. You may create it together or bring one that already exists.

## Hold a Family Meeting

This could take place around your nonviolence altar or in a space that you create intentionally to hold this meeting. Begin the meeting with something beautiful. Maybe a short song or a poem or an inspiring quote. Allow time for quiet reflection. Then, invite one another into a discussion.

Suggested conversation starter: In what ways do we see the “law of love” working itself out in our own lives?

## Journaling for Adults



Read the Day 315 entry from *Nonviolence Daily: 365 Days of Inspiration from Gandhi*.

Journal about the contrast between power based on fear and power based on love. In what ways does love simplify life? In what ways does fear complicate it? Were you raised in one of these schools of thought? How did it affect your life and relationships?

## Reading and Discussion

Someone volunteers to read Chapter 6 of *Gandhi Searches for Truth: A Practical Biography for Children* aloud. Suggested topics of discussion:

- ♦ Why did Gandhi, as an Indian, have to study the legal system (laws) of another country? What challenges did he face? What did he learn while he was in England?
- ♦ Relate Gandhi's experiences to your own experiences when you had to change schools, houses, or friends. What was difficult? What did you learn?

## Food Project

Prepare a vegetarian meal as a family. Choose the menu together, and find a way to present it with beauty and creativity.



# Skills Exercise

## Week 6 Skill-Building Principle

BY  
MICHAEL  
NAGLER



*Unearned suffering is redemptive.*

This maxim of Martin Luther King, Jr. encapsulates the special power of nonviolence and is good to bear always in mind, but it can be misunderstood. It does not include self-inflicted suffering, or any suffering put up within a spirit of martyrdom. Rather, it is the suffering, ranging from minor inconveniences to the risk of life itself, that is already present in an unjust situation and that one takes on oneself to make that suffering visible and in so doing move the heart of the opponent.

Human beings cannot but respond to the unexpected act of taking suffering on oneself rather than inflicting it on others (the recently discovered “mirror neurons” being the physical pathway for the response). The response may not manifest itself outwardly, which of course is disappointing, but we can have full confidence that on some level it has worked. So powerful is the dynamic involved that in forms like fasting, Gandhi regarded it as the most powerful “weapon” in the nonviolent repertoire, to be used with caution, as a last resort, and crafted accurately to awaken without coercing.

### FAMILY EXERCISE:

Reflect on an example from history and also one from your own experience whereby some degree of suffering that had been taken on voluntarily served to open the heart of someone in opposition. Where would you apply this principle right now, in your own life or with social activists? For “extra credit” (and fun), think of one case which was coercive and didn’t work.





## Drawing, Writing, and Coloring Page

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin red border, intended for drawing, writing, and coloring.

*I believe in the sovereign rule of the law of love which makes no distinctions.*



## WEEK 7

# Family Activities

## Clean Your Peace Altar

Take time this week to dust and carefully clean your peace altar as a group. Is there something you would like to remove or add to it? Do so with reverence.

## Hold a Family Meeting

This could take place around your nonviolence altar or in a space that you create intentionally to hold this meeting. Begin the meeting with something beautiful. Maybe a short song or a poem or an inspiring quote. Allow time for quiet reflection. Then, invite one another into a discussion.

If you're looking for a suggested conversation starter, you could try this Gandhi quote: "The path of nonviolence requires much more courage than violence." Talk about courage together, and celebrate any acts of nonviolent courage that each person would like to share from their own life.

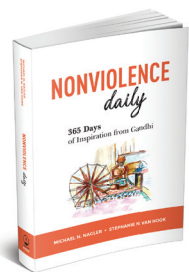
## Reading and Discussion

Someone volunteers to read Chapter 7 of *Gandhi Searches for Truth: A Practical Biography for Children* aloud.

Here are a few starting questions for discussing this chapter:

- ♦ What does dignity mean?
- ♦ Why did Gandhi go to South Africa? On which continent is South Africa? How many continents had Gandhi visited by then?
- ♦ What did Gandhi notice when he arrived in South Africa? What did he do when someone tried to treat him unfairly? Why did Gandhi start to gain attention from others around him?
- ♦ Is there a situation in your life where you challenged something unfair with nonviolence? What was it, and what happened?

## Journaling for Adults



Read the Day 232 entry from *Nonviolence Daily: 365 Days of Inspiration from Gandhi*. Reflect on Gandhi's statement that we should never despair of human nature. Draw from an example from your own life when someone did not give up on you.



# Skills Exercise

## Week 7 Skill-Building Principle

BY  
MICHAEL  
NAGLER



*Nonviolence resists in both constructive and obstructive modes by creating solutions (including parallel institutions), and by standing in the way of injustice. Know when to use which.*

One of the most overlooked features of Gandhi's nonviolence was his insistence on "constructive programme," which began in his first year of public activity, when he urged that alongside presenting petitions for redress of grievances to the government, that the Indian community should look to its own internal difficulties and address them themselves as far as possible.

It reached its mature form with the publication of *Constructive Programme: Its Meaning and Place in 1941* (reprinted in 1985). It grew in richness and importance to the very end of his mortal career. Its many advantages are covered on the Metta Center's website and in all of Michael Nagler's books, beginning with *The Search for a Nonviolent Future*.

The Metta Center's Roadmap builds on a trajectory for nonviolent campaigns and movements, from personal empowerment to constructive program (CP) to direct nonviolent resistance, or what we term "obstructive program" (OP). The formula is: CP wherever possible (which is almost always), and OP when still necessary.

### FAMILY EXERCISE:

Think of two really effective elements of CP that you'd recommend to activists today. One should be non-confrontational, like the spinning and making of homespun cloth during the Khadi campaign for independence India. The other should be confrontational, like the 1930 Salt March, also for India's independence. Note that each of these campaigns addressed a basic human need (food, clothing, shelter) that was being withheld by the regime. Where might we start putting these programs in practice today?





## Drawing, Writing, and Coloring Page



*The path of nonviolence requires much more courage than violence.*



## WEEK 8

# Family Activities

## Love Letters at a Peace Altar

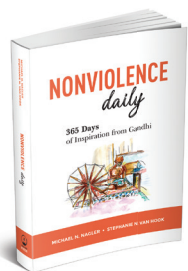
Write a love letter to the world. Place it on your altar.

## Hold a Family Meeting

This could take place around your nonviolence altar or in a space that you create intentionally to hold this meeting. Begin the meeting with something beautiful. Maybe a short song or a poem or an inspiring quote. Allow time for quiet reflection. Then, invite one another into a discussion.

Suggested topic: What can we do when we are angry with ourselves, each other, or at a situation in the world? How can we help each other through our anger?

## Journaling for Adults



Read the Day 169 entry from *Nonviolence Daily: 365 Days of Inspiration from Gandhi*. Reflect on what arouses your anger. Make a list of solutions from the angle of nonviolence. If you don't feel you have the answers yet, make a list of questions you have instead.

## Reading and Discussion

Someone volunteers to read Chapter 8 of *Gandhi Searches for Truth: A Practical Biography for Children* aloud.

Before you begin this chapter, you may want to review the term “satyagraha” in the Big Glossary of Ideas. Possible explorations:

- ♦ Why do you think that Gandhi realized that Truth is such a powerful force?
- ♦ Gandhi vowed to use his creativity, not his violence. Take time to proclaim your own vow of nonviolence inspired by Gandhi.

## Art Project

Create an uplifting poster with a message of nonviolence for a situation you feel passionately about. Place it in a window in your home—or bring it with you to a place that is important to you.



# Skills Exercise

## Week 8 Skill-Building Principle

BY  
MICHAEL  
NAGLER



*Never disrespect another person—or let them disrespect you.*

Long before forensic psychiatrist James Gilligan published his finding that “the emotion of shame is the primary or ultimate cause of all violence,” Gandhi discovered through personal experiences that no human being can live without dignity. Perhaps he also went a step further than Gilligan in recognizing that dignity is a field in which all are involved: “I have never understood how anyone can believe he has gained by the humiliation of a fellow human being.” To offer dignity is a powerful way to smooth the abrasions of conflict, as it helps opponents give us what we—and ultimately they also—want.

### **FAMILY EXERCISE:**

Reflect on your expectation of others in terms of feedback, respect, and mutuality. Notice when you withhold these same desires you have from others and try to work on extending what you want for yourself toward others, especially toward those with whom you may be in conflict.







## Drawing, Writing, and Coloring Page

*I have learned through bitter experience the one supreme lesson to conserve my anger, and as heat conserved is transmuted into energy, even so our anger controlled can be transmuted into a power that can move the world.*



## WEEK 9

# Family Activities

## Hearts Open at Your Peace Altar

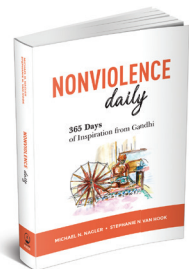
Place the quote from this week's reading of *Gandhi Searches for Truth* on the altar, and take time each day to reflect on its message.

## Hold a Family Meeting

This could take place around your nonviolence altar or in a space that you create intentionally to hold this meeting. Begin the meeting with something beautiful. Maybe a short song or a poem or an inspiring quote. Allow time for quiet reflection. Then, invite one another into a discussion.

When Gandhi had a challenge, he looked for a constructive, positive way to resolve it. Talk about a challenge faced by individuals or by the whole group, and think of Gandhian ways for restoring harmony.

## Journaling for Adults



Read the Day 119 entry from *Nonviolence Daily: 365 Days of Inspiration from Gandhi*. Write about your thoughts on this entry, and apply the concept to any experience or conflict you are facing. What is helpful?

## Reading and Discussion

Someone volunteers to read Chapter 9 of *Gandhi Searches for Truth: A Practical Biography for Children* aloud.

When we use nonviolence, we realize that harming others will harm ourselves and that helping others will help us too. Talk about the power of nonviolence together, and try to apply some of the key ideas from this chapter to a problem in your community or our shared world.

## Art Project

Draw a big circle. Then, add a variety of images from any part of your life inside it (animals, birds, a person, an object, anything that comes to mind). Connect these images by drawing a line from one to the other, so you see their interconnection. Make different kinds of lines for different levels of connection. Is anything left out from being connected to everything else? If so, see if a family member can find the connection.



# Skills Exercise

## Week 9 Skill-Building Principle

BY  
MICHAEL  
NAGLER



*Know what's essential and cling to that. Be willing to compromise on everything else.*

Gandhi was an absolute genius compromiser, even to the point where his own people worried that he had given away too much. This is a valuable model to follow for struggles and movements today, where we can get caught up in clinging to details, often symbols, and lose power to get redress on the major point. A tragic example was the 1989 uprising at Tiananmen Square in Beijing: it was not really about the square but about democratic reforms; now both are lost.

When you're in a dispute, either yourself or with a large group, remind yourself (and the others) frequently what it is you are really after, on which you cannot compromise.

### FAMILY EXERCISE:

When you find yourself in a conflict this week, reflect on what the dignity of all parties involved looks like and means to you. Hold on to that.





## Drawing, Writing, and Coloring Page

*My life is an indivisible whole, and all my activities run into one another;  
and they all have their rise in my insatiable love of humanity.*



## WEEK 10

# Family Activities

## Salt at Your Peace Altar

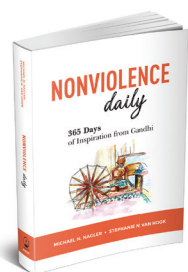
Put a pinch of salt on your peace altar this week to remember the meaning of the Salt March.

## Hold a Family Meeting

This could take place around your nonviolence altar or in a space that you create intentionally to hold this meeting. Begin the meeting with something beautiful. Maybe a short song or a poem or an inspiring quote. Allow time for quiet reflection. Then, invite one another into a discussion.

Here's an interesting question to start with: What is bravery? (The goal is to explore nonviolence, interdependence, vulnerability as forms of bravery, and to get beyond the images of physical might.)

## Journaling for Adults



Read the Day 95 entry from *Nonviolence Daily: 365 Days of Inspiration from Gandhi*. Contemplate a conflict—and the hidden causes of the conflict that may not be immediately apparent. Then, brainstorm solutions to the conflict.

## Reading and Discussion

Someone volunteers to read Chapter 10 of *Gandhi Searches for Truth: A Practical Biography for Children* aloud.

Why were the satyagrahis triumphant that day? And if they were with Gandhi for the Salt March, what might they have felt, done, said?

## Art Project

Do a theater performance of the Salt March together.



# Skills Exercise

BY  
MICHAEL  
NAGLER



## Week 10 Skill-Building Principle

*Do not yield to threats, or make them yourself. Remain open to the other person making them, and offer to meet their real needs.*

In a nonviolent campaign, there is often a fine line between letting your opponent know what you're planning and threatening to do something they don't like (the definition of "threat power," in Boulding's important book, the *Three Faces of Power*). A whole chapter in Gandhi's autobiography is dedicated to an episode where a British official accused him of making a threat "which no government can tolerate" and to which he patiently explained that no, it was a fair warning. How to tell them apart?

Boulding characterizes threat power as, "Do something I want, or I'll do something you don't want." A satyagraha warning, by contrast, which as Gandhi showed can often make the engagement of the actual satyagraha unnecessary, might be paraphrased, "please do the needful, which is actually good for you and me whether you realize it or not, or I'll have to take on suffering to open your eyes." Not too subtle, really, when you get down to the principle.

### FAMILY EXERCISE:

Pay attention when you choose to engage with threat activity ("do what I want, or I'll do something you don't want"). Try, at least once this week, to re-imagine a new path forward instead of a threat action.





## Drawing, Writing, and Coloring Page



*I present a weapon not of the weak but of the brave.*



## WEEK 11

# Family Activities

## Transformation at Your Peace Altar

Place something on your altar that expresses the power of transformation.

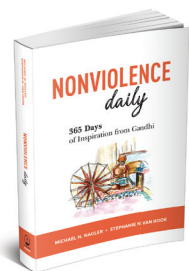
## Hold a Family Meeting

This could take place around your nonviolence altar or in a space that you create intentionally to hold this meeting. Begin the meeting with something beautiful. Maybe a short song or a poem or an inspiring quote. Allow time for quiet reflection. Then, invite one another into a discussion.

Questions worth exploring:

- ♦ What does it mean to be a friend?
- ♦ How can a family work together to build a friendship with the whole world?
- ♦ What kinds of specific actions can we take together to be friends to the world?

## Journaling for Adults



Read the Day 262 entry from *Nonviolence Daily: 365 Days of Inspiration from Gandhi*. What is meant by the statement that the root cause of much violence is the belief that we are separate, material objects? Write out your answer.

## Reading and Discussion

Someone volunteers to read Chapter 11 of *Gandhi Searches for Truth: A Practical Biography for Children* aloud.

Talk about the mill workers and Gandhi:

- ♦ Why were they mad at him?
- ♦ Why were they afraid of him?
- ♦ How did he respond?
- ♦ What happened?

## Art Project

Paint, draw, or create some other visual representation of the entire world. Place images, words, and ideas that represent the quote from Chapter 11 of *Gandhi Searches for Truth*: “My goal is friendship with the whole world.”





# Skills Exercise

## Week 11 Skill-Building Principle

BY  
MICHAEL  
NAGLER



*If you want to make lasting change, then try, whenever possible, to persuade, not coerce. Take on suffering if necessary, rather than inflict it.*

The beauty of satyagraha is its potential to “move the heart,” meaning that the changes induced are entered into more like a partnership than a coercion. This is one of the reasons a satyagrahi will try never to inflict suffering on others but if necessary take on the suffering that’s breathing in the injustice.

The qualification “if necessary” is important: we are not masochists, or out to get sympathy. All means of persuasion should be exhausted prior to our taking on any kind of risk, inconvenience, or outright suffering, even if we think there’s little chance they will work. Here, there are gray areas.

Gandhi’s famous fast during the Ahmedabad mill workers strike of 1917 was meant to rally the strikers, not coerce the mill owners. When the latter nonetheless made concessions, he thought he’d strayed from “persuade” to “coerce” and was far from happy with the outcome. This is Gandhi for you: he actually told the mill owners “there’s no reason at all you should change your position,” to which they treated him to some choice sarcasm, and made the concessions.

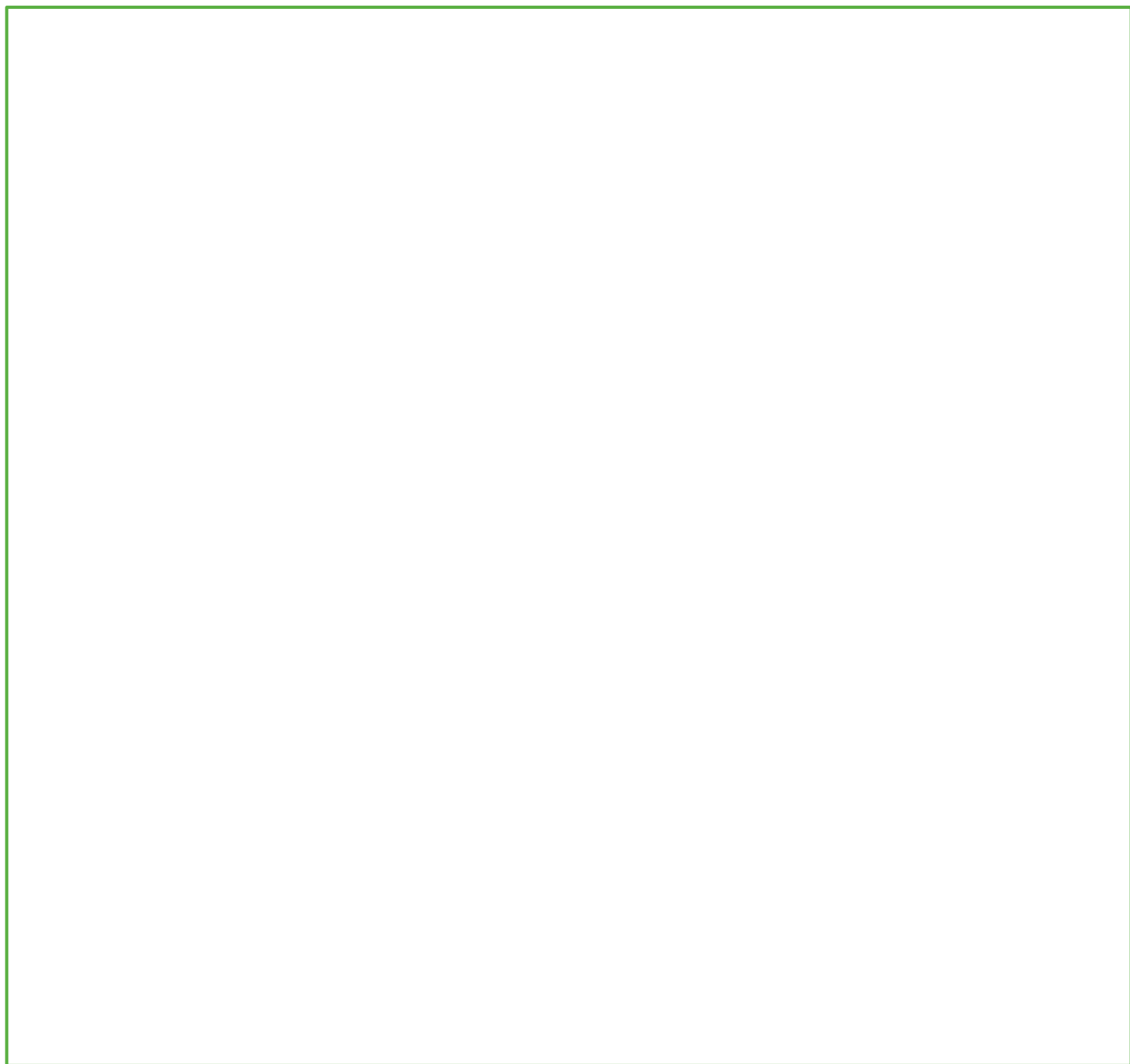
### FAMILY EXERCISE:

Make clear your definitions of persuasion and coercion. Then, become aware this week when you use coercion instead of persuasion in any of your relationships. Where do you want to work on this more? Take time to reflect on this.





## Drawing, Writing, and Coloring Page



*My goal is friendship with the world and I can combine the greatest love  
with the greatest opposition to wrong.*



## WEEK 12

# Family Activities

## Children at Your Peace Altar

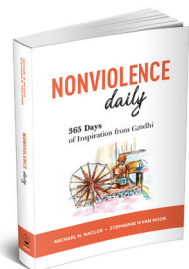
Place an image of a child on the altar. Remember that our commitment to nonviolence is for the wellbeing of children worldwide.

## Hold a Family Meeting

This could take place around your nonviolence altar or in a space that you create intentionally to hold this meeting. Begin the meeting with something beautiful. Maybe a short song or a poem or an inspiring quote. Allow time for quiet reflection. Then, invite one another into a discussion.

Gandhi wanted to live in peace, security, and happiness. What kinds of things can we do as individuals and as a family to help ourselves and others find these?

## Journaling for Adults



Read the Day 196 entry from *Nonviolence Daily: 365 Days of Inspiration from Gandhi*. What are some key take-aways you've learned about the "law of love" from a child?

## Reading and Discussion

Someone volunteers to read Chapter 12 of *Gandhi Searches for Truth: A Practical Biography for Children* aloud.

Gandhi discovered Truth in his own heart and it helped him transform himself as well as the world around him. Talk about how that process unfolded spiritually and politically. What tips can we learn from Gandhi's life about how to bring our nonviolence into the world?

## Art Project

Take time to reflect on your heartfelt desire to make the world better for everyone in it. When did this desire begin to take hold of you? How has it shaped your choices and decisions? What are two lessons you have learned in the process of learning to love the whole world? Find a way to express these feelings and ideas in a poem, letter, song, dance, or drawing/painting/etc. Share it.



# Skills Exercise

## Week 12 Skill-Building Principle

BY  
MICHAEL  
NAGLER



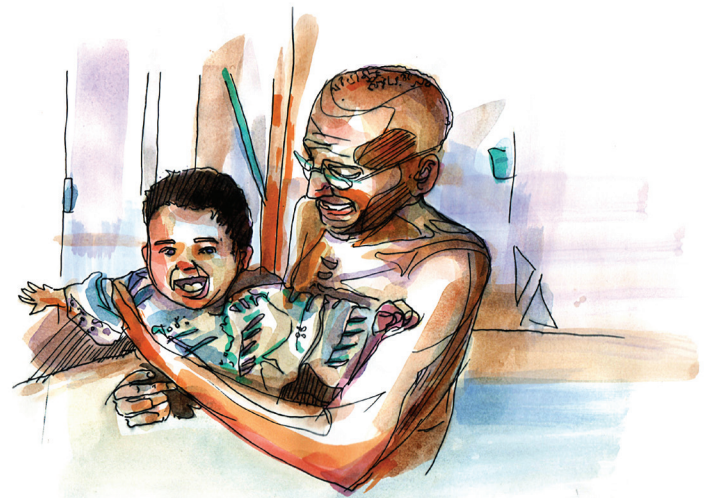
*When you succeed, do not try to work on a new issue, or yield to the temptation to triumph over your former opponents. Remember, the goal is not to “win” but rebuild relationships.*

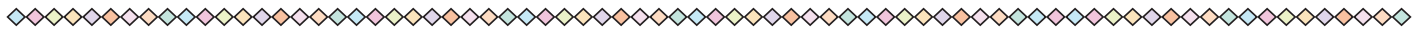
The first mistake, to which well-meaning changemakers often succumb, is called “no fresh issue.” The trouble with doing that—piling on new demands when you’ve “won”—is that it changes the texture of your interaction from a conversation, or mutual learning opportunity, to a power struggle. We want to avoid that at all costs, and gloating over successes has the very same effect.

The core principle of nonviolence, always and everywhere, is that you are against the injustice, not the person. Many instances of hard-won nonviolent momentum have been lost by over-zealous actors (or actors whose zeal has gotten misplaced) making one or the other of these mistakes. And that’s a shame.

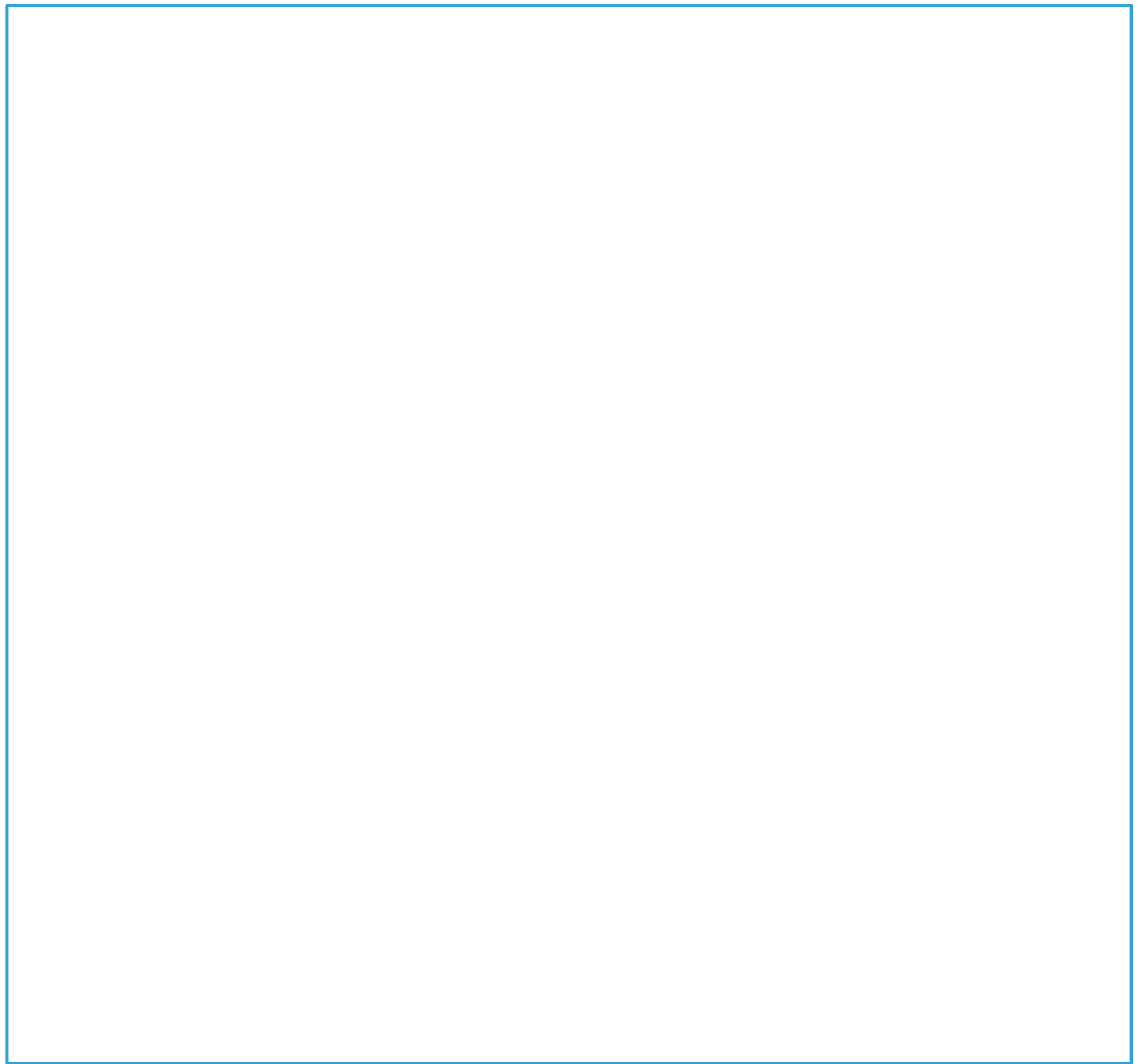
### FAMILY EXERCISE:

This principle at its core is about one-pointedness and focus. All week, try to maintain a one-pointed focus on whatever you are doing. Any work you do in this area will help create a greater capacity for focus in all other areas!





## Drawing, Writing, and Coloring Page



*The heart's earnest and pure desire is always fulfilled.*

