

Alternatives to Violence Project Newsletter

the Transformer

for AVP Workshop Leaders
Spring 1997

YOUTH WORKSHOPS

Bringing Non-Violence Workshops to My Middle School

by Fenna Mandolang, Age 13, Tallahassee, Florida

At Belle Vue Middle School racial conflicts and violence are never far from the surface. Sometimes whites and blacks just jump each other and fight for no reason.

Non-violence is highly valued in my family and I love new experiences, so I decided to bring a series of three, three-day non-violence workshops to my middle school. My mother offered to assist. We needed teams of volunteer facilitators, manuals, supplies and the support of the school administrator. My mother spoke to the principal. They wrote a grant to purchase manuals and supplies. We invited a lead facilitator from Syracuse to run the first series.

I found the workshops were wonderful. There was a bond between everyone at the end of each workshop, which was incredible since we were such a diverse and mixed group. There was a sense of trust. We had all learned new skills to help prevent violence.

The principal had said if the students liked the workshops, they would continue; if not, they would stop. So I made a decision to make a difference and keep the program alive. I didn't know what I was getting into, but I did know the first step was to become a

facilitator. That meant that I had to complete three workshops: basic, advanced, and training for facilitators. After I finished the training for facilitators, I too apprenticed as a facilitator.

The other thing I had to do was to talk to teachers and support the school sponsor of this project. My mother and I talked to the teachers at a staff meeting. She talked about the history of the workshops and their importance to her. I talked about how they were important for the students and the school and how I benefited from them. The workshops are open to all kinds of kids: leaders, troublemakers, and average kids. Both participants and facilitators are volunteers. One-hour mini-workshops after school are offered for those that have completed workshops.

In the workshops, we learned skills that help prevent fights and create a friendly, fun atmosphere. These skills include good communication, affirmation, cooperation and transforming power. All of these skills are important for many different reasons. Learning about good *communication* is valuable because I can stop a fight before it starts by eliminating assumptions and clearly stating my

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Workshops in Middle Schools *continued*

message without being rude or disrespectful. *Affirmation* is essential because we need to have good self-esteem to do most things well. And that it's okay to say good things about myself and others. *Cooperation* is important because if I am not willing to cooperate and at least listen to the other side, I will have a rough time coming to a win/win situation. Most kids have at least heard of these skills, but many kids don't have a lot of practice, and most haven't ever heard of transforming power.

Transforming power is the opposite of the power of violence. When someone is annoying or violent, it's so easy to get mad at them. That's the power of violence. Transforming power is the power to change a situation so that it becomes manageable or maybe even a constructive situation. It is the power of truth, the power of caring, the power of respect. Transforming power means I have to be open to all kinds of solutions: surprise, humor, patience, persistence or being serious. Using transforming power is hard because it isn't letting people take advantage of you. All this information is usually new to participants so we give examples of when we have used or seen transforming power.

Everyone has an image at school, but we try to mix with everyone and treat everyone with respect. Everyone—no matter black or white, rich or poor, participant or facilitator is equal. We open up and share a lot in the workshops. It is hard to describe the trust that is formed.

The experience is what captures me every time. Every time it is different. Every time I hear a new set of sad and happy stories. I

meet new people with different cultures, families, and varieties of experiences. I become good friends with someone no one would have ever expected. Some people just come out with a new understanding on non-violence and whether they practice what they have learned or not is up to them. Others come out with their lives changed completely.

I know a guy that comes from a family of extremists and he feels they are very prejudiced. In the basic workshop, he talked about his experience and found a new confidence about himself and his views. He knew he couldn't change his family, but he could change himself.

He was the one that stopped checker day last year. Checker day starts with a rumor that blacks and whites will jump each other and fight for no reason. When the rumor came to him, he said he wasn't going to be involved, so his friends said that they wouldn't be involved either. Some of the black kids that knew him asked him what was going to happen on checker day and he said, "Nothing's going to happen." For the first time, nothing happened last year. Now I can walk around and say hi to all kinds of kids I would have never known and might have been afraid of before. The workshops made the school feel different.

The middle school workshops were sponsored by HIPP, Help Increase the Peace Project, which is based on AVP and focuses on schools. It is sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee and started in the Syracuse, NY schools in 1990.

WHAT'S NEW IN AVP



Introducing
Rick Krouskop...
**New Chair
for AVP-USA**

Rick Krouskop, formerly vice-chair, agreed to become chairperson at the February Board Meeting. Rick, a neonatologist in Shreveport, Louisiana, became an AVP facilitator about six years ago. He introduced AVP to Texas, Arkansas and Louisiana during the Gulf War and found that facilitating community workshops was a good antidote to the emotional violence that the war generated. He and his wife Jan like to do workshops together, and are one of four husband and wife AVP teams in Shreveport.

Rick's goal for AVP-USA is to strengthen the ties between the grassroots and the national organization. Locals have much to share with others all around the country, and AVP-USA can tie it all together.

Thanks, Rick for taking on this important job.

AVP-USA Annual Meeting on Labor Day

The 1997 Annual Meeting will be held at Burlington Conference Center in Burlington, New Jersey, starting on Friday evening, August 29 and ending on Monday, September 1 (Labor Day). More details and a registration form will be included in the next issue of the Transformer. Please reserve the dates.

Introducing Ed Sweeney...
New Treasurer for AVP-USA

Ed Sweeney, newly appointed treasurer of AVP-USA, has an extensive background in both finance and AVP. Ed's professional experience spans thirty years and includes top financial management positions. One of his recent jobs was working on a team to implement a fully integrated accounting system for a major company in his hometown of Columbus, Ohio.

As an AVP facilitator for four years, Ed now coordinates AVP activities in Columbus. Ed has worked in prisons and the community doing mediation, Aikido and leadership development workshops as well as AVP. He was selected as a finalist for a newspaper community service award.

Welcome, Ed! Those of us outside of Ohio look forward to getting to know you in coming months.

1998 International Conference in Miami

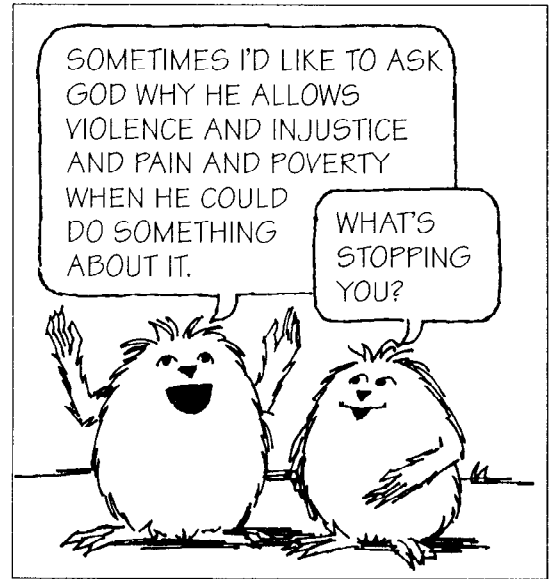
Plans are being made to hold the 1998 AVP International Conference in Miami next year. Greater participation from AVP groups in Latin America is expected. The AVP-USA Annual Meeting for 1998 will be scheduled prior to the conference. More information will appear in upcoming Transformers.

AROUND AVP

A Comedian's Guide to Transforming Power

by Russell Lowen, AVP-Manitoba

1. Seek to reach conflicts by grounding common resolve, then clinic.
2. Grab for that something good from others, it's your right as a facilitator.
3. Listen before making judgements, until some new apprentice facilitator challenges you.
4. Base your position on truth, especially when you are correcting a cofacilitator who is making a mistake in an exercise.
5. Be ready to reverse your position as a facilitator, but never admit you were wrong to the participants – that way we retain our Transcendent Power.
6. Power is a great inward experience, just ask any lead facilitator.
7. Risk being creative rather than violent, but if that doesn't work, try other methods to fill that workshop.
8. Use surprise and humor (laugh liberally at yourself), often it's the only option left for some of us facilitators.
9. Learn to trust your inner sense of when to act confused during workshops – it covers up a lot of mistakes.
10. Be willing to suffer for what is important, jump in on every exercise that cofacilitators are having trouble with.
11. Be patient and persistent, especially when asking someone else to lead the workshop scheduled for this Friday.
12. Demand honesty and respect. These are your rewards for becoming a facilitator. And remember, humility is for the participants, not us facilitators.



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Under the Banyan Tree... AVP in India

by Karin Fry and Stephen Kemp, AVP-UK

Imagine a large room, a circle of 32 apprehensive volunteers in the center and about 50 observers around the walls. No time for a warm-up, just start in with, "Take turns to talk for two minutes about things about myself which I really like..." Except that each instruction had to be translated into Hindi.

After the 45 minute mini-workshop, there was a level of excitement. "How soon can we set up some proper workshops?"

Some time later, at nine o'clock one morning we were sitting under a banyan tree, counting people as they arrived. Two days before we thought that there might be 14; when we all assembled there were 27 participants, two interpreters, the two of us (Karin and Stephen) and an Indian friend who had taken part in the first basic workshop in England in 1989. This was the first AVP workshop in India.

There was a wide spread in ages (but mainly young) and about an equal number of male and female. This we had not expected, having been warned that the cultural norms in India might make mixing and physical contact between men and women unacceptable. Certainly on the first day, the teenage girls

found it embarrassing to call us by our first names, Karin and Stephen – even with the adjectives "kamal netri" (lotus eyes) and "stimulating." But the ice was soon broken (no ice could survive under that sun) and everyone was drawn in. By the second morning we had a real sense of community. Cultural barriers seemed insignificant. (It must have helped that most people were Quakers.) The sharing exercise – introduced as "A difficult situation I handled peacefully" – took the workshop forward and real personal experiences were shared openly. By lunchtime we felt able to risk an Alaskan Hug, to great amusement all around; and an affirmation pyramid (although because of the numbers we had to use a belt).

This was a workshop with a difference: four of the six sessions in the open air, with flip charts on rickety A-frames made from saplings and leaning against the tree, everything having to be translated and written in two languages. But nobody passed and nobody left. Everyone was enthusiastic and asked how AVP could be carried forward in India. There is a very long way to go from such a small beginning but we sense a real energy to make it possible.

AVP-UK National Gathering

A special three-day conference will be held in Birmingham, England from the 22 to 25th of August. This will launch AVP as an independent organization separate from the Quakers. Special training sessions will be part of the

program. The cost for the whole event will be \$185.00 at current exchange rates. For details and an application, write to the AVP Admissions Team, Woodbrooke, 1046 Bristol Road, Birmingham B29 6LJ U.K.

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A new exercise...

Lowering Levels of Violence

by Don Lathrop, AVP-New York

Purpose: By reflecting on places where violence is at a minimum, we can increase awareness of how to reduce violence.

Time: 45 minutes

Setup:

1. Have all participants think of the safest home they know. Go around the circle collecting responses. Each participant should name and briefly explain the safest home they know.
2. Have the participants think of the safest neighborhood they know. Repeat as above.
3. Have the participants think of the safest workplace they know. Repeat as above.
4. Have the participants think of the safest country they know. Repeat as above.
5. On the board, brainstorm feedback from all participants of what qualities made the homes, neighborhoods, workplaces and countries they listed safe.

Processing: Questions to ask:

- What would make safety more widespread? Normal?
- Who or what could bring change from the way things are to the way these safe locations are?
- What is blocking this process from taking place?
- What would it take to overcome these blockages and bring some changes?
- When can these changes begin?

Just off the press...

Spanish Manual Available

The long-awaited Basic AVP Manual in Spanish is now available. The 180 page manual includes some updates and additions not included in the English Basic.

The cost is \$20.00 plus shipping. The manuals may be ordered from the AVP-USA office, P.O. Box 300431, Houston, TX 77230-0431.

Order your copy...

Supplement to the Basic and Advanced Manuals

The "Lowering Levels of Violence Exercise" to the left is only one of the 48 new exercises included in the supplement. It also includes 3 new role play methods, 12 new light and livelies, 38 gatherings, two talks and Advanced Workshop units on bias awareness and all women groups.

The cost is \$10.00 plus shipping. The manuals may be ordered from the AVP-USA office, P.O. Box 300431, Houston, TX 77230-0431.

Have You Seen Mrs. Mumbley's Money Tree?

The AVP-USA Fundraising Committee has produced a video to help local groups generate income through phonathon campaigns. Copies of the video are available from the national office.

AVP-USA also is seeking to make a video on our work with youth. Funds are needed to complete this project.

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AVP-USA...

Education Committee News

by Grace McGrath, Ed Committee Chair

Youth Manual - Since the Supplement has been published and the Spanish Basic Manual is being printed, the next priority is to organize the youth material that has been submitted in various forms, and to publish it as a supplement to the Basic Manual.

At the International Meeting in July, many local organizations agreed to test exercises. Exercises and test report forms have been distributed and, to date, two groups, Santa Barbara and Ohio, have responded with test results and recommendations.

Additional help is needed with testing as well as keyboarding and editing the youth materials. Contact Grace McGrath for information.

Revised Basic Manual - In addition to the youth material, we have a limited amount of additional material for the Basic and Advanced Manuals, some of which was not included in the Supplement to the Basic and Advanced. The committee is working on further testing of this material. The committee is seeking feedback from greater AVP community about the usefulness, appropriateness and value of the material submitted. Some choices need to be made about the material included in the revised Basic Manual.

Candace (Mayer) LaRue has agreed to take on the responsibility of revising the Basic Manual, along with several committee members. Other committee members have agreed to focus primarily on the Youth Supplement.

A New Light & Lively... Rabbit Telegraph

From AVP-Canada

Wild rabbits post a "lookout" who can "thump" with their feet. They do this to warn others of danger so that the rabbits can pop down into their holes. (The Light & Lively is a little like Zip, Zap, Boing.)

Ask everyone to form a circle and then get down on all fours with their shoulders touching and their hands flat on the floor.

Participants must thump left hand and right hand in order passing the message around the circle. When someone thumps twice distinctly with one hand, the direction reverses. Do a practice round first, and then after the practice round, anyone who misses is out.

After the group has mastered the exercise, then ask everyone to pick up their right hand and cross it over their neighbor's left hand. Then thumping proceeds around the circle strictly in the order in which the hands lie. The direction changes after two distinct thumps from the same hand.

AVP in Hawaii

Last fall, Steve Angell, Nancy Nothhelfer and Ben Norris conducted four AVP workshops in Hawaii including a Training for Facilitators. There are now fourteen eager apprentice facilitators in Hawaii but no lead trainers. If the program is to grow, lead trainers need to train the apprentices. If you can come to Hawaii to help (and vacation too) contact Steve Norris (Ben's son) at P.O. Box 10067, Hilo, Hawaii 96721

Concepts for thought...

Conflict Resolution Principles

By Marge Schlitt, AVP-New York

As part of the February AVP-USA Board Meeting in Plainfield, NJ, a number of mini-workshops were offered. I attended a session led by John Shuford on a workshop he leads on conflict resolution for professionals, particularly the staff of prisons in Philadelphia.

He announces that the workshop is intended to help resolve conflicts with other staff members, but in the evaluations he finds that they use these techniques with their families, with inmates and in the community. His workshops are quite similar to AVP, but since he is paid for his work, he modifies the workshops and gives them a different name.

One of the things that makes them different is that he not only focus on experience, but also gives the participants some basic principles to deal with conflict. Some of these are:

Five Basic Styles in Conflict Situations

It helps us to realize that there are many possible ways to resolve a conflict, and no one method will work in all situations.

1. **Competition** (win/lose): I satisfy my concerns at your expense.
2. **Giving In** (lose/win): I satisfy your concerns at my expense.
3. **Avoidance** (lose/lose): Neither you or I satisfy our concerns.
4. **Compromise** (no win/no lose): I give up some of my concerns to satisfy you and

you give up some of your concerns to satisfy me.

5. **Collaboration** (cooperation win/win): We discover new ways to satisfy both of our important concerns.

Win/Win Attitude:

There are four basic principles involved in a win/win attitude:

1. **There is something of good or of God in everyone.** This means we need to separate a person's actions from the person.
2. **We must be willing to approach each conflict as though a nonviolent, positive outcome is possible.** In any given situation, there is a possible nonviolent solution no matter how hidden. There is somewhere in your opponents the desire to seek a nonviolent solution, to reach a win/win outcome.
3. **We must change ourselves first,** our perceptions, our beliefs, our behaviors, if we want the situation to change. We cannot change others; we can only change ourselves. This will allow others to change if we give them enough space.
4. **This is a skill, and like any other skill, it must be practiced.** Begin with easy, non-threatening situations, and then as confidence and competence build, use these skills in more challenging circumstances. Practice frequently.

John had an interesting way of describing "I Messages": An I message may vary in its di-

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rectness from very assertive to almost assertive. The purpose of an I message is to open up discussion. Sometimes an indirect I message will work well, while at other times, only a very direct I message will get through.

There Are Three Levels of I Messages:

Direct Hit: "I was disappointed when you did not come by last night because I thought we had agreed you would."

Indirect Hit: "It is disappointing to me when friends don't come by when they say they are going to, because you should be able to count on them doing what they say they will do."

Soft Hit: "I get disappointed when friends don't follow through with their commitments."

Direct Hit: "I was furious this morning when you put me down in front of my subordinates because it undermines my authority with them."

Indirect Hit: "I get angry when superiors put down subordinates in front of their staff because it damages their relationship with them."

Soft Hit: "When superiors don't show respect for their subordinates, it makes the job much harder."

AVP-USA ...

Nominating Committee Members Needed

Each region needs to appoint a member to the Nominating Committee. Currently only three regions have done so, and two people have agreed to act in an advisory capacity.

The purpose of the committee is to nominate at-large Board Members and Officers for the coming year. Members should be experienced facilitators who know a number of the facilitators in their region. They need to be willing to contact local AVP groups to find out who might be willing to take on some leadership responsibility on the national level. It would also be helpful to be on the lookout for people who would be willing to serve on AVP-USA committees. Most of the committees have a written description that would be available to nominating committee members.

Three regions have named members: Doug Roach, South East; Jan Krouskop, South Central; and Betsy Rothstein, New York. Joe Paquette, State Administrator for New York, agreed to serve in an advisory capacity. Regions without representation are urged to name members.

Most of the committee's work is done by mail, phone or e-mail; the committee rarely meets face-to-face. If you have questions or a name to recommend, please contact Marjorie Kerr at the office in Houston. AVP-USA; P.O. Box 300431; Houston, TX77230-0431

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AVP-USA Winter 97 Board Meeting

The AVP-USA Board meeting was held in Plainfield, NJ at the Friends Meeting House during President's Day weekend, February 14-17, 1997.

Thursday and Friday, John Shuford and Marjorie Kerr conducted a mediation training for facilitators.

Friday afternoon and evening, committee meetings were held and Saturday morning was devoted to mini-workshops. Some of the topics were youth, sharing of facilitation ideas and conflict resolution principles.

On Saturday afternoon, an issues forum was facilitated by Bill McMechan of AVP-Canada and Al Thorp of AVP-New Jersey. Some issues discussed were: Payment of facilitators, guidelines for dealing with "problem facilitators", minimum number of workshop hours leading to a certificate.

The issue felt to be most pressing, brought by the New Jersey group, was the structure for Youth Workshops where facilitators are paid. Tom Truitt has launched an ambitious program for youth which he calls RAVE (Real Alternatives to Violence for Everyone), and plans to pay those facilitators. AVP-New Jersey has taken the position that no AVP facilitators should be paid. Tom would like to be able to issue AVP certificates for participating in RAVE workshops, and would like those trained to be recognized as AVP facilitators. The AVP-USA policy statement leaves up to the local group whether or not facilitators of community workshops would be paid.

This issue was brought up again during the board meeting. A minute was approved that

underlined AVP-USA's support for a strong youth program, and expressing the Board's intention that youth activities stay under the AVP umbrella.

In the Board meeting, Debby Wood (NY) announced that she would be stepping down from the position as chair of the AVP-USA Board. She stated she felt she could not continue "both for my well being and that of the organization." She said she had struggled for seven months, and felt "that the underlying problems are beyond my level of energy and skill to deal with." Some of the problems cited were non-representation of regions at Board meetings and non-functioning committees.

She felt that her efforts would be better spent on facilitating the publication of the Transformer, and the Newsletter, and on fundraising. She continues to be an at-large Board member.

Marjorie Kerr, the Executive Director reported on volume of work in the national office and the many tasks she deals with on a daily basis.

An Organizational Review and Analysis Task Group was formed. The members of the group are John Shuford (DE), John Knight (MD), and Marjorie Kerr. One area they were asked to focus on was diversity, particularly to make recommendations about including prisoners and ex-prisoners in the organization. The group was instructed to submit its written report at least one month prior to the Annual Meeting so that it could be included with registration materials for that meeting.

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A proposal for a Training Committee was not approved, but it was recommended that several people who had expressed interest in the committee look into developing standards for facilitator training that would be ready for consideration at the Annual Meeting. Debby Wood, Candace LaRue and Marjorie Kerr will work on the project with Peter Laughingwolf serving in an advisory capacity.

The Treasurer's Report showed that our financial situation has stabilized since July. The Board directed that all the back salary and medical benefits be paid for the Executive Director. She has currently been paid up to date at a rate of \$1,000 take-home per month.

The Nominating Committee is not functioning and new members need to be appointed. See the article on the previous page. The Nominating Committee was also asked to contact all absent at-large Board members letting them know that their participation

Changes in the leadership team are: Rick Krouskop has replaced Debby Wood as chair, Ed Sweeney has replaced Toby Riley as Treasurer. Henry Bernstein continues to serve as Recording Secretary. Donn Williams has resigned as Corresponding Secretary. The positions of Vice-chair and Corresponding Secretary are vacant and the Leadership Team is authorized to fill the vacancies if suitable candidates can be found before the Annual Meeting. See the article to the right.

It is important that all regions of AVP-USA be represented at the Annual Meeting in Burlington, NJ on the Labor Day weekend. is

Leadership Team Openings

Because of resignations, the AVP-USA Nominating Committee is looking for a Vice-chairperson and a Corresponding Secretary.

The Vice-Chairperson performs the duties of the chairperson in case of absence or upon the Chairperson's request. The Vice-Chairperson has the responsibility to maintain contact with the committees of AVP-USA..

The Corresponding Secretary helps take some of the load of answering inquiries from those seeking information about the AVP program. This person needs to be someone who has the time to spend writing letters, and who can represent the organization to the general public.

Both positions involve serving on the Leadership Team. The Leadership Team functions as the executive committee and plans the Board and Annual Meetings. A teleconference call is held about once a month.

Anyone who might be willing to serve may call Marjorie Kerr by phone: 713-747-999 or e-mail: AVP USA@aol.com or by writing to her at the AVP-USA office in Houston.

Call for AVP

Did you know that you can save money on your long distance calls and contribute to AVP-USA at the same time? This is a wonderful way for facilitators and friends of AVP to provide financial support.

If you subscribe to EXCEL, 5% of usage fees can go to AVP-USA. To learn more about this, or to sign up for the service, call 1-888-999-6926 Ext. 9738

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AVP Publications

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|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Basic Manual | \$7.50 |
| Advanced Manual | \$10.00 |
| Training for Trainers Manual | \$10.00 |
| Basic & Adv. Supplement | \$10.00 |
| Spanish Basic Manual | \$20.00 |
| AVP Brochures | \$15.00 per 100 |

Send your order to the AVP-USA office:

Alternatives to Violence Project-USA
P.O. Box 300431
Houston, TX 77230-0431

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Facilitator Mailing List: Janet Lugo

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Please send any address changes to Janet Lugo at: 46 Main Street, 9, Mechanicsville, NY 12118

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