

A Path with Heart

A Nonviolent Communication & Social Change Telesummit



Jori and Jiva Manske

Grief, Joy, and the Long View on Social Change

This is a transcription of one of the interviews from A Path With Heart, the 2013 telesummit on Nonviolent Communication (NVC) and Social Change, produced by Alan Seid of Cascadia Workshops and the Blackbelt Communication Skills Program. More than 1600 people from over 40 countries registered for this event. Each call had live listeners and a question & answer period.

Jori has been actively involved with several social change organizations including the grassroots organization that has been called the most powerful lobby in Washington. She has served the Center for Nonviolent Communication as Executive Director, Board Member co-founder of the CNVC Global Community Circle. Other contributions include co-founding Board Member of the Network for NVC, founding Board Member and Trainer with Comienzos.org jail program and co-developer of NVC Alive in a regional hospital which then changed their mission statement to include NVC.

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~ Jori Manske

Alan: Hello everybody and welcome.

This is Alan Seid. We are together here and this is *A Path With Heart: a telesummit on Nonviolent Communication and Social Change*.

The reason I created this telesummit is because this is a topic whose time has come.

Our planet's life support systems are going through significant stress.

At the same time, human society is in an unprecedented time historically.

Never before have there been so many humans on the planet at one time.

Never before have we humans been so interconnected and starkly aware of our interrelatedness and our interdependence.

Never before has the human family experienced such promise, such peril and such opportunity.

Marshall Rosenberg's process, Nonviolent Communication, which was named out of a sense of alignment with Gandhi's movement of truth-telling and compassion, is a world-famous, proven, time-tested methodology for:

- creating exceptional personal and professional relationships,
- for offering compassionate understanding to others (and knowing when and how to ask for it ourselves),
- for preventing and resolving misunderstandings and conflicts,
- for speaking our truth in a way that is more likely to lead to harmony than conflict,
- and for creating mutual understanding without coercion.

In this interview series, I'm conversing with NVC trainers for whom I have a great deal of respect and whose work I admire.

My guests today are Jori and Jiva Manske, mother and son and Jim Manske, Jori's partner husband was one of the guests earlier on in the telesummit. Jori has been actively involved with several social change organizations that have contributed to the well-being of people around the world including the grassroots organization that has been called the most powerful lobby in Washington. She has served the Center for Nonviolent Communication as Executive Director, Board Member and with her husband Jim as co-founders and leaders of the CNVC Global Community Circle. Other contributions include Co-founding Board Member of the Network for NVC, founding Board Member and Trainer with Comienzos.org jail program and co-developer of NVC Alive in a regional hospital which then changed their mission statement to include NVC. Her trainings and service have taken her to many states in the USA as well as to Europe, Central America, Asia and Australia. Currently she is the lead Mediation Trainer with Compassionate Leadership and serving through mediation, group facilitation,

mentoring and organizational development. Her greatest honor is to be family with her husband Jim; son Jiva and daughter, Jaya.

Jiva Manske introduced the concept of restorative justice to Brown University through his Honor's Thesis. He has his Masters in Peace Studies from the European Peace University in Austria and currently works in Washington DC with Amnesty International. He has created educational programs and trained in NVC and peace studies with comiensaus.org and Georgetown University. He has also trained in Costa Rica, Afghanistan and Iran. He began his path of social change in Washington at the age of 10 on his first trip to Washington DC when he spoke with Senator Domenici in his office as part of a delegation advocating for funding micro enterprise loans for poor people around the world. So first of all, I want to say welcome Jori and Jiva. Are you there?

Jori: Yes. Thank you. Thank you so much.

Jiva: Yup.

Alan: I'm so glad to have you here.

Jiva: Thanks for having us.

Alan: So I'd like to start with this, the question for Jiva. Jiva how did you come to be interested in social change?

Jiva: Yeah, thanks. Thanks again Alan for organizing this and I also wanted to say that it's really exciting to do this with my Mom. We've talked about doing things like this in the past and I'm glad to be doing it now and then the other thing too is that I'm going to have to leave in about 45 minutes, so I'll make sure that if folks have follow up questions or anything like that you were able to send those my way.

Alan: So Jiva...

Jiva: Yeah

Alan: Jiva, I do understand you had a prior commitment and I just want to thank you for saying yes to being here, for joining us. I know you put all these things in. I would like to ask you to speak more closely into your microphone.

Jiva: Sure. Is this better?

Alan: That is better... so how'd you come to be interested in social change?

Jiva: Yeah, so I think you've mentioned this in the bio but, social change I think has been a part of my life since I was really little. I have two parents who are fairly engaged in the world and they had a huge influence on me from the very beginning and...

Mair: Hey Jiva I think you're a little too close to your mic right now cause we're getting your wind sound there

Jiva. Okay. Is this better?

Mair: We'll see.

Jiva: So, the first time that I... So I was aware of things about the world that I thought needed changing. The first time I remember feeling like I could be an agent of that change was at Washington DC with my Mom and Results, the organization. I remember coming into the office of Senator Domenici. I was prepared to talk about the need for clean water. I spoke up and he actually listened to me. He seemed really interested that someone as tiny as me, I was a tiny little kid, that my voice mattered. Afterwards I went back home and I spoke to the results delegation there in Albuquerque, my first real experience with public speaking and again I had a sense that my voice mattered. So I think that really opened up the idea that not only could I see that the world needed changing but I could actually do something about it. I've gotten older and got more engaged with the world myself. I am a strong believer in the importance of our grassroots struggle and really engaging in social change projects with people who are most affected by the norm of injustice that we see in the world. Through that we are gaining more and more consciousness and also more and more skill to really change some of the systems, not just the issues or policies that contribute to those injustices.

Alan: Jori is there anything that you want to add?

Jori: Alright I want to add how exciting it is to have Jiva on this call and have a call and how really proud I am of both our children. Jaya is a Head Start Teacher and just delighted to be able to have this work going forward in the world. This is really what social change means to me is to be able to have something that goes out beyond just us as individuals. One of the things that happened in that meeting with Jim, that Jiva talked about, was that he got to speak to Senator Domenici who was then the most powerful senator in Washington. You can tell who's the most powerful senator by where they sit in the senate, he was front row center and he got to speak with him and one of the things that I learned about social change was having compassion for the people that we're actually talking to. I learned to open up my heart and really appreciate that senators and representatives were really there to try and contribute. I didn't always enjoy how they want to contribute but being able to meet them one-on-one. I think it was in that meeting that I lost that compassion more strongly than any other time when Senator Domenici came up after Jiva Spoke and bopped him on the head cause he thought he was so cute. I don't know if you remember that Jiva but I do.

Alan: That's when your compassion went out the window?

Jori: That's right, you lay a hand on my kid but I was able actually to sit back. We had quite a large group there. I don't remember exactly how many people, maybe 10 in the room and the power of the community and coming together and hearing a variety of

voices, I really got to see that through my social change effort at that point and how much we could get done if we found the people who actually do have the power or position to be able to make the changes that we want to make in the world and then meeting them with compassion and being able to speak articulately about the observations that we are aware of and coming in with clear requests so in retrospect although I did work in that particular project and with Results before I knew NVC. NVC just clarified the specifics of how to move forward in the world and make real change.

Alan: Jive, is there anything you want to add so far?

Jiva: I think that's a good intro.

Alan: So, back to Jori I guess I'm wondering, how do you define effective social change? What does that mean and do you have any examples that you could give us?

Jori: Sure. Social change actually if you take those words, one is change and my hope is that change would be to meet more needs. Just the word change doesn't necessarily indicate that... but adding the word 'social' means that we come together to determine what kinds of changes we would make in our society and the spaces where we see that affect us the most and where we could possibly have some influence. So even the change between two people can be a social change if they then can connect in a way that makes them more resourceful and they can contribute more fully out in the world. That dynamic between two people has extended influence based on everyone they touch and the size of the socio. When we started talking about what we're doing in Results, that was an international project and that's a large social change. Everything we do: to add more compassion in our life, to be able to support authenticity or truth-telling as you said, and to affect well-being of people in the world for me is social change.

Some examples of that that I worked on is something called the Grameen Bank. This was a project that was started by Mohammed Yunus who later got the Nobel Peace Prize in relationship to this. So the change that was the goal of that change was to create economic thriving and well being in one of the poorest countries in the world, which was Bangladesh. The way that was structured was that groups of five or more people would be found in any particular community and brought together and form a group and they would look for the poorest of the poor and they brought them together and they educated them in how to have a project that could work for them. They also educated them about birth control and various other real practical things and then they came together as a group to support each other. It was the poorest of the poor and many of them didn't have any options and this particular project was focused on micro-enterprise lending and the economy of Bangladesh has moved from third world to first world in 20 years. That is a huge social change project and what I was involved with was working on funding with our federal government to support that and through the World Bank, so that's a really large social change project. I hope it will give some inspiration, not all of our social change projects are that big. So isn't it amazing what we can do when we figure out a strategy that will really meet people's needs and then find

the leverage points for us. For me, those points were the federal government and the World Bank and getting them onboard and supporting this, so that's an example.

Alan: Hmm, Jiva, anything you want to add?

Jiva: Yeah. Sure. We've talked a little so far about kind of specific sort of tactics when it comes to creating social change which is our advocacy and I think it's important to kind of... sorry...

Alan: You cut out for a second. Do you say legislative advocacy?

Jiva: Yeah. That right. So talking with members of Congress or people in positions of power and persuading them to take positions. I think that I want to draw a quick distinction between policy change and social change and give a little bit of an example. I think you know one of my biggest influences is Martin Luther King Jr. and I often go back to his words as inspiration just to keep myself growing. Working for social change can be draining and actually one of the ways NVC has been very helpful to me is in making sure that I'm taking care of myself. As I do this one of the things that King said that I think fits here is that the arc of the moral universe bends towards justice. Ultimately, what that means to me is that we are moving towards having institutions and systems that are ultimately meeting more and more needs. I think that is embedded in that people actually make that change happen.

So to give an example of the difference between a policy change and social change or moving towards that, one of the issues I worked quite a bit on with Amnesty International is abolishing the death penalty worldwide. Our primary focus is eliminating death penalty in the United States. The United States is among the top 5 executors in the world and that includes China, Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the United States so not great company. I mean there's no great company for people or government that executes their citizens. So one of the campaigns that I worked most closely in the last few years was to end the death penalty in Maryland. In the past three years we've done quite a bit of organizing with youth groups and community groups and also legislative advocacy this year. We have a bill we're waiting for the Maryland Governor to sign the. This is a huge victory. I think it's huge and illustrates that points to the distinction between policy and social change because one of the things that moved this particular bill was working directly with people who were most affected by silence in communities throughout Maryland. These were people who had seen family members murdered and people who experienced other forms of violence in the communities and so what we did was hear directly from those people who are most affected. They were out front in terms of who is representing our coalition that was working on this issue. One of the things that happened in Connecticut actually last year, when the death penalty was abolished there, was that there was a lot of talk about replacing the death penalty with life without parole and 'making sure that the worst of the worst in these monsters' that they 'get the punishment that they deserve'. In Maryland we didn't have that. Instead, the talk was about making sure that the victims of crime were taken cared of and I think that's the step towards social change. If what we're doing is punishing people in the worst ways,

that's not changing the paradigm of criminal justice. That's destructive to communities around the world. But by going directly to the people who are most affected by violence in our communities what we found was we didn't need that language. We didn't need to be dehumanizing people. Instead we're moving towards a culture that is more closely aligned with actually using the language of need, creating safer communities and things like that.

Alan: So let me ask you a follow up on that, Jiva

Jiva: Sure.

Alan: When your goal is to abolish something or get rid of something, do you also have the other side of the coin? What is the positive thing you want to replace it with, or the things that you're moving toward? How does that work for you or at least in this example?

Jiva: Yeah I think that is a great question and I think it's something that, at least for myself, a place where Nonviolent Communication has helped me to be a more effective change agent, is asking the question, "What do we want?" I think the example of how we are working on this issue of the death penalty in Maryland, and what made Maryland slightly different, was that ultimately what we were talking about was making our community safer. We weren't just talking about ending something and I think that really resonated with people. I remember sitting in the balcony that overlooks the Maryland General Assembly and listening to people, to state legislators as they were talking about why they were casting their vote the way they did. They named individual advocates by name who were sitting there, people who had lost family members to violence. The fact that they had said, "What I need is support for my family. What I need is a safe community." Things like that really resonated much more than saying let's just end this thing. Does that answer your question?

Alan: It does and that helps me see more clearly what you were doing. You've used the word organizing a few times. How do you define organizing? What does that mean? What does it look like and what does it accomplish?

Jiva: Yeah. I think this, this is actually one of the things I was most excited about in as my Mom and I were talking about participating in this telesummit. Organizing to me is about building power. My Mom talked about the social in social change and I think organizing is a big part of that. So ultimately it's about bringing people together who have shared values and then take those shared values and move them towards shared purpose, develop shared leadership and really work towards a common goal in a strategic way. I think that word 'strategic' is really important when we're talking about organizing. It's not just that we're coming together and building wider and wider, it's that we're moving those circles forward towards a goal. We're taking very intentional steps and reflecting back on whether we're moving towards that goal or not. That goal goes back to what you had asked before, about what are we saying yes to - what is the world that we want to create? The other piece where I think that nonviolent communication

helps here is when we make that goal as concrete as a clear and present request then we know if and how we're getting closer to that goal.

Alan: Yeah. Thank you. Jori, is there anything you want to add so far?

Jori: Just a little more clarity, in relationship to NVC, that Jiva is talking about, is that we've pointed to getting clear on the current state. We make the observations and then we use feelings to determine whether those observations are actually meeting needs in this moment? Is there something else missing perhaps in there or some sort of change were looking for? Are we saying please about something that we would like to see happen in the world or are we saying thank you, feeling that sense of gratitude that things are working?

Usually when we're looking at social change we're looking at states that we want to change. So we just need to know what the current state is and then to be clear on what the underlying needs are that we want to address. Then we create that common vision, that clarity that we are on the same page about what we would like to see happen in the world. Which needs would we like to work on together? Then we move toward requests about how that might happen and we try them out. Then we see whether those are working and as we learn more we might be shifting our requests. So I just wanted to point how these all relate to NVC. I know in my work how much more aware of those things I became as I heard of NVC and its' simplicity.

Alan: I really like how you took the NVC model and can overlay it to sort of a general kind of process approach to looking at social change. From my own experience in groups and organizations, you know that the slightest interpersonal conflict can sometimes end up ballooning and really taking over the psychic and emotional space of everybody involved to the point that it can sink really wonderful endeavors. Just the interpersonal disharmony can do that. So I'm just seeing all these different levels, all the way from this sort of meta-template that you're talking about all the way down to looking at what kind of culture do we have within the group that's working toward the shared ends.

Jori: Thank you for saying that because I have seen that over and over and I would like to point out perhaps something that we don't always focus on: we have observations, feelings, needs, and requests. For me, there's another element here. That is the container of our group, which is that shared vision of what we're holding. For example we have a program called compassionate leadership and in the beginning of each of our meetings we share our common vision. Then we know why we're coming together, so that there is some clarity that we all have individual things going on in our life at the time. And we're choosing to come together because we share this common vision. Then there's also that case of taking care of the interpersonal parts and ideally taking care of them well. I don't know what's ideal, but at least some of that interpersonal part would happen outside of meetings, so that we would come to our meetings with our own internal resources and we are prepared to contribute to the group. We would also come

to our meetings having taken care of separation that might be happening at an individual level and of course make space in our meetings for what arises with care.

Alan: Thank you. Jiva, do you have anything you want to add to that?

Jiva: Yeah. I think this gets into where Nonviolent Communication has been most helpful for me, you know, engaging in social change kind of work outside of my connections through the Nonviolent Communication communities. The foundations of organizing and social change are relationships. To quote King again, "In order to see the change that we really want to see in the world, we need an uncomfortably large coalition." So we need to be able to communicate across those differences when values and vision are aligned so that conflicts come up in ways that make relationships stronger and move through that conflict in life-serving ways. Nonviolent Communication has been valuable to me in working within organizations, within groups and also between organizations and groups.

I think it's also important to recognize that again, when we are working for social change we're also building relationships with people who hold positions of authority and power - people like members of Congress or presidents of countries or others who are in those positions that have been bestowed with authority. We have to be building relationships with those people as well. Nonviolent Communication gives us a tool for that to maintain that intention to connect even when we are frustrated, when we lose being centered.

I just want to say two more things about how Nonviolent Communication has been helpful to me in doing social change work. One that we talked a little bit about is the power of being able to form a clear and present request and to speak a language of values of universal human needs. To give an example, I was at a rally in Baltimore. It was led by low wage workers who were basically asking for better working conditions and there was a woman who was speaking at the rally who was going through a list of the things they needed to change. A woman reporter in the crowd spoke up and said something like: "How can you be asking for a better condition at the time like this when our economy is so low? Aren't you just grateful to have a job in the first place?" and the woman who was speaking stopped and she said: "No, it's not enough." And the reporter who asked the question said, "I don't think this is the right time." Then the woman who was speaking said: "It's always time for dignity. There's always time for respect." And that really kind of communicated very clearly one of those core principles of NVC.

The second way that NVC has been really helpful to me in a practical sense is organizing and developing leadership and building more and more leaders. I'm not very effective if I'm just out there by myself. Each person that I meet is an opportunity to bring somebody into the movement. I have found the skills that I continue to cultivate through Nonviolent Communication, through empathy or listening have been valuable in being able to support people to find their own voice, to find their own sense of leadership and really take on roles and responsibility towards that shared vision that were working.

Alan: Thank you Jiva and I concur with everything you said from my own experience. I'm curious, since you are working within Amnesty International right now, do you find yourself hearing conversations or sometimes in meetings where you're thinking "Uh-oh, I'm not sure this is going to go in a fruitful direction." Then you step in and you help people hear each other or you help someone clarify their request in the meeting. Are you finding those skills coming out spontaneously in your workplace?

Jiva: Absolutely and I'd say within the teams that I work with internally, that's definitely true. I also work with that between organizations. I think Nonviolent Communication has been a huge part of helping me to develop strong facilitation skills which is an essential part to the work that I do now. I work a lot with the youth and people on campus who have very busy lives and lots of priorities and are working on some pretty heavy issues. We're talking about human rights. We're talking about and looking very closely at people who are suffering in enormous ways and so that can be very draining. It is important to have a lot of internal resources. I've definitely found that having an intentional practice around Nonviolent Communication has helped me to have, as you said, those spontaneous moments of realizing what this person needs right now is some empathy. I can support them to get more present and get more connected to their needs so that we can move forward together and rebuild the connection, rebuild the relationship either with me or somebody else or between other people.

Alan: So what are you working on right now with Amnesty and if anybody here either on the live call or listening to the recording wants to get involved or participate or would like to support your efforts, how do they do that?

Jiva: Sure, yeah. We actually have a very big victory today happened at about noon today. For the first time in history we have a global arms treaty around small arms. That includes everything from bullets up to grenade launchers now have restrictions on how those can be sold on the international market. This is a huge step and will affect many people's lives, particularly women and children who are the primary people who suffer in armed conflict.

Mair: Yay.

Jiva: Yeah. It's really exciting. It's a 20 year effort so I think it's also important to recognize the Maryland bill that passed a couple weeks ago. That was also almost a 30 year effort of applying consistent effort to building those relationships. So I just want to acknowledge that social change takes time and it's constantly happening. But there is one thing that folks can do. I'm not sure if anybody on the line have ever participated in legislative advocacy or met with your Members of Congress. If you haven't, and are doing it for the first time....

Alan: Keep in mind Jiva we have people from all over the world on this too.

Jiva: Oh cool. Okay, great! Well, so folks in the US, one thing that you can do is...we are organizing Lobby Week, happening at the end of April, that's just in a few weeks and

you can sign up to join a delegation at www.amnestyusa.org/lobbyweek. Maybe we can send that out as part of the follow-up. I've posted on the Facebook page. So one thing, if you've never lobbied before, it is a great way to start because you will be with a group of people. There will be others who have never done that before and there will be people who have. We have great training materials and you'll have a lot of support. I said at the beginning when I was 10 and had that first experience, it's just incredibly empowering, you will realize that we really do have a voice in how change happens. So then for folks in other countries, what I would recommend doing if you want to get involved with Amnesty and the human rights movement, go to www.amnesty.org and that's the kind of main landing page where you can find information for different countries and choose the section that is closest to you. We have sections in something like 200 countries around the world so there's definitely ways to get involved locally and affect somebody's issues. Nonviolent Communication aligns with this movement so well, seeing human rights as universal values and human needs.

Let me just say that one of the big issues that we're working on right now is the International Violence Against Women Act. It's a bill that would pass through the US congress but international pressure is important so if you're not in the US there are ways that you can influence the US government to spend resources in a much more life-serving way and end violence against women and creating more safety and all that would entail.

Alan: Jiva, I want to thank you for all the time you've spent for all your efforts creating positive change in the world. That's really inspiring and heartwarming and I know that you're close to being out of time in terms of your participation with us. So I'm wondering if you have any closing thoughts or closing words and specifically if someone in their late teens comes up to you and said: "I want to be part of positive social change where do I start? What should I do?"

Jiva: Yeah. I just really appreciate having this conversation and the questions that you've raised. It's fun to do this kind of work with my mom. That's special and I think that's an example of social change. In a bit, I am going to be telling a story on stage to an audience and I think story is a really important element of creating social change. We as activists, people who want to change the world and make it more of a life-serving place have the challenge of changing the story of violence that we've seen over the course of at least the last few hundred years. I think that starts with a personal story and that's where I would connect with that 16 or 17 year old hoping.

I have a request for the folks on this call. Take a second and think about the moments in your life when social change became important to you when looking at relationships and systems and changing them to be more life serving. Use those NVC skills and really pinpoint the observations that led to that shift and the values that were activated. Find ways to tell that story to people. Connect with them and ask them how they can get...let them know how they can get what they're working on and ask them how you can get involved with what they're working on. I think we just need to build bigger and bigger, if we want to see the change that many of us want. So thanks again for having me.

Alan: Yeah, thank you so much and you know have fun out there on the stage.

Mair: Thank you Jiva. Delightful to do this with you.

Alan: Jiva I heard a saying that... you may enjoy here, are you still there?

Jiva: Yeah.

Alan: They say that the trick is not to get the butterflies out of your stomach but to get them to fly in formation.

Jiva: Perfect! That's perfect in where I'm going and what I'm doing right now.

Alan: Alright, so we'll continue with Jori here.

Jiva: Thank you.

Alan: Thank you again.

Jori: Yeah. I'd love to actually follow up on at least one thing that I heard Jiva say about systems and how social change is about changing systems. That is first and foremost, our own system inside of ourselves in relationship to connection with others and then whatever systems that we're connected to. I used the word connection and we use that word, I think in our community, in so many different ways. So I want to point out that we first look for a life-serving sense of connection with those that were involved with. The systems can be the system of a family, it can be a system of a school or an organization, a hospital, a city or state government, or something that is more national. We can play in the international field, if that that is meaningful for us. That we find this sense of meaning in purpose inside of ourselves and then create the amount of leverage needed depending on the size of the socio were talking about by joining with those other people who share in that vision. I know that we've been talking about really big systems. One of the reasons I wanted to do that was for inspiration. What is possible even on a grand scale is not everybody's mission in life to work on that large of a scale so for us to find our own mission and move forward with that.

Alan: I believe it was Mother Theresa who said: "We don't do great things, we do small things with great love."

Jori: One of my heroes...

Alan: Its easy Jori, as you're saying, it's easy to pressure ourselves into thinking we need to be working only on big grand large scale things but that's not really what it's about. Is that what I hear you saying?

Jori: Yeah. During the Christmas Holidays, Jiva and Jaya, our two children and Jim and I were together for the first time in the same place in about a year. At that point, my full focus was on the socio dynamic of us as four people who really matter to each other in our family unit and really taking care of our connections. So it changes from time to time.

I'm also involved with something called compassionate leadership which is about supporting people and finding their own vision and their mission and creating a community that enables each of us to be able to feel our own sense of meaning and purpose. We then move into the vision and mission that we identify ourselves with - a real clear plan and steps and support in measuring those steps and getting new steps as we grow. So for me that's the place of leverage that I'm choosing right now. At one point, a lot of my focus was on a hospital and their changes. They've now changed their mission, the way they are doing business. I've worked in schools. It keeps changing

Alan: Right. Tell us more about compassionate leadership, a little bit more about what you do and how can people find out more? How can people get involved or learn more about it?

Jori: Thanks for asking. Compassionate leadership, the website is compassionateleadership.com, that's pretty easy and it is an eight month program that brings a community together, to support each other in this kind of visioning and mission and support for each individual. We create a leadership plan and it involves the three things that I see that are important for social change. And as a matter of fact, it's not just what I see, but it is actually what the Buddha saw. The first thing that happens is that we have a sense of clarity about our own intentions. In Buddhism, it's called "The Buddha." This is the idea that asks, "What is the broad vision and the spiritual commitment, the personal commitment, whatever you want to call it inside each of us individually and our sense of connectedness in the world. The second part is to really find our way, to find the steps of practice in terms of the skills we want to develop and also to just have our...the path that we're on even if we can't really see the end of the path or sometimes not even past the next step. To have a path is one of the things we use in terms of this skill development, in terms of this practice. This is something called the matrix of self assessment or sometimes we call it the pathways to liberation. That's also on my website as a link.

Alan: There's a link to it at the top of the page, at the bottom of Jim's information box. People can look for it there.

Jori: So we support people in this center part in really being able to assess themselves and assess the steps they're taking to keep morphing those. Then the third thing is community. To be able to create community around ourselves that keeps reminding us of what's possible and gives us the level of support that enables us to keep holding what really matters in front of us and helps us keep that inspiration alive because often we are faced in the world with people who say: "Oh no, you can't do that." That is where we see the systems being so different from what we want and we lose our inspirations. Our

community helps to maintain that inspiration. I wonder if you want some specific ways about how we do that when you asked that question or whether I answered the question you were asking?

Alan: I would love to hear some examples and I'm assuming the other listeners would enjoy that too.

Jori: Yeah. Right now the form of Compassionate Leadership is for people to have an option of either having distance learning or something called that we call immersion where there'd be two retreats also. By the way, these all starts this month, our first community meeting is being scheduled right now and it will be on the 26th of April.

Alan: So this is a program people apply for?

Jori: Yes.

Alan: ...to be in to it?

Jori: Yes. This is an 8-month program.

Alan: And when is the deadline for applying?

Jori: The applications are open to be part of it from the beginning, right now would be to apply now and we will have our first meeting on the 26th of this month. For the distance learning and for the retreat, there's still openings, people can join along the way and what we've done is record it along the way as well.

Alan: Got it and people can find that at compassionateleadership.com?

Jori: Yes.

Alan: So anyway, keep going I just... you were going to share some examples.

Jori: So some of the elements are that we have particular focuses that people can look at. We have very specific things where we can break off into different groups of shared visions and missions. The four we're working with right now is personal development. So those people who are just wanting to work really on that inner place right now, which is so essential to all of us, can be in a group that is just focused on that. All of these groups are focused on personal growth, by the way, that's got to be the foundation.

Then we also have mediation. Jim and I have been mediators since early 90s, long before NVC. So we bring in a lot of skills. Jim pivots the trainer track. Jim has also been part of training trainers, since before NVC. He was part of training trainers in Neurolinguistic Programming programs and training leaders to go out in that way. And then the fourth track is a business and organization track, for people who are in business, for people who want to create organizations that are effective. More and more

of the studies show that the most effective organizations are the ones that have compassion in them. So those are the four tracks we've identified right now that are part of that. So the way the program works is we have community teleconferences once a month. Then we also have once a month telecasts, two weeks later with that same focus, that break us up into groups based on our focus area. Then in between we have activity pods, something that happens every week to keep us on track and then there's also empathy in practice buddies that we put into that as well to really keep our resources up and keep us going. And there's also mentoring, you get six mentoring calls with our trainers, we have four trainers, one guest trainer at the retreat for this program. So it's Jim and Jori Manske, Rodger Sorrow, Faye Landey and Mary Mckenzie as our trainers in this. They are all certified trainers with lots and lots of life experience and NVC experience. The fifth track is being able to fulfill your mission and getting clarity on your vision and mission. It is about having a plan and getting support in creating a clear plan and having support for keeping it going and helping it to be dynamic so it is of interest to you. Please check out compassionateleadership.com and see if this can be a fit for you. If there's anything we request that doesn't work for you, let us know because we are committed to supporting people whether they have enough money to do this or whatever they have. Time would be an important part of this program but if there are any obstacles along the way let us know. We would like to support it, because for me and for my team members, this is part of our mission in creating social change in the world. This is where we're seeing the leverage because we know we can't meet our own vision without all of you and with as many people as we can who are effectively out in the world living their values and contributing in a meaningful way.

That was a lot! I got excited about that. When I talk about vision and mission, I get very excited and the projects that I'm working on and that's where I see people come alive as well. So I imagine for many on this call, they can start to touch their own visions and missions and their excitement in coming alive with what they really want to see in the world and how they might contribute to that.

Alan: And Jori before I open it up to Q and A with people on the call, I have just a little follow up to what you've just shared. If I ask you how you're implementing social change right now, this is the big part of the answer, is the compassionate leadership program, is that right?

Jori: Yes. This is a big part of the answer because what's really important to me is to find the leverage to make change in the world. That is why I was involved with resource results and several other projects. I've been involved with the Grameen Bank and asking myself, "Where is the real leverage?" For me the real leverage at this point with the skills that I have and the capabilities and the team that we've been able to create is really supporting others in coming alive and moving forward in their visions and missions and to have compassion in their lives and to have leadership. We define leadership as leading your own life and influencing others around you to meet more needs.

Alan: Got it! Thank you. Are you open to hearing from people on the call?

Jori: Oh...open, more than open... excited!

Alan: Excited. Press 1 on your phone keypad if you have a question or a comment for Jori. We have... John on the line. Hi John!

Jori: Hey John! John, I haven't heard your voice in a long time

John: Hi! I'm sorry I actually missed most of the call so far but so I may lack some context that you gave for this, I regret, but I wanted to make this call because this was one of the calls that has relevance for the way that I think about social change. You talked about actual change in the world. I think most people think of that when they think of social change. The piece that interests me, and has me feel often kind of lonely is that... some people may be familiar with Marshall's story. It's actually an old activist story about how there are people trying to save babies they're finding floating down the river. Hopefully at some point, somebody goes upstream and finds out who's throwing the babies in the river. So a good recent example of that is people who are trying to help people whose homes are being foreclosed on. Those people are saving the babies but going upstream is to say, "Hey, why did all this happen anyway?" Then there are activists working to say, "Hey let's change it so that we don't have banks that are too big to fail so that we don't run into this happening over and over again" And, I'm interested in the next level beyond that. We seem to have a system that keeps creating, keeps resulting politically and culturally in us making decisions that lead to disasters of the moment or just an ongoing way of life that could be so much better. So I'm interested in actually changing the structures of governance, the fundamental assumption in our culture and not just on an individual by individual basis. So I see the one-on-one work and the training that all the people do. I see that addressing that level of change. But through one individual by one individual and I feel like at some point either to make enough progress or as a result of the progress that we've made on an individual by individual basis, we're going to want to change the fundamental structures of our society. When I say structure of society, I mean not just who we elect, but how we elect entirely different forms of legislatures where people actually talk with each other and actually draw on the wisdom of everybody. I am working towards a system that represents everyone, not just the few people who get there in a system that results in a very skewed selection of the population. Sorry that took so long to ask...

Jori: Oh no, I actually love that John. Thank you so much for the articulateness of what you just said. I really appreciate that perspective and I think you'll really enjoy listening to some of the early part of the call. I don't know if you were here when Jiva talked about the difference between social change and policy change. Some of what you're talking about is policy change where we actually start to change the very structure of how things are structured.

John: I'm interested in changing how we change policies.

Jori: Fundamentally, how do we approach people who have the power to change those things and how we change that place inside of ourselves, is that what you mean?

John: Like I said I'm not so much interested in the part how we change our selves I agree that it's critical, but I see a lot of people putting attention on that. So, an example would be in British Columbia a number of years ago, they were thinking about changing their electoral system. What they did is they convened an assembly of citizens, two people from each district or what have you. Those representatives were not voted for. They were randomly chosen but in a way that ensured that they would be representative of all the different demographics in the area. Then they were supported to have real conversations with each other and they came up with a proposal that they had almost total consensus on in that assembly. Citizens or groups were empowered to make decisions and they ended up putting a ballot up so the people had to vote for it and they had to get a high percentage to pass it. They didn't get enough votes but the process of it was something new.

Similarly related in Oregon we have ballot initiatives. A group has set something up so that citizen juries vet each proposal that an independent group can get funding for. Hopefully the state funds the whole thing eventually. But they really look at the ballots for a week. They get expert input and then they come up with a consensus statement about the proposal that they all agree on. Then they also give a vote who favored it and who didn't and they give a statement explaining that. And all of that goes in the voters pamphlet. So it's these different ways of convening people from the larger population that reflect the full diversity of the population and are facilitated in ways that give what we hope would be a more accurate voice of we the people, a considered voice of we the people not just a poll of people's opinions just walking into the issue at hand.

Alan: So John, this is Alan...

John: Yeah.

Alan: Policy changes are all well and good but we need to transform how we can even engage with changing policies. We need to transform the entire decision making process. I'm guessing your familiar with Tom Atlee?

John: I live with him...yes. (Laughs)

Alan: But you're familiar with his work?

John: Oh yes...

Alan: Tom said or wrote something a long time ago that really stuck with me which is, "The way we collectively take in information, the way we collectively process that information and then our collective forms of decision making are really the issue at hand." For anyone on this call or listening to the recording I encourage you to go to the website of the Co-Intelligence Institute and that website is co hyphen intelligence dot

org or co dash intelligence dot org because you'll find a whole compendium of real world processes that are along the lines of what John is talking about is that accurate, John?

John: Absolutely - that's what I've been involved the early mid 90s. I've been involved with the Co-intelligence Institute pretty much from the beginning. We often feel lonely when we talk with people about this stuff who are more typical social change agents because they're excited about a particular issue and they want to win on that issue...

Alan: Yeah.

John: ... and so we say, "Hey let's empower or at least bring together a bunch of people and let them look at this issue and decide what ought to happen. A lot of people who are passionate about going in a particular direction and they are saying, "This is too slow," or, "We don't trust that it will go the way we want it to." And so on...

Alan: Yeah...yeah...

Jori: So thank you so much John for bringing this forth because it is really important. We need to find representatives who can really hold the needs of constituents. When we make really large decisions that can affect so many or even smaller decisions, when there are multiple constituents that come together with that level of wisdom, how do we accommodate each one in a workable dynamic? So thank you.

John: Yeah I trust that everybody has that wisdom, if we can just set up the systems to tap into it

Jori: Absolutely... thank you.

Alan: John I have one more thing to add. The focus of this particular online event is quite narrow. We're looking at a specific convergence of Nonviolent Communication and social change. In no way I hope this is clear and I hope to make it clear now. In no way am I trying to say this is the be all end all and all, it just happens to be a very narrow focus. I am a big fan of Tom's work and Co-intelligence Institute's work. I concur with Gary Snyder as he was quoted in the book Deep Ecology when he says that we need to work on these things on all levels simultaneously and I really appreciate the focus that your bringing. Thank you.

John: Yeah I feel committed because to me NVC and social change almost implies this stuff - thank you.

Jori: Thank you.

Alan: Thank you John and I see another hand up here... Jackie

Jackie: Hi! Can you hear me?

Alan: Yeah if you could get a little closer to your phone or I am not sure if you're on speaker phone

Jackie: Yeah no I have my headphone plugged in. Yeah, I just wanted to say.. I concur with John.

Alan: Yes

Jackie: Yeah...yeah. I mean, I totally agree with him when I'm listening to all of it. You know, I think the systems we need to put in place are to make sure that Nonviolent Communication is being taught in our schools and just make it a basic part of our education. That's definitely one part of it. Then as far as he was talking about people together make decisions, one area that I see that happening is through the internet. To put together something that helps people go online and make huge world changing decisions - basically millions of people to log in and contribute. It would be kind of a computer-guided way of facilitating that kind of discussion. So I think there are a lot of schools that are now just coming into play where we can apply this knowledge to do these things on a massive scale. I totally feel I want to do something that big and it's so hard to talk to people, especially activists, because they almost completely tune me out. It is really weird you know...so I just wanted to support him in that and say that all over we're working for the same thing.

Alan: Great! Thank you Jackie.. thank you. Jori do you have anything to add to what Jackie said or what John said?

Jori: I enjoyed what you said was talking about how we now have more tools in technology to be able to bring people together and to have a broader focus and to really hear voices on issues that influence us in a broad way very excited about that too.

Alan: We have a couple other hands that went up

Jori: Uh huh...Great I'd love to hear from others.

Alan: Hi Nori!

Nori: Hi!

Jori: Hmm.. Nori, she lives down the road from me. Hi Nori!

Nori: I never took time to find out more about Compassionate Leadership. I was really really curious about finding out more about it. Can you explain more about leadership and what this caters to - leadership in the family or leadership in business? I'm really looking into the possibility of co-creating with other leaders and co-creating in a community.

Jori: Yeah so your question is how does compassionate leadership fit into that or how that might help you in taking on leadership in these areas in your life?

Nori: No, just kind of using it as an example. I know only a little bit about compassionate leadership. Is there more you would like to share?

Jori: Thanks. I'm open to some questions about that. For me, as I said, Compassionate Leadership is my mission and the mission of the trainers that have come together to do this. We are supporting others in taking the leadership of their own lives and leadership in the mission that really lights them up. It is developing the skills that are needed to move forward in manifesting what each of us wants in our lives. It's creating a community of support for that, at whatever level in whatever area that you're looking at bringing compassion into. Because you take leadership of your plan and your vision and your mission so I welcome that. Is there more you'd like to hear about that Nori?

Nori: That actually really helps. It is kind of a tandem practice to me anytime that I'm in a nonviolent communication practice, I am imagining.

Jori: Yeah, on the personal level, it is developing and bringing that compassion into the systems that you are in. When you get clearer that you actually do have influence, then you can influence with compassion and grow in widening circles of bringing about the consciousness change that needs to happen for systemic change to happen.

Nori: Awesome. Thank you for explaining that further, that really helped.

Jori: Yeah,

Nori: Thank you. Bye for now.

Jori: Thank you Nori. Thank you for asking because it really again touches into my deep passion for systemic change, for influencing a whole system of how we relate and support everybody in being able to not only survive but thrive in the world. So much violence is done in our system, and as we grow in our level of influence we can begin to dismantle the violence and put into effect systems that really serve more broadly. It's going to take the whole...a large village.

Alan: Thank you Nori. Okay.

Jori: More hands?

Alan: Yes this is the last question for this call...from Frances.

Frances: Hi to both of you I hope I can be articulate and clear with what I have to say. There are two things... one is a question that I had for your son and my understanding is he's not here anymore?

Alan: Correct.

Frances: Ok..Well, I'd like to share my question in case you know if there's an answer to it and then I have something that I want to say to you personally.

Alan: And Frances, you can also email the question to me or Jori and we'll get it to Jiva.

Frances: Oh ok, alright, It was about Amnesty International and whether or not they are having any connection with impacting the horrible and unfair incarceration of young African American young black men to... well kind of railroaded ways. I'm pulling from the book now but I'm blanking out on the name of the book.

Jori: I think what you're talking about is the inordinate percentage of imbalance in jails and prisons...

Frances: Right.

Jori: ...particularly around young men and the tragedy of that the people are profiled and also not seen individually and for the pain that brings them to where they are...we're now addressing that.

Frances: Well, the way that it literally can end their lives they just become a slave actually. It's the New Jim Crow, that's the name of the book and it was very, very powerful to me and very disturbing to me and I don't know if it's something that is floating out there. The injustice that is too indefinable or unable to really be touched and say, "This is it" When your son mentioned the Amnesty International and their work with other nations and other countries, then it occurred to me, maybe they are doing something in this country with that situation.

Jori: I'm not really sure whether they're working on that particularly situation, I do know that they are working on the death penalty. I'm also aware that particularly with young people and people who are not necessarily violent but they do unfortunate things in trying to have their needs met and then they end up in prison. There they learn to be violent rather than learn how to make their life work. I just recently heard of someone, who after 18 years being convicted of a violent crime, had new DNA evidence released. This person was not part of that crime. This person had never really been violent or hadn't been accused of anything major. Within a few years of being released, this person actually did murder somebody so they became acculturated and their needs have been so unmet for so long that even when they come out, it's very, very difficult to integrate into a world in a life serving way. This is not uncommon with former inmates.

I will tell you about one project that I have been involved with. I was a founding member for comienzos.org which is the jail project in Bernalillo County which includes Albuquerque, New Mexico. There, Comienzos was ongoing from before I got involved but I introduced NVC into it and we created a non-profit and NVC is a core part of transforming people's experience of being in jail. So they're actually learning the skills

they need both socially and practically to go out into the world when they're released. They are learning to make life work for themselves and everybody else rather than inflicting more pain on themselves and others. So that is comienzos.org, which is a Spanish word for beginning. In New Mexico, it's not the blacks that fill the jails, but is mainly Spanish-speaking people. That same sort of inequity happens in Hispanics and so it's c-o-m-i-e-n-z-o-s.org - perhaps that will give you some inspirational ideas that influence that particular part of our systems.

Alan: Jori, it's Comienzos with an s in the end is that right before the .org?

Jori: Yes, oh thank you Comienzos. The translation of the Spanish word is beginnings, which you probably knew, Alan.

Alan: c-o-m-i-e-n-z-o-s.org and Frances you said you had one comment for Jori personally.

Frances: Yes, Jori when I heard you're voice and your spirit and what you had to say, I immediately thought, "I want her to be my grandmother." (Laughs) I didn't know either of my grandmothers and so I don't have a memory of grandmothers. Someone was mentioning their grandmother died and they shifted when that happened. I thought, "You know, I never had that because I literally did not know my grandmother." So there are times when women have gone looking for mothers. So this is a time when I want to say, "Hello, grandmother," to you. Like the grandmother of the tribe, I'd like to honor you in that way so I just wanted to say that.

Frances: Thank you.

Jori: Thank you and I actually had the opportunity to get someone's grandmother not long ago so I've actually been playing that for people and I'm at that age where I'm old enough to be a grandmother now so thank you.

Frances: And I was thinking spiritually too, you know.

Jori: Yes and come on by. Contact me, I'm happy to connect with you and play grandmother with you. I'm in North Alabama but I love the idea and I'm just starting to create a grandmother in my soul and my heart and looking for inspiration and now I've got a good start. Thank you! To that end I'd like to let people know my email address radicalcompassion@gmail.com - that's radical compassion at gmail .com and I welcome connection. I may not be able to respond very much particularly at this point. I'm about to start a three week tour and so if you or anyone else is in California, Nevada, New Mexico or Texas over the next three weeks, I'll be there and I would love to hear from you. If you are interested in coming into any of those trainings, do send me an email.

Frances: Thank you so much I may send you from time to time a grandmother poem that I run across that just connects for me, and might connect for you too.

Jori: I welcome connection with you, Frances.

Frances: Thank you so much.

Alan: Thank you Frances, thank you. So Jori any closing comments before we wrap up the call?

Jori: I really appreciate it hearing people from the call I'm reminded how vital that is for me and how much I appreciate when we get on these teleconferences to make that personal connection. Although I'm able to see the names here and create that sense of connection as I'm sitting here, I just love hearing the voices and so that's really alive for me. That is how we put together our teleconferences whether it's Compassionate Leadership or NVC Academy or any of our own personal telecourses. We work to really have that level of interaction, so thank you to those people who spoke up that was very rich for me. I really enjoyed everything I heard in your voices. Thank you and thank you Alan for doing this, for creating this, for having something that people can enter into, no matter what their financial means are. Obviously they would have to have enough resources to be tuned in via the internet and be able to hear and perhaps speak and to keep the focus on what the deeper meaning of Nonviolent Communication is and to support all of us. Thank you so much

Alan: Thanks Jori so I am going to unmute everybody so we can say bye to each other. Bye everyone!

Jori: Bye, thank you for coming!

Everyone: Bye.

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