

## **GANDHI'S LEADERSHIP STYLE: *charismatic - inspirational - visionary - value based***

### **Positions / Questions**

- A.** The **essential principles** of Gandhi's philosophy are quite simple to understand (if not implement).
- At the **personal level** the four principles are: *Respect, Understanding, Acceptance and Appreciation.*
  - Gandhi's principles with regard to **public policy** were:
    1. *Truth and Truthfulness:* Unconditional commitment to be truthful and authentic.
    2. *Nonviolence in relationships at all levels:* One must also accept the fact that all forms of violence cannot be totally eliminated.
    3. *Trusteeship:* Each one of us has a unique talent; however, we do not own it but serve as trustee -- our talent must be used as much for the sake of others as for ourselves.
    4. *Constructive Action:* Once acknowledged and balanced, we must use our talents to empower others in creating social change as a whole community.
- ✓ ***Do you think that nonviolence is relevant for the 21st Century?***
- B.** For Gandhi **religion** played a significant role not only in his life, but in his leadership -- Gandhi's own spiritual quest included Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity.
- ✓ ***Do you think that in today's political arena religion plays such a prevalent role for leaders?***
- C.** For a **pacifist**, Gandhi was not very passive. "Where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence," he once said, not because he welcomed bloodshed, but because he favored engagement. He had **little respect for passivity, and even less for moral weakness.**
- The basic idea of Gandhi's approach to fighting is to redirect the focus of a fight from persons to principles. Gandhi called it **satyagraha**: "*insistence on truth*" or "*grasping onto principles,*" or "*truth force.*"
  - To Gandhi, fighting has its benefits. An appreciation of the other point of view enhances one's own perspective. We are all limited to our own angle of vision, Gandhi said. Through fighting, one gains a broader view of truth.
  - He assumed that behind any struggle lies another clash, a deeper one: a confrontation between two views that are each in some measure true. Every fight, to Gandhi, was on some level a fight between differing "angles of vision" illuminating the same truth.
- ✓ ***In ancient times, an eye for an eye approach worked quite well and effectively. What Gandhi preached is the exact opposite. Are both these approaches equally effective or is one more effective than the other? Is that due to the social and time context or just due to the fact that one is more effective than the other because of the leader?***

**D. Gandhi's way of fighting** has two dimensions:

- One is to imagine a solution that includes the best features of both sides. He pioneered what is now called the **"win-win" approach** to conflict resolution.
- The second is even more innovative: to incorporate the solution into the struggle itself. In Gandhi's view, **the way you fight and the goal for which you are fighting are the same.**

✓ ***Gandhi believed in tolerance and "win-win" leadership. His acts were marked by patience, compromises and the belief in the truth. Today's society is a conflict of power. Marked by media attention and interest groups / parties, the world can be considered a constant drive for power driven by egotistic decision. Would Mahatma Gandhi's leadership be effective in today's society? What current leader best exemplifies Gandhi's leadership style of tolerance and leadership by example?***

✓ ***GRADING GANDHI? - Gandhi's mission was to make the British realize the wrong they committed against India. Do you believe the British left India because of an attack on their consciousness or for other reasons?***

**BONUS** (in case you take a political philosophy course someday - Thoreau, Gandhi, King, Mandela):

King's principles of nonviolence were:

1. Nonviolence is a way of life for courageous people.
2. Nonviolence seeks to win friendship and understanding.
3. Nonviolence seeks to defeat injustices, not people.
4. Nonviolence holds that suffering for a cause can educate and transform.
5. Nonviolence chooses love instead of hate.
6. Nonviolence holds that the universe is on the side of justice and that right will prevail.