

NVC, Unschooling Dads, The Fallacy of Violent Communication



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“Finding the Challenges” is an original column appearing, usually every other week at Everything-Voluntary.com, by Verbal Vol. Verbal is a software engineer, college professor, corporate information officer, life long student, farmer, libertarian, literarian, student of computer science, nonviolent communication, and self-ordering phenomena, pre-TSA world traveler, domestic traveler. Archived columns can be found here. FTC-only RSS feed available here.

One never stops learning. Today, I learned again that whenever you take a malfunctioning something to a fix-it place, the thing will begin to work splendidly and will stubbornly refuse to repeat the malfunction. The case in point was a gimpy smart phone, but this has wide applicability. Sick pets will stage miraculous recuperation on the front step of the veterinary clinic. Then there was a second thing I learned — the thing that behaved perfectly before the caregiver will suffer a dramatic relapse on the way home.

And, as usual, I learned some new things about Voluntaryism in the past two weeks, which I will duly share with you today: 1) a new influence called “non-violent communication,” 2) a great new book from Skyler, as editor and publisher, entitled *Unschooling Dads*, and 3) a particularly toxic form of begged question, communication in the form of browbeating.

Nonviolent Communication

A few days ago, I was invited to join a Facebook Group, wherein members sought to see the match between voluntaryism and nonviolent communication. By way of introduction, we were asked to write a brief hello telling how we came to voluntaryism and to nonviolent communication. As I considered this assignment, I realized that though I might be a good voluntaryist, I had very little skill at transferring my non-violent outlook to my ways of thinking, listening, talking, and writing. Here is how I responded:

I have always acted in a way to avoid violence, but culturally I have been influenced toward verbal aggression. In a family which was very competitive in professional pursuits, I was encouraged to be dominant in communications. I have had a lifelong struggle trying to turn my bent away from verbal aggression. I am getting much better now since I have discovered voluntaryism.

I left out that I was also trained, in every venue, to respond, slavishly, to violent communication. In order to have a quiet zone around me, I have become a wielder of a flame-throwing tongue. In the days since, I have been amazed at how often I have carried on an internal monologue of things I should not say to my worst enemy — silent temper tantrums. Even now, as I write, I am becoming overwrought, feeling buckling in the layers beneath the thin veneer of placidity that I show to others.

Just this Tuesday, the (University of) Kentucky Wildcats Men's Basketball Team lost to a below-average Tennessee team, blowing a double-digit lead. How many unkind words have I spoken in my imagination about that? It is not going to be easy.

I have discovered that it takes more than just a philosophical disposition against war. It will take consistency. It will take a willingness to recognize the problem to relinquish violent, negative, aggressive thinking. It is not enough to just cork our violent thoughts. Nonviolence best precedes from nonviolent thinking. Nonviolence cannot really be suppressed violence. Of course existing violence should be suppressed, but that is not the main road to nonviolence

Unschooling Dads — A Voluntaryist View

During the last week, I have had the distinct pleasure of listening to the new audio book, *Unschooling Dads*. So why does a septuagenarian grandfather need ideas on unschooling; hasn't that water gone over the dam?

Well, no. There are a number of reasons, not the least of which are 2 daughters, 8 grandchildren, and 2 great-grandchildren. All of them are, luckily for Lin and I, very much part of our daily lives. Currently, we are supporting and encouraging piano, flute, saxophone, singing, running, and basketball. We never mature away from parenting. In fact, since someone like me has been parenting himself for seven decades, it is lifelong truth for even childless persons. And I always knew, but have realized later, that self-education is critical. Being voluntaryist, being an individualist, I know that no one can hold my course across the sea of knowledge and experience but me. To me, our independence from prescribed education has always been fact, while association with institutions has only

been incidental.

I am saying that each of us engages in unschooling regardless of what schooling we may have. I may have been taught on occasion, but I still had to learn everything, voluntarily, for myself.

It is because of my fortune in grasping the principles of unschooling that I want to learn more. I see important principles as these:

- Learning is not from intervention, even though an urge to learn can be influenced by others.
- Others can affect your natural learning inclinations by intervening forcefully, with or without premeditation, in your best learning years.
- But learning proceeds in every being no matter how stultifying the strictures or how late the date.
- Having an unschooling heart becomes all the more important when the environment suppresses learning.

With these principles in mind, I will now re-listen to the book and I will read in print many passages. And then, if I get the chance, I may share certain views in this space in coming columns.

Logic Fallacy #43 — Violent Communication

It is fundamental that if there were such a thing as nonviolent communication, that there must be its opposite, violent communication. But what can be the constructive function of violent communication? Nonviolent communication is a redundant phrase, while violent communication is an oxymoron. Violence destroys or, at least, deteriorates communication.

So, an event that heightens communication without regard to intensity is nonviolent communication. NVC is not about the feel-good content of communication. It is about content. If violent utterance only carries an attempt to intimidate, loudly or quietly, it is fallacious. Cheering at a football game is not inherently violent, but screaming “Kill the quarterback” is. Using a stentorian tone to warn an infant away from a fire is not necessarily violent, but using the same tone all the time is. Dodging an argument by labeling part of the discussion “stupid” is uncaringly violent, while agreeing to objective criteria by which debate will be judged is nonviolent.

I was in a Facebook thread about the effectiveness of voting. One interlocutor declared that not voting was “moronic!” How shall we unpack that? In that context, the word is only a wrecking ball. It wrecked the poster’s position and it terminated a useful debate. It

had nothing to do with analysis of either the premise or the sad state of being a moron.

This column is about discovery, the discovery of new sides to valued objects. Nonviolent communication is a new trailhead for me. Unschooling is an exciting idea to refresh one's journey through the landscape of experience, not just a resolution to stop the hassle of getting children out the door tomorrow. And employing fear or defamation to communicate is a failure to communicate.

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