

# EPCC Newsletter



## How Do I Handle Difficult Conversations?

BY WILMA GOLD

We wanted to share an introduction to a valuable strategy for those times when you have to have a challenging conversation with a family or a co-worker. Nonviolent Communication is a communication skill that allows you to express what you **observe** and how you are **feeling, needing, and requesting**.

Some of the significant roadblocks to successful conversations when emotions are involved are defensiveness and blame. Nonviolent Communication (NVC), founded by Marshal Rosenberg, gives us the language to share without defensiveness and blame.

The first step is to share your observation. You are sharing what you observe that does or does not contribute to your well-being. For example, "When Tommy arrives at school in the middle of circle time..." OR "When you arrive while I am engaged in circle time and can't greet you and Tommy at the door..."

The second step is to clearly express how you are feeling without blaming or criticizing. OR empathetically receiving how the other is

feeling with our hearing blame or criticism. The most challenging aspect is to stick with feelings (emotions or sensations) as opposed to thoughts. For example, "When Tommy arrives in the middle of circle time I feel disappointed." OR "When you see that I cannot greet you and Tommy at the door because I am in the middle of circle time I wonder if you feel concerned?"

Some examples of true feelings:

- When needs are met; Happy, hopeful, thankful, touched, calm, satisfied, interested, excited
- or when needs are not met; depressed, frustrated, annoyed, Self-conscious, confused, worried, fearful

Some examples of mistaken for feelings:

- Accepted, attacked, criticized, ignored, tricked,
- I feel that..., I feel you..., I think that...

The third step is to share your need. Verbalizing what you need or value that causes your feelings. (continued, page 4)

## How can I get involved?

*We are honored that you have opened and perused our quarterly newsletter.*

We value your input and support for our peace education work that is so close to our hearts and minds. There are many ways that you can support our work with educators, families and communities across the country.

Here are a few ways you can get involved:

- Share your training or workshop experiences with others.
- Think about what you see on our website ([educatorsforpeacefulclassroomsandcommunities.org](http://educatorsforpeacefulclassroomsandcommunities.org)) that you might be interested in organizing for your community or sponsoring/funding or participating in yourself
- Tell others about the training opportunities we offer
- Refer others to our website
- Grant writing support, or leads
- Offer leads for training or speaking opportunities
- Offer leads for funding sources
- Offer leads for marketing our project

Please share this newsletter and refer others to our website, [educatorsforpeacefulclassroomsandcommunities.org](http://educatorsforpeacefulclassroomsandcommunities.org).

If you have any questions email us at [bonzvo@verizon.net](mailto:bonzvo@verizon.net).



## Rituals and Traditions: With Family or in Classrooms

BY GABY LITSKY

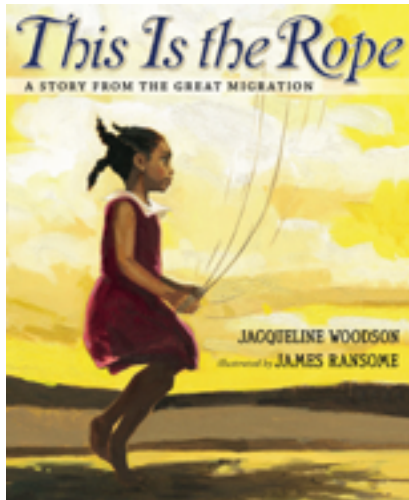
A Ritual is defined as: The way you do an action. Rituals can be religious or non-religious. A Tradition is the way you repeat the ritual over time. Children enjoy these rituals and traditions and look forward to them. It's about belonging to the group, being able to anticipate something familiar. They can be silly as well as serious.

We may do rituals very intentionally or without even realizing that's what we are doing. A family has a Saturday night ritual of eating a big spaghetti dinner and then taking a long walk to the ice cream shop together. Sunday may be visit Grandma day. Every year a family waits for the circus to come to town. We have cultural and (continued, page 2)

## BOOK REVIEW

# **This is the Rope: A Story From The Great Migration,** **by Jacqueline Woodson**

BY GABY LITSKY



The story follows an African American family during the great migration from the rural conditions of the South to a better life in the North. Traversing time from 1900 to the early 1970's and three generations.

"The rope" is found under a tree in South Carolina by a little girl. She uses it for skipping but her father finds another use for it, to tie items onto the car for the trip North. Mother uses to tie up flowers as the family adapts to city living.

As the rope passes from one generation to another, we find out more about the family, see pictures of new babies and learn about next generations. We come full circle as "the rope" is finally passed back to Grandma along with her memories of childhood skipping rope.

For young children there are many conversation openers. From looking at a warm loving family to uses for a rope. For older children the conversation can contain discussions of rural versus city life, street culture and family stories and values. I would hope after sharing this story, children will be curious about their own family stories.



## Trainings and Workshops

Woo Yee Workshops:  
February 2 Media and Children  
March 16 Nonviolent Communication

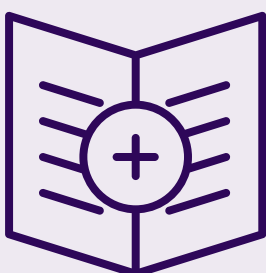
Level I San Jose January 27 -28  
Level II San Jose March 2 - 4  
Level I Orange Co. May 5 - 6  
Level I Saba Islamic Center San Jose Summer 2018  
Level I Sacramento Spring/Summer 2018

## Rituals and Traditions, Continued from page 1

family traditions during family celebrations or holidays that we all come to expect and enjoy. They give a sense of continuity and being part of something bigger than yourself.

A group of school age children started their day at Peace Camp by having a sip of water and toasting as part of their Water Conservation

Theme. Another group of preschoolers ended their day by telling one thing they felt good about during their day. Often children will create their own rituals like being very careful not stepping on cracks walking to the yard. Children started to initiate singing the Peace Song together before going to lunch.



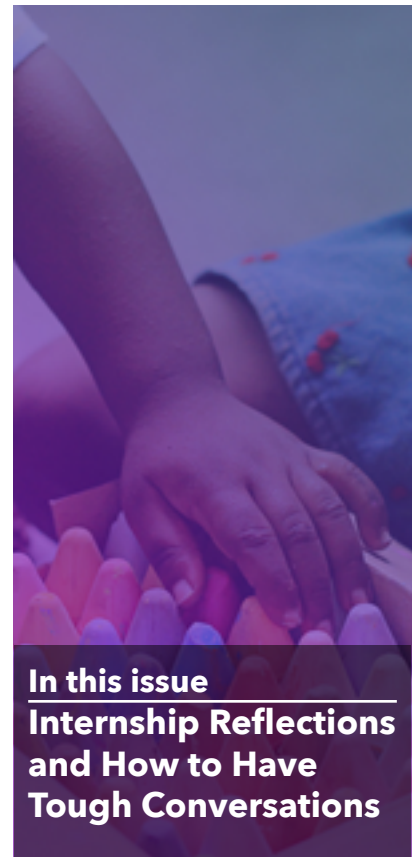
READ MORE ONLINE

## The Power of Routines

Read about the [Power of Routines](#) in Best Health Magazine.

**Click to Read the Article**

[ExchangeEveryDay](#)



## In this issue Internship Reflections and How to Have Tough Conversations

- 1** BOOK REVIEWS  
[This is the Rope](#) by Jacqueline Woodson
- 2** DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS  
We are bringing you tools for building Non-Violent Communication skills.
- 3** INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE REFLECTIONS  
The 2018 interns offer what they have each learned this year.
- 4** TRAINING AND WORKSHOPS  
See the Level I and Level II trainings coming up near you.
- 5** RITUALS AND TRADITIONS  
How can rituals and traditions be applied at home and in the classroom?
- 6** THE POWER OF ROUTINE  
Run of the mill routines can have health boosting effects.

## OUR ORGANIZATION

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[educatorsforpeacefulclassrooms  
andcommunities.org](http://educatorsforpeacefulclassroomsandcommunities.org)

# Internship Experience Reflections

These three young professionals completed their 2016-2017 EPCC Internship and have shared their final reflections. The requirements for the internship included planning a major project, doing the project, and presenting their work to the EPCC members at the summer retreat. The areas of interest were "Peace Camps" and "Training and Speaking." We hope you enjoy reading their reflections.

## To Intern or Not, That Was the Question

BY TIM BONGCO

The EPCC Internship, Peace Camp track definitely impacted my life but not in the way I had expected it to. My goal from the very beginning was to become a stronger advocate for young children and to further develop my skills as a leader working with youth and children. While I feel that I gained that from the internship, I also gained so much more. About halfway through the internship, I was ready to drop out. At the time, I felt like I was being pulled in so many directions and that I had to let something go. As guilty as it makes me feel to say it, the internship was the most expendable thing. After speaking with my mentor over the course of a week or so, I decided to stay on board and streamline my internship with something I was already

## I was given tools that would bring us together as educators.

committed to doing: being the Youth Leader Coordinator for Orange County Peace Camp. This internship helped me gain a different perspective in working in collaboration with others. It also taught me about time management and self-care. It showed me that it is ok to say "no" when you know you can't commit to something and that you shouldn't feel bad or guilty. I completed the internship feeling a deeper sense of accomplishment because it not only put me in touch with my community, it gave me insight into who I am as an individual and I came out feeling more confident and with a stronger self-image than when I started.



Tim, Veronica, and Laura

## How to Build a Peaceable Classroom: My Life Since My EPCC Internship

BY VERONICA HERNANDEZ

To discuss the impact that the internship of public speaking had on my life, I would need to share a little about my journey. The EPCC internship came during a time in my career where I felt frustrated and nervous because of changes taking place at my worksite.

During our first meeting at the EPCC internship retreat, I discussed my feelings and how I was hoping that the internship

Since this internship, the school that I work for has gone through many challenges, where we felt the parents might doubt leaving their children in our care, but we were wrong. The support we gave each other as educators during the internship, and the community we built with the children and parents, allowed us to hold hands and move through this rocky path together. Yes, we unfortunately lost a few parents, but the parents that really got to know us and loved who we are as a team, have been supportive and made us feel that we could get through anything together, if we do it together. I am happy to say that the tools that were given to me during my internship, are now being practiced during this new transition for the school.

This internship has not only given me a new perspective building a peaceable classroom, but also on what it really means to be a community and why it is so important. I could not be more thankful for the opportunity that EPCC had given me. They gave me lifelong tools that I hold on to and practice every day.

See Laura's story on page 4.



# Transformational Experience: Collaboration and Reconnecting with My Values

BY LAURA HYATT

The EPCC internship completely transformed my view of training, speaking, and leadership, while providing me with more clarity for my future, and far more confidence.

When I started the internship, I was very nervous. I hadn't been involved with training or public speaking for many years. In all of my prior experiences, training educators was an isolated, individual effort, involving a great deal of stress on the part of the presenter. However, what drew me to EPCC was the community. I began to see the art of true collaboration, and clearly see the impact of a team.

Throughout the year, all opportunities to present involved a team with a shared vision working toward a common goal. All responsibilities were shared and collaboration was key. This level of support was inspiring and provided me with more confidence as a speaker and educator.

Ultimately, it wasn't the EPCC internship project itself that had the greatest impact. What truly impacted my life was ultimately

prioritizing peace education and connecting with others at EPCC. The retreats, the mentors, and the learning opportunities allowed me to reconnect with the values I hold most dear, and to begin to see what is possible for my future in peace education.

This level of support was  
**INSPIRING**  
and provided me with  
**more confidence**  
as a speaker and educator.

## Difficult Conversations, continued from page 1

For example, "When Tommy arrives in the middle of circle time I feel disappointed because I need connection with you and Tommy when you arrive." Or "I wonder if you feel concerned when you and Tommy arrive during circle time and I can not greet you because you need connection?"

Some examples of needs:

- Security, consistency, acceptance, comfort, empathy, kindness, honesty, support, choice, purpose, meaning, joy, peace, hope.

The last piece of the NVC conversation is to express a request. It is an opportunity to clearly request that which would enrich your life without demanding. For example, "Would you be willing to arrive 10 minutes earlier? OR empathetically receiving that which would

enrich the other's life without hearing any demand. For example, "Would you like me to arrive a little earlier?"

### Obstacles to Positive Communication

- Advice: "You should..."
- Consoling: "Don't feel bad..."
- Interrogating: "Why do you feel that way?"
- Correcting: "You must have misunderstood."
- Shifting attention: "That happened to me once..."
- Judgmental thinking: "You're right, he is a real jerk."
- Sympathizing: "I am so sorry. I know exactly how you feel."
- Reassuring: "You'll be OK."

This information is a compilation of ideas from Marshal Rosenberg in many of his books, resources from Santa Cruz Nonviolent Communication and Educators for Peaceful Classrooms and Communities' Level I Training Manual.

#### Additional information can be found at:

[groktheworld.com](http://groktheworld.com), [www.nonviolentcommunication.com](http://www.nonviolentcommunication.com), and [www.educatorsforpeacefulclassroomsandcommunities.org](http://www.educatorsforpeacefulclassroomsandcommunities.org)

