

34. Violence and Harm

Violence is doing harm, especially if done willfully, by force. Violence directly or indirectly produces injury, death, damage, abuse, destruction or suffering. Violence and harm can be willful or ignorant, intentional or unintentional. Violence and harm often result from use of force. Violence does harm.

Our culture glorifies violence. Violence is prominently featured in many of our entertainments, usually with some kind of plot contrivance to justify its use, but clearly starring violence as a thrilling element. The U.S. has a long and violent history of war, being complicit in the deaths of some 200 million people, causing death, injury, destruction, pain, dissolution and suffering in most parts of the planet, and only experiencing about 15 out of 240 years not actively at war.¹ The world's biggest police state in the U.S. is actively doing violence and harm to 1 in 35 of its citizens, their families and loved ones, through its prison and punitive judgement systems, imprisoning us at 5 ½ times the world's average rate.²

Our culture is also largely ignorant of or indifferent to violence and harm it does to ecological systems, other forms of life, and our health and well-being, through at least: harms done by global warming,³ pollution and environmental changes;⁴ making, overusing and wasting energy from harmful sources;⁵ allowing the privatization, hoarding and exploitation of information, knowledge and experience;⁶ transportation systems damaging ecosystems and life;⁷ poorly developed and maintained infrastructure and commons;⁸ the ways it does agriculture and food;⁹ ways it manages lands, wastes and soils;¹⁰ corruption of its governments;¹¹ and mismanagement of information, privacy and invasive advertising.¹²

We do violence and harm by allowing epic gun violence, including being the only country in the world where our citizens commonly kill our children in our schools with guns;¹³ an inefficient healthcare system optimized for capitalist profits rather than healthcare, that is bankrupting citizens, killing and harming us and leaving many uncared for;¹⁴ unhealthy relationships with substances, devices and entertainments, driven by pervasive social, emotional, living and mental health wicked problems;¹⁵ unfair justice systems giving those with money and power systematic advantages over those without;¹⁶ extraordinary unfairness in the ways we share income, wealth and resources;¹⁷ resulting poverty and stress that are tearing apart family, friend and community relationships;¹⁸ homelessness and its threat;¹⁹ and unfair taxation systems taking money from people to do things many of the people do not want.²⁰

We do violence and harm with abusive and predatory debt systems;²¹ outsourcing power and control of money systems to privateer bankers;²² having people focused on unreal money and financial games rather than real life and real wealth efforts;²³ using an education system failing too many to indoctrinate us rather than inform and train us;²⁴ scapegoating and abusing immigrants and asylum seekers desperately fleeing violence we do to them;²⁵ operating the largest military the world has ever known, all over the world, on 10 times the overseas military bases of the rest of the world combined, spending ¾ of Federal discretionary income on it, selling the most arms and munitions, operating the world's largest and most abusive spy and interference organizations;²⁶ and by abusing human rights.²⁷

Violence and harm are not limited to objective physical damage, or lives, limbs, stuff and money lost. Violence can also harm subjective psychological, emotional, spiritual, thought, social, relationship, communication and other elements and systems. Many of our wicked problems, behaviors, ways of being and actions harm and do violence to how we are, behave, think and feel. Violence causes harm, objectively or subjectively. We often are ignorant of subjective violence, harm, pain and suffering.

Violence is so deeply ingrained in our culture that we often don't even notice it. It's just part of the background of existence. Sirens wail; jets fly overhead; military and other vehicles pass by; pollution and noise surround us; climate changes slowly; guns are all over; entertainments are violent; life is sick; we abuse substances and devices; we have legal, money and healthcare problems; the rich get richer, and more of us struggle economically; many are homeless in our streets; we're alone, after families, relationships and communities break apart; terrible foods and drinks are everywhere; all are obsessed with money; government corruption is clearly evident; we're assaulted by ads and selling; people are buried in debt; we're surrounded by ignorant people; and we're too busy to do anything about any of it.

All of that involves violence, conscious or unconscious behaviors and actions which cause objective or subjective harm. We're blasé about it. It's so pervasive that it's just normal everyday stuff. It's harm.

We have to wake up to the pervasive violence and harm done by our society, businesses, military, police, citizens, farmers, food providers, utilities, wealthy, judicial systems, guns, healthcare systems, artificial chemicals and substances, activities on lands, air and waters, money, economic and debt systems, media, technologies, energy and transportation systems, surveillance and spy systems, weapons, treatment of others, predatory systems of aid and support, and so many other things.

No more violence! No more harm! Be aware of the short- and long-term impacts of everything, and don't participate in anything resulting in violence or harm! Violence is only ever justified by preventing violence and harm, and even then, there is usually another, better way. Do no violence! Do no harm!

¹ See *We Can Change Our Wicked Problems!* Chapter on Empire and Its Agents, <https://www.wecanchange.us/empire-and-its-agents>

² See *We Can Change Our Wicked Problems!* Chapter on Prisons and Incarceration, <https://www.wecanchange.us/prisons-and-incarceration>

³ See *We Can Change Our Wicked Problems!* Chapter on Climate Change, <https://www.wecanchange.us/climate-change>

⁴ See *We Can Change Our Wicked Problems!* Chapter on Pollution and Other Environmental Harms, <https://www.wecanchange.us/pollution-and-other-environmental-h>

⁵ See *We Can Change Our Wicked Problems!* Chapter on Energy, <https://www.wecanchange.us/energy>

⁶ See *We Can Change Our Wicked Problems!* Chapter on Science and Technology, <https://www.wecanchange.us/science-and-technology>

⁷ See *We Can Change Our Wicked Problems!* Chapter on Transportation, <https://www.wecanchange.us/transportation>

⁸ See *We Can Change Our Wicked Problems!* Chapter on Physical Infrastructure, <https://www.wecanchange.us/physical-infrastructure>

⁹ See *We Can Change Our Wicked Problems!* Chapter on Agriculture and Food, <https://www.wecanchange.us/agriculture-and-food>

¹⁰ See *We Can Change Our Wicked Problems!* Chapter on Pollution and Other Environmental Harms, <https://www.wecanchange.us/pollution-and-other-environmental-h>

¹¹ See *We Can Change Our Wicked Problems!* Chapter on Government Corruption, <https://www.wecanchange.us/government-corruption>

¹² See *We Can Change Our Wicked Problems!* Chapter on Marketing, Advertising, Selling and PR, <https://www.wecanchange.us/marketing-advertising-selling-and-p>

¹³ See *We Can Change Our Wicked Problems!* Chapter on Gun Violence, <https://www.wecanchange.us/gun-violence>

¹⁴ See *We Can Change Our Wicked Problems!* Chapter on Health and Healthcare, <https://www.wecanchange.us/health-and-healthcare>

- ¹⁵ See *We Can Change Our Wicked Problems!* Chapters on Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco Problems, <https://www.wecanchange.us/drug-alcohol-and-tobacco-problems> and News, Information, Entertainment and Distraction, <https://www.wecanchange.us/news-info-entertain-and-distract>
- ¹⁶ See *We Can Change Our Wicked Problems!* Chapter on Legal, <https://www.wecanchange.us/legal>
- ¹⁷ See *We Can Change Our Wicked Problems!* Chapter on Income and Wealth Inequality, <https://www.wecanchange.us/income-and-wealth-inequity>
- ¹⁸ See *We Can Change Our Wicked Problems!* Chapter on Community, Family and Poverty, <https://www.wecanchange.us/community-family-and-poverty>
- ¹⁹ See *We Can Change Our Wicked Problems!* Chapter on Housing and Homelessness, <https://www.wecanchange.us/housing-and-homelessness>
- ²⁰ See *We Can Change Our Wicked Problems!* Chapter on Taxes and Debt, <https://www.wecanchange.us/taxes-and-debt>
- ²¹ See *We Can Change Our Wicked Problems!* Chapter on Taxes and Debt, <https://www.wecanchange.us/taxes-and-debt>
- ²² See *We Can Change Our Wicked Problems!* Chapter on Economy, Banking and Finance, <https://www.wecanchange.us/economy-banking-and-finance>
- ²³ See *We Can Change Our Wicked Problems!* Chapter on Economy, Banking and Finance, <https://www.wecanchange.us/economy-banking-and-finance>
- ²⁴ See *We Can Change Our Wicked Problems!* Chapter on Education, <https://www.wecanchange.us/education>
- ²⁵ See *We Can Change Our Wicked Problems!* Chapter on Immigration, <https://www.wecanchange.us/immigration>
- ²⁶ See *We Can Change Our Wicked Problems!* Chapter on Empire and Its Agents, <https://www.wecanchange.us/empire-and-its-agents>
- ²⁷ See *We Can Change Our Wicked Problems!* Chapter on Human Rights and Freedoms, <https://www.wecanchange.us/human-rights-and-freedoms>