

# Ahimsa: Living With Harmony

by John Pierre, Vegan Activist and Natural Hygiene Educator

Ahimsa, the Sanskrit principle of non-harming, is not just for monks; it is a daily discipline. It lives in your thoughts, your words, and your actions. When these three are aligned, inner peace stops being a struggle and starts being your natural state.

For over 40 years, I have worked in health education, movement, and plant-based living, with one foundational conclusion: the most powerful upgrade is not a supplement, a protocol, or a new routine. It is the decision to practice love, compassion, and care. Ahimsa, the Sanskrit principle of non-harming, is not just for monks; it is a daily discipline. It lives in your thoughts, your words, and your actions. When these three are aligned, inner peace stops being a struggle and starts being your natural state. As fruits and vegetables are aligned with our biological adaptations, living in a state of love and compassion is also our natural state.

The National Health Association has long taught that the body thrives when we remove interference and live in harmony with nature. In my book, *The Pillars of Health*, the final pillar is compassion, and it is the one that supports and reinforces everything else, because you can eat well and exercise faithfully, yet still poison your inner world with anger, jealousy, hatred, and greed. That inner toxicity erodes the spirit, and it spills into the world. Ahimsa is the universal antidote to those poisons.

Ahimsa is not just opening doors for strangers or donating to a cause. Those are beautiful, but they are the easy parts. The deeper practice is what you allow into your mind and out of your mouth, the tone you use with the bus driver, the cashier, your partner, and yourself—especially yourself. Ahimsa includes the way you speak to yourself because the first person you practice with is you.

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### **Ahimsa starts in the mind.**

Most people assume harm begins with action, but the genesis of harm is earlier. It begins in thought. A thought becomes a feeling, a feeling shapes a tone, then the tone becomes behavior. If Ahimsa is non-harming in thought, word, and action, then the mind is where the practice starts.

We generate thousands of thoughts daily, and when we repeatedly focus on negativity, those patterns condition our inner world, and they eventually spill into how we speak and how we act. Your mind is not a neutral waiting room, it is a greenhouse. Whatever you water consistently in it is what will grow.

Modern life makes this harder, because negativity is marketed as entertainment. Graphic media, sensationalism, gossip, manipulative messaging, even “background noise” that glorifies violence—it all seeps in, and people start to feel off balance without knowing why. If the mind is continually drenched in negativity, people who were once joyful can become lethargic and depressed.

Ahimsa in thought means you become discerning about what you consume mentally. Not rigid, not fragile, but aware. You do not have to let every headline, every doomscroll, every sarcastic inner monologue move into your house and start redecorating.

A practical Ahimsa question for the mind is simple, “Is this thought reducing suffering or rehearsing it?”

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### **Ahimsa in words: what you speak becomes biology.**

Words are not just sounds, they are instructions. They create images in the mind that shape feelings, moods, and actions. A brief exchange can make us laugh or cry, a fiery tongue can burn down relationships, and once harmful words are launched, they cannot be taken back. Like an arrow released, they cannot be recalled.

Many people casually speak violence all day, saying, “I hate this,” “My job is killing me,” “That’s sick,” and then wonder why their nervous system feels like it is living in a war zone. Kind words do not cost money, yet we act as though we have an imaginary bank account that might run out. Caring, friendly comments are needed more than ever, and they can lift people for hours.

Ahimsa in speech is not fake positivity, it is precision. It is choosing language that cools the nervous system rather than igniting it. One powerful practice is replacing “volcanic” phrases with calmer ones, not to deny reality, but to stop adding gasoline to your own fire.

Then there is the simplest remedy, gratitude spoken out loud. Not the automatic “thanks” we toss out in passing, but deliberate gratitude that names what is real: “I appreciate your patience,” “You made that easier for me,” “I’m grateful you showed up today.” It is words that restore dignity and warmth in everyday life.

If you want the subtle practice of Ahimsa, notice your tone. Your tone is your values made audible. Ahimsa is proven in your tone, long before it is proven in your actions. A practical measure of Ahimsa is tone, which reveals whether compassion is present in the moment. Words carry meaning; tone carries energy.

Sometimes how we say something matters more than what we say. Add presence, eye contact, real listening, because people can feel when they are competing with your phone.

### **Ahimsa in action: the subtle is the real test.**

Ahimsa in action is where integrity becomes visible, but it does not require grand gestures. In fact, one of the traps people fall into is waiting for a “big” way to help, then doing nothing because it feels overwhelming. Small deeds accumulated over time can accomplish more than grand intentions never acted on.

Ahimsa is practiced in micromoments.

Ahimsa is noticing small life and choosing care instead of indifference—the insect on the sidewalk and the spider both deserving of gentle rescue, a reminder that we do not get to decide whose life matters based on size, appearance, or capabilities, because all expressions of life are sacred.

Ahimsa is honesty when nobody is watching—walking back to return extra change, even when the world has become so used to dishonesty that integrity looks suspicious.

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### **Ahimsa is practiced in micromoments.**

Ahimsa is smiling, not as a performance, but as a bridge. A warm smile can change someone’s mood, it can calm anxiety, it can make it safer for people to be human. Even the physical act of smiling can shift brain chemistry and improve how you feel.

Ahimsa is making time for real human connection, because loneliness is everywhere, especially among elders, and a compassionate ear can be more powerful than advice. A small moment of caring attention can change someone’s whole demeanor. It can become a memory they carry for years. Compassion can become a thread woven into their being, and that thread can change the trajectory of their path.

Ahimsa is responding to irritability with humanity. When someone is sharp, impatient, or unkind, Ahimsa invites a different kind of strength. You do not have to mirror their energy; instead, you can meet the moment with steadiness, respect, and love.

This is the part of Ahimsa most people miss. It is not only about what you refuse to do; it is also about what you transmit into the world, the emotional climate you create, and the standard you hold when the moment tests your character.

### **Ahimsa and the planet**

Ahimsa does not stop at personal behavior. It extends to the living systems that make life possible. What we eat, what we support, and what we normalize has consequences for animals, land, water, and climate. That is why the work of my nonprofit, Living With Harmony, emphasizes “PLANET-

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Based Living”—putting the planet first when choosing what to eat and how to live.

Ahimsa, practiced deeply, asks a simple question every day: does this choice increase harmony or does it increase harm? When that question becomes normal, the environment is no longer an abstract topic; it becomes part of our daily integrity. Ahimsa looks like choosing plant-based meals; reducing single-use plastic; purchasing local, organic, fair-trade, nontoxic, vegan, and cruelty-free products; walking; biking; and carpooling.

### **The pillar of compassion, the missing foundation under every other pillar**

Natural Hygiene emphasizes nourishing choices, whole foods, clean water, fresh air, sunlight, movement, rest, emotional balance, and living in harmony with nature. The compassion pillar ties it all together, because hatred, anger, jealousy, and fear are destructive toxins, and they move from thoughts into actions if we keep feeding them.

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Ahimsa is not soft. It is protective. It defuses violence, fear, anger, and hatred, and it transforms us and the world for the better. It encompasses love, kindness, warmth, tolerance, tenderness, and mercy.

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It encompasses love, kindness, warmth, tolerance, tenderness, and mercy. In other words, Ahimsa is the internal environment where real health can finally take root.

### **Ahimsa as a daily practice**

Ahimsa becomes real when it stops being a concept and starts being your default setting. Here are a few ways to practice it at the subtle level, the level that actually changes your life.

Choose your mental diet with the same care you choose your food, reducing the “acid rain” of negativity. Replace it with what strengthens courage, clarity, and compassion—uplifting books, calming music, truthful conversations, time in nature, and practices that settle the nervous system.

Notice your automatic negative phrases. Swap negativity for compassion. You are choosing words and actions that heal.

Name what you truly value in someone; acknowledge effort, patience, kindness, or courage; and say it directly while it is happening because gratitude is not manners, it is nourishment.

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Practice spoken gratitude with intention. When you live this way, Ahimsa stops being an action and becomes who you are. You get stronger, not harder. You become more grounded, not more numb.

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In ordinary moments, smile, listen fully, offer respect to the people society trains us to overlook.

### **The heart of Ahimsa**

Ahimsa is the universal antidote because it ends the quiet civil war inside the self. It is the decision to stop practicing harm in your mind, in your speech, in your behavior, in your food choices, and in your relationship with the living world.

When you live this way, Ahimsa stops being an action and becomes who you are. You get stronger, not harder. You become more grounded, not more numb. You become a safer person to be around, and that is no small thing in a world that feels perpetually on edge.

Start where you are. Choose one moment today, then do it again tomorrow. Ahimsa is not a slogan. It is a path, and it is walked one thought, one word, one action at a time. 🌱



**JOHN PIERRE** has captivated and entertained audiences around the world. With a fascinating blend of science, humor, and practicality, John Pierre offers life-changing strategies in an easy-to-understand method. A

pioneer in the brain-building field for the elderly, John Pierre created the first brain-building programs utilizing a plant-based diet and nutraceuticals over 25 years ago. With more than 40 years of experience in the nutrition and fitness field, John Pierre has developed cutting-edge programs with a blend of science and ancient modalities. John has authored two books, along with cooking DVDs, exercise videos, and numerous online programs. His heart of service is a nonprofit called Living With Harmony that works to heal, inspire, and transform the lives of people, animals, and the planet through the education of “PLANET-Based Living.”