

# NONVIOLENCE EXPERIENCES in the Education



Working Group on  
**Christian Nonviolence**  
Christianity and Justice Research Center



Centre d'estudis  
**Cristianisme i Justícia**

*"Move Nonviolence"* is an educational commitment to initiate a process of personal transformation before the conflicts we face in our times, creating nonviolent strategies that free up situations that are at an impasse. This tool consists of a series of videos accompanied by the corresponding educational units so that the teaching guides have the material and direction for their work. The dynamics of this document are classified into sections and their topics in accordance with their appearance in the video. In some sections we suggest suitable options for each end-user profile. This proposal is intended for groups who can be accompanied by someone with a capacity for in-depth reflection on each subject.

Acquire all the material

**[www.movenonviolence.net](http://www.movenonviolence.net)**

Each unit plan incorporates a series of associated material accessible from the project website: [www.movenonviolence.net](http://www.movenonviolence.net). The material of this specific unit is found in: <https://movenonviolence.net/U9>.

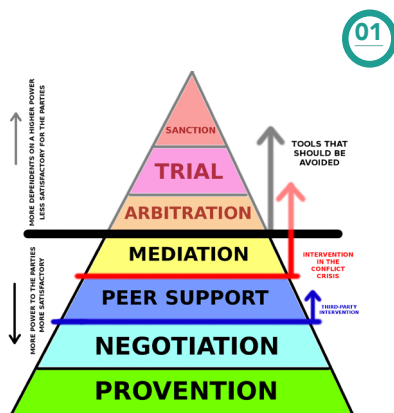


## The Conflict Management Pyramid

To learn to manage conflicts one must<sup>1</sup> draw a distinction among:

- 1. Positions (What).** This is the initial stance. These tend to generate confrontation and seem incompatible. (Both parties want this water)
- 2. Interests (Why).** Benefit to be gained. It is negotiable, and materializes in resources. (I want to put out a fire / I want to drink)
- 3. Needs (What Is It For).** Basic human need. It is not negotiable. It is needed to satisfy all of these: (I need security / I am thirsty).

There are various ways to transform conflicts. One is broken down in the pyramid that Paco Cascón<sup>2</sup> designed to describe various intervention tools chronologically. It is important to start with the foundation—never from the top, which would lead to a less satisfying conclusion.



01

1. You can use the example of cows or drinking water, which you will find in chapter 5 of teaching unit 2.  
 2. CASCÓN, P. (2001). [Educar en y para el conflicto](#). Barcelona: Cátedra UNESCO sobre Paz y Derechos Humanos.

## ■ CHILDREN

A conflict is acted out: Two children run from different spots to get a sheet of white paper. In the end, the paper is useless and neither can do anything with it. They sit down and the group is led to reflection:

- Can the result of a conflict approached with violence be entirely beneficial to some party?
- What were the Positions, Interests and Needs of each? (Maybe one wanted to take notes and needed to express themselves, and the other wanted to decorate something with strips of paper and needed to be gentle). Together think up a solution that meets the needs of both. Act it out.

## ■ YOUTH AND ADULTS

If the group is large, seven teams are formed and each level of the conflict management pyramid is acted out (provention, negotiation...). If it is a small group, they can all together represent each level as applied to the same example (at university, at school, within the family...). In the end, sit down and debate:

- How did you feel crossing over the black line after mediation? What was the main stumbling block in the management of the conflict: a lack of will to reach an agreement, a lack of originality to come up with third ways...? Apply the Positions-Interests-Needs schema: What were they in the chosen example? Together think up a way to meet the needs of both parties by proposing a concrete and effective way to transform the conflict.



## Provention: Preparing for Communication

Conflicts have always existed and will continue to exist. They are necessary to make us grow despite differences, and therefore conflict should never be interpreted negatively, unlike violence, which is what occurs when a conflict is not addressed in time. In order to avoid this, John Burton coined the term *provention* (Cascón, 2001): an intervention process to bring conflicts to the surface before they reach their point of crisis, in order to lead each party to adequately explain what they are experiencing, recognize structural changes needed to eliminate the causes, and foster attitudes and collaborative relationships needed to manage it without violence. Good coexistence is based on 5 pillars:

- **Cooperation:** Work and an environment that combines effort and fosters cohesion.
- **Trust:** Positive management of emotions, and authenticity.
- **Communication:** Education to facilitate communication skills.
- **Knowledge:** How do we manage conflicts positively?
- **Love:** Respect for differences and integration.

You can find more information on page 11 of [02 Education in and for conflict](#).

### ■ CHILDREN

A circle is formed. A giant cardboard doll is picked up and introduced: He is pacifist and nonviolent, but he doesn't know it. Therefore, we need to remind him of his qualities. The doll is placed in turns in front of each member of the group, and one by one any child that wants goes into the middle to emphasize nonviolent qualities of the child in front of the doll, writes them on the doll and says them aloud (knows how to listen, is easy going, gets along with others...). At least three qualities should be shared for each, in total. When it's all over, we reflect: How did we feel? Do we usually tell others what they bring to a group? Why? Can you have all skills at once? Could they be acquired, if they work? Everyone reflects silently: What quality of the doll do I most lack? Could I work on it?

### ■ CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Read the six causes of conflicts<sup>1</sup> that usually arise in the classroom and represent the scene of each of them to try to experience the same feelings. After each performance, comment: How did each one feel? What caused the conflict's crisis? With what ideas could we apply provention according to the 5 pillars presented in the introduction? Together, write ideas for each pillar on a card (for example: create dialogue spaces, provide tools by way of comment boxes, tutorials, appreciative dialogues...).

1. KREIDLER, W. J. (1984). *Creative conflict resolution: More Than 200 Activities for Keeping Peace in the Classroom*. Calver City: Good Year Books, pp. 49-52.

## Negotiation: We Try to Reach an Agreement

A second possibility for intervention in conflicts is through negotiation: between individuals or between representatives of parties. If possible, choose people with qualities of empathy to engage emotionally with the other, firmness but at the same time willingness to agree, and creativity in thinking up third ways... Negotiators should internally set acceptable minimums and maximums within the conflict, and start with ambitious claims in order to negotiate down to minimums. If this does not get anywhere, you may need to convene a new negotiation after rethinking the minimums within the group itself, having also looked for third ways.

Negotiations are usually ruined by any of the three E's: Ego (not coming to reason, blindly defending one's self-interest), Emotions (not empathizing with the other, or reaching conclusions from anger or pain), Escalation (rejecting any relationship with the other because of attacks received). At every delicate moment, it is essential to remember how to implement nonviolent communication (see Chapter 2 of Unit 4).

### ■ CHILDREN

At camp, the preparation of a game has been assigned to a group of children. One part of the group would like to do one game, and another part another. Tension and division grows. First, they act out the conflict as it usually plays out. They are then invited to organize: They choose a representative from each group who has the qualities to be such, and they are taught how to guide the negotiation: What is the maximum we

would like to achieve? What is the tolerable minimum? How could we include the needs of both parties in the solution? Let them apply nonviolent communication to negotiate (observation, feelings, needs, proposal), then act out the negotiation.

### ■ YOUTH AND ADULTS

Watch these four principles to build up your skills in negotiations:

#### [03 The Harvard Principles of Negotiation](#)

Comment on your points of view about each of the four clues. Do all of them fit into any conflict negotiation? Offer ideas to work on active listening, empathy and flexibility.

Now choose one of the following negotiations:

- Between a student representative and a teacher regarding the exam schedule.
- Between an evangelical mother and a Buddhist father on their children's religious education.
- Between squatters and the owner of the empty flat they occupy.

Act out the negotiation by implementing everything learned in the introduction and video. In the end, we evaluate it: How did we feel? We write the three E's on a board, and in turn each group takes a critical look at their own performance regarding each, positively valuing something from the other group.

## Mediation: We Need a Third Party

In mediation, we start from the principle that you and I will not always be able to understand each other on our own. Sometimes we will need a third party. But, careful, let's not use this as an easy excuse to avoid getting our hands dirty! Mediation focuses on the relationship, not just on reaching agreements. It requires: confidentiality, impartiality, neutrality, willfulness and trust.

Phases:

1. Guide the process, spaces, time, and rules to follow for the dialogue. Each should present their side of things.
2. Invite parties to move from (entrenched) positions to (real) interests and needs. Come to an agreement on a retelling of the facts that both sides recognize.
3. Define agreed points and write down the final shared position. Sign a final agreement. Propose, if necessary, an agenda to review compliance of the agreements

### ■ CHILDREN

Imagine this situation:

Before: They blame your brother for breaking a vase. Your mother scolds you both.

After: Your mother is happy with you and your brother. Both of you play on your own. There is a new vase. What could have happened? Consider possible scenarios, where mediation plays a role

### ■ YOUTH AND ADULTS

We suggest that you stage a possible mediation around the following conflict:<sup>1</sup>

Renia is a prestigious public school in Moland, a European country that welcomes immigrants from all over the world. It is not easy to get into the school. But in recent years many families have unenrolled their children complaining that the quality has dropped and the atmosphere has deteriorated. They attribute this to the high number of immigrants. They argue that they are not racists but are just looking out for the best interest of their children. At the last PTA meeting, a Molanda native proposed creating a PTA made up only of Molandians. Immigrant families, some having been in the county more than 10 years, felt discriminated against. A few years ago immigrant families requested a center where their children could pray and study their cultural roots. The proposal was ignored, and money was invested in improving the sports facilities. The director proposes mediation.

Ha'l → immigrant, 12 years in Moland. When Chock announced the creation of a Molandian-only PTA, Ha'l rebuked him with strong criticism, saying he would sue him for racist behavior.

Chock → leads the collective of Molandian families. He has proposed a PTA with only native-born members.

Mediator: You will need to put into practice nonviolent skills to manage the conflict, keeping in mind what mediation is all about. This means the ability to pose open-ended questions, which facilitate empathy, encouraging them to re-establish a relationship in order to manage their conflict.

1. Adapted from: FARRÉ, S. (2004). *Gestión de conflictos: taller de mediación. Un enfoque socioafectivo*. Barcelona: Ariel, p. 269.

## Educate in Disobedience

The law has an undeniable function in the social order, but as Jean-Marie Muller says, "it is not for the law to dictate what is just, what is just must dictate the law." We understand that disobedience is beneficial when and only when it comes to standing up against injustice, even if the most comfortable stance was not to disobey. The distinction is important, lest mere anti-authority outbursts be justified under the pretext of the benefits of disobedience.

We know that disobedience has consequences: To disobey is to put yourself at risk and always comes with consequences. One must previously assess such consequences and determine the resources we have to deal with them (psychological, personal, material...). As such, the act of nonviolent disobedience will be freely carried out and not from a place of naivete. Disobedience, however unjust that which is being disobeyed, can never be imposed: It must arise freely, from a place of conviction. In the face of an unjust law, however, disobedience is not only a right, but also a moral imperative.

### ■ CHILDREN

Play a role-playing game in which you play directors of a school and the others play the students. Come up with ways the school could be improved and how to ask this of the directors: more time on the playground, a place to play football, fewer classroom hours...At the same time, the team of directors will respond with a value that must be

put into play along with the first. E.g.: When students ask for more leisure time, they are shown that it comes from a real need for rest—a right—but they are also asked to value the right to gain knowledge in order to function in society. So, keep playing to rights and duties. In the end, assess whether there were really injustices and whether the means for demanding improvements were dignified and just.

### ■ YOUTH

Think of a behavior or law that you consider unfair. Write them down anonymously on pieces of paper, and put them in a box. As a group, pick one out. Start a dialogue based on what you have written, according to the following criteria: Is the law really unfair? Why? Who does it harm? Who is weakest? What benefits can be gained by disobeying it? What damage? Develop a SWOT (see unit 5 chapter 9) to assess an act of disobedience for this law.

### ■ ADULTS

Watch the film *Hannah Arendt* (2012) and establish a colloquium based on Eichmann's testimony at the Jerusalem trial when he excuses his actions by saying "I just followed orders". Stop to consider Arendt's speech when Eichmann utters those words. It may be useful to ask about the banality of evil and the human capacity to take responsibility for one's actions. Give examples on a small scale that you experience in your day-to-day life.

1. MULLER, Jean-Marie (2015). *Entrar en l'època de la noviolència*. Barcelona: ICIP, p. 16.



# 5

## Freedom and Limits

Freedom is not doing whatever I want, but knowing which want compels me to do something. We gain freedom when we are the ones in control of our impulses and drives. Otherwise, we would be slaves to impulsivity and passions. It is important to make decisions both with our hearts and with our heads.

It's for this reason that setting limits need not be at odds with enhancing freedom. Boundaries, in fact, confirm freedom as a framework of possibilities, and keep others' freedom from being infringed upon. When we set boundaries, we gain freedom. An example we have of this is the father or mother who says to the child, "Because I love you, I ask you to be home before 2 in the morning. If I didn't care at all, I wouldn't ask you to arrive at any particular time."

### ■ CHILDREN

We propose carrying out the experiment by the psychologist Walter Mischel to discover the capacity for self-control and management of one's own limits. Ask three volunteers to sit one after the other in front of a table with their favorite, previously chosen treat. Leave them there and let them know that they can eat the candy, but that if they refrain from eating it until you come back, you'll give them another one. In the ability to postpone the pleasure of eating the treat you will be able to assess whether they have learned to test their limits, to freely sacrifice an immediate good for the benefit of a future good. Variants can be implemented: If they do not eat the treat, they will be given some surprise (limit

for an unknown good), or the whole group of children will be given the same treat (limit for a common good)...etc. How did everyone feel? What have we learned?

### ■ YOUTH

You open a website that tells you Five Things to Do This Fall and describes them to you: riding a horse, looking for a resort, reading the book they propose, enjoying a special meal...Are you free to do or not do what they propose to you? Then, when you click on a website for signing up for work or studies, you will see ads for these things (horses, spas, meals...). What limits do you have to set to avoid getting caught up in this? Are you aware of this? Talk about it in groups with real experiences.

### ■ ADULTS

We propose you establish a debate on boundaries at the educational level. To do this, we provide you with two experiences:

1. Look up information about Rebeca Wild's pedagogical project where she tries to balance freedom and limits at the educational level. Different educators affirm the importance of boundaries in expanding freedom. No to control, yes to limits.
2. Watch the movie Summerhill (2008). A controversial pedagogical experience framed around freedom.

# 6

## Nonviolent Discipline in Class

When a class gets out of control, how should we act? Do we start shouting and doling out threats, or employ fear and punishments?

- **Crisis:** When it has already escalated, the boldness of surprise strategies will be needed. Learning from experiences we will allow for actions that combine firmness with deep respect for the dignity of each child.
- **Authority:** It is not imposed by the force of threats, but is earned from students, who give it freely when they feel recognized and appreciated by the leader.
- **Difficult cases:** The most disruptive students are those who should receive more dedication from the educator, because they require more nonviolence to disarm them of their defenses.
- **Consequences:** Nonviolent repair as an action to help fix damage. It must be respectful, rational and useful for the person (moral) and the environment (material).

### ■ CHILDREN

A conflict is explained and the group is divided into two rows that face each other to defend their arguments. They will first argue exaltedly and shouting, and when the guide raises their hand, one of the two rows will respond calmly and serenely by asking the other, who is still shouting, to listen to them. To maintain order do you need to shout? Can we decide how we share emotions while firmly holding to our position? It can be shown that it is only those who believe their arguments are not strong enough who resort to shouting

### ■ YOUTH

Imagine you are a substitute teacher, and you find yourself with a seemingly indomitable student. What would you do? Classify responses as violent and nonviolent. Why do we have so much confidence in violent options, and so little creativity when it comes to nonviolent ones?

### ■ ADULTS

Divide yourselves up into three groups with each researching one of these pedagogies and then explaining them to the other groups:

- [04 Waldorf \(Rudolf Steiner\) Pedagogy:](#) gaining knowledge by enhancing the senses.
- [05 Pedagogy Maria Montessori:](#) autonomous learning.
- [06 Paulo Freire's Critical Pedagogy:](#) dialogue in order to educate without oppression.

Finally, watch the movie [07 Between Teachers](#) (2013) about educating through empowerment with the pedagogy of Carlos González.

Based on these ways of educating and your own experiences, agree on the most important keys to developing nonviolent discipline in the classroom.

# 7

## Have You Thrown in the Towel? Reconnect with Your Inner Strength

As an answer to the question “Did you throw in the towel?” intrinsic demotivation will play a part, when reluctance prevails and there is no strength left for anything. A kind of widespread “What do I care?”. Extrinsic demotivation will play a part, when one’s environment does not help, when social, economic, familial or structural conditions do not make things any easier.

If this internal energy does not arise, it can be aided by boosting self-esteem. Work so that personal potentialities arise along with self-confidence. Educate to connect with inner strength and allow it to emerge. The educational challenge here will be to prepare educational professionals to detect students’ lack of enthusiasm and do something about it. It is worth noting that inner strength is often more developed in those who have been dealt the hardest blows in life.

### ■ CHILDREN

Watch *The Chorus* (2004) as a group so that during the screening everyone identifies with a character from the film. No one needs to know which character the others have identified with. Finally, imagine a scene from the beginning of the film which the teacher retells. We act out the situation with each child playing the character with whom they have identified. Now imagine one of the final chorus sessions. Everyone plays their part. How did we feel in each case? What was the difference? What have the children

found inside themselves that helps them draw out passion, interest and creativity?.

### ■ YOUTH

Watch the movie *Peaceful Warrior* (2006) as a group. Write down those lines where we find strength and motivation for our life projects. When it’s over, create a wheel of life (a coaching tool) laying out our life goals in different areas (health, work, studies, family, society, leisure...). We look for a goal to achieve for each area and we write down the sentence that gives us vital strength to work toward that goal.

### ■ ADULTS

To connect with one’s own strength, we propose working on one’s interior <sup>1</sup> with visualization exercises focused on posture, breathing and attention. By establishing a correct posture, relaxed but attentive, we focus our consciousness on breathing and the pelvis’s base of support. Imagine a tree as our symbol. We visualize it in different seasons. Who is the tree and who am I? Roots, fruits, branches, what season am I in now, which fruit do I want to bear? I use my imagination to transform what I want to improve within me. We remain silent to create an inner space where this all can come into being.

1. MENESES, B. (2016). «La interioridad, un horizonte de conocimiento profundo», in M. R. BUXARRAIS; M. BURGUET (eds.), *Aprender a ser. Por una pedagogía de la interioridad*. Barcelona: Graó.

## Pygmalion Effect: Deploying Hidden Abilities

An ancient Chinese proverb suggests the fluttering of a butterfly in Brazil can cause a tornado in Texas. It speaks to the subtle power of the powerless, as defined by Czech President Václav Havel. The *butterfly effect* shows the profound influence that any minimal act can have in triggering a chain reaction. Nonviolence is often employed in subtle movements and always believes in the force of invisible fluttering. We need to put into play and build on the hidden capabilities that everyone has, to combine forces.

### ■ CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Have the first person to figure out what this video is trying to communicate [08 Double pendulum](#) raise their hand and say so. Double pendulums start off the same, but tiny variables (air, friction...) trigger delays that eventually result in completely different movements.

Now describe a role-model, someone you admire and would like to emulate. Start with their physical features, how they behave, how they act, how they look, what they do, what words they use, what feelings you think motivate them to act the way they do...Imagine what they must do on any given day, from the time they get up until they go to bed. What are they doing when they are out of the spotlight, so that they can release all their potential in public? We guide the children toward realizing that many of the

abilities we admire from our leaders require constant and very attentive effort and work, during times that no one sees. The threads of nonviolence are woven together in unseen moments. And like the double pendulum, a sum of small acts completely changes an outcome.

Finally, watch and comment on *The Butterfly Circus* (2009). Why this title? It turns out Mr. Méndez can see something different in people considered “worms,” and turns them into beautiful butterflies. Pay special attention to the phrase “If you could only see the beauty that can come from ashes!”

### ■ ADULTS

We get to know Tim Guénard’s story<sup>1</sup> of resilience. When finished, let a moment of silence, and we first go around having everyone recall a line or core idea that stuck with them from Tim’s story; in a second round, we express how Tim’s life resonates with us; and, in a third round, everyone specifies an action to do with someone around them, to foster the deployment of hidden abilities.

To go further, art is a very valuable tool for connecting with inherent abilities. We approach art for nonviolent work by deploying one’s own abilities with the artistic techniques of Kolams.<sup>2</sup>

1. GUÉNARD, T. (2003). *Stronger than Hate: Struggling to Forgive*. Springfield: Templegate Publishers. The film *The Greatest Gift* (El mayor regalo, 2018, by Juan Manuel Coteló) includes his witness in 12 minutes.
2. NAGARAJAN, V. (2018). *Feeding a Thousand Souls: Women, Ritual, and Ecology in India- An Exploration of the Kolam*. Oxford, OUP USA.



## Educating Toward Nonviolent Authority

We usually assume that all power is in the form of a vertical domain, without considering other powers: Watching over the group, valuing, involving and listening to everyone when taking actions and making decisions...are powers of attraction proper to a nonviolent authority, different from those of domination. Carlos Eduardo Martínez Hincapié uses nine polarities to describe the need to convert spaces of hegemony/domination into spaces of nonviolent power. It is not enough to switch out who dominates (the hegemonic leader, the dominant sex...), but rather we need to change the cultural apparatus that forms the backbone of our group. Will we be capable of nonviolent leadership that reigns in hegemonic culture according to the nine outer key points?

### 09 Cultural Skeleton

Moral authority is gained through personal example (consistency between words and actions), and sacrifices in time, resources, patience and effort to take care of each member of the group. It is the persuasive power of the person who attracts from the lead, rather than pushing from behind, that will create a nonviolent authority that students will voluntarily recognize by way of empathy and respect.

### ■ CHILDREN

Based on the graphic by Martínez Hincapié, ask the group of children a series of questions aimed at questioning the culture they are a part of, and after each one ask them what they have learned from it. For example, have them raise their hand whoever...

1. Knows the name of the person who cleans their classroom. (Are those who are invisible undervalued?)
2. Always takes heed of adults more than their peers. (Does hierarchy matter more than arguments?)
3. Greets others even if not greeted back. (Do I choose what brightens the world?)

As such, adapt the nine points to hard-hitting questions. Finally, let them write the nine lessons learned and compose a song together weaving in these teachings, and inviting other groups to take them into account.

### ■ YOUTH

Listen to this real story in English to discover how the nonviolent authority of Mrs. Thompson over Teddy ends up providing an unimaginable fruit: [10 Gratitude To Teachers](#)

Use a wall to artistically express your feelings for a teacher that has had an impact on you, especially your heart. When finished, we reflect in silence on the wall to internalize the moral authority that we can all practice.

### ■ ADULTS

Think of a situation where you have some authority (in the classroom, with children, at work, in a social movement) and apply Martínez Hincapié's cultural apparatus to assess your degree of nonviolence in the leadership you adopt. Fill in the nine inner circles with real, related experiences, and propose nine ways to approach them according to the outer nonviolent key points.

Above all, we learn by doing. That's why it's important for schools to explore ways to communicate knowledge through transformative experiences. We need to take risks and make structural decisions to effectively eliminate violence. Some proposals:

- Centrality of mentoring sessions. They require more than an hour a week, providing adequate training and pay to the teachers who take part...and co-tutoring can be explored. Conflicts will come to the surface before they erupt in violence, and this will be a valuable training ground for managing future conflicts.
- Centres should be organized around educational teams, not departments. Teachers who work with students in the same class or group will better be able to work together to foster harmonious coexistence, and have more challenges in common than a thematic grouping by department.
- Give space and time for students to speak their minds.
- Don't homogenize: Keep student groupings flexible with personalized attention, adapted curricula, plurality when it comes to work...
- Structural pedagogical alternatives to sanctions and punishment, and training to put it into practice.
- Pedagogical criteria for drawing up timetables: It is important to foster the creativity and value new teachers bring to the table, and not just saddle them with the worst timetables. What is the basis for assigning schedules?

## ■ CHILDREN, YOUTH AND ADULTS

Get together and make a list of different kinds of violence you have experienced in your school in recent months: physical, verbal, psychological, cultural, structural violence...With age-appropriate language, analyze the resulting list: Which are the most common? Which are the most serious? Who are the most common victims? Based on your findings, and also (in the case of adults) the examples we propose in this chapter, think about what structural changes the center might decide on in order to help eradicate violence. Regardless of the age of the group, could you meet with the heads of the center to lay out your proposals? A committee could be appointed to make the same effort of compiling and analysis at the beginning, middle and end of the course to draw conclusions and present them to the others. If the directorship decides to take action, has it evolved by applying the new measures? What would it take to reduce even the most subtle acts of violence?

In order to transform an educational center into a space where authority and discipline are positive and nonviolent, the Good School Toolkit resources

[11 Good School Toolkit](#)

[12 World Health Organization](#)

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