

THE NONJUSTICE SYSTEM

(for live partner and self-guided trials)

*There is a higher court than courts of justice, and that is
the court of conscience. It supersedes all other courts.*

—Mahatma Gandhi

INTRODUCTION

When you've been mistreated or victimized, you might want justice in the form of revenge against the person who did it. But becoming preoccupied with justice and retaliation can stop you from healing and moving on, and sometimes lead to actions that harm yourself and others. Research shows that the motive for most acts of violence is retaliation in response to grievances. Research also shows that grievances trigger the same circuitry inside your brain as narcotics, producing revenge cravings that can hijack your thinking.

The Nonjustice System mock trial role play empowers you to take control of this process and win the most important trial of your life. What is that trial? It's the trial of the people who wrong you.

During a ***Nonjustice System*** trial, *you* become the prosecutor, victim, defendant, judge, warden and even judge of your own life. Since you play all the roles, you're in control of the courtroom at all times. It's been shown in university research to decrease revenge cravings and increase benevolence, and to support greater awareness of self and others, "thinking things through," a sense of empowerment and control, and to help people move on from the pain of the past.

Nonjustice System trials are faster, easier, less costly, and more convenient than regular trials. They can take place anywhere, in less than an hour. You can conduct Nonjustice System trials by yourself or with a partner guiding you. Everything's in the script; just read it and follow the prompts.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Find a quiet, private location
- If using a partner, pick someone willing to stick to the script and not be judgmental
- Speaking and testifying out loud can help the Nonjustice System trial come alive
- Testify honestly (do not use a partner if you have confidentiality concerns)
- Each step of the trial is different and important; be sure to complete all 5 steps

5 Steps to a Nonjustice System Trial

Step One – The Prosecution

Step Two – The Defense

Step Three – The Verdict and Sentence

Step Four – The Punishment

Step Five – The Final Judgment

We hope you'll benefit from using The Nonjustice System and share your experience with others. When you're ready, let's begin.

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BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Consult your doctor or a licensed mental health practitioner before using The Nonjustice System to confirm that it is safe and appropriate for you. Do not use The Nonjustice System if thinking about grievances or revenge may place you at risk of harming yourself or others. If you experience distress or believe you may harm yourself or others while using The Nonjustice System, contact your doctor or licensed mental health provider; dial 911 (U.S.) for emergency medical services; dial 988 (U.S.) for the National Crisis & Suicide Prevention Hotline (<https://988lifeline.org>); or go to your nearest hospital emergency department.

THE NONJUSTICE SYSTEM TRIAL

Close your eyes or do what you can to picture clearly in your mind what's about to unfold.

Imagine that the person who hurt you is being put on trial for the wrongs committed against you.

You're in the courtroom. Notice the judge's bench, witness stand, and jury box. See the lawyers' tables and the gallery. Notice all the sights, sounds, and smells of the courtroom.

The case begins...

STEP ONE—THE PROSECUTION

Imagine the prosecutor calls you to the witness stand to testify. You're placed under oath. You look out at the courtroom. You see the Defendant and the Defendant's lawyer, the Judge, and the Prosecutor. The Prosecutor approaches you at the witness box and begins asking you the following questions:

- First, as the Victim, please tell the court what happened that brought you here today. Tell the court what the defendant did and how you were hurt by it. Take your time and give all the details.
- Next, tell the court the specific wrongs you're charging the defendant with committing. They don't have to be violations of law, and you can include charges that wouldn't be allowed in a traditional court.
- Now, tell the court how you've been harmed by the defendant. What specific injuries have you suffered? How has it impacted your life? Take your time and be specific.
- Last, have you thought about retaliating or getting even with the defendant? How? How often have you thought about it? How does it make you feel? Take your time and be specific.

The prosecutor's questioning is now over.

Before moving on to the next step of the trial, think about how it felt as the victim to testify and tell the court what happened? How did it make you feel? Take your time and be specific.

STEP TWO—THE DEFENSE

This is Step 2, The Defense. Close your eyes or do what you can to picture clearly in your mind what's about to unfold.

*Imagine now that you're no longer you. **You're now the Defendant who hurt you.***

Imagine that as the Defendant, your lawyer calls you to testify in your own defense. You're placed under oath. Your lawyer begins asking you the following questions:

- First, as the Defendant, please tell the court your side of the story. Take your time and be specific. Tell the court what happened the way you remember it as the defendant.
- Now, as the Defendant, do you plead guilty or innocent to the charges against you?
- Is there anything you'd like to say in your defense?
- As the Defendant, what's it like to be accused and put on trial? Think about it. How does it make you feel?

Okay, the questioning by the defense lawyer is now over.

*Before we move on to Step Three, **switch roles from the Defendant back to being yourself, the Victim, again.** As the Victim, what was it like for you to hear the defendant testify? Think about it. How did it make you feel? Take your time and be specific.*

STEP THREE—THE VERDICT AND SENTENCE

This is Step 3, The Verdict and Sentence. Close your eyes again or do what you can to picture clearly in your mind what's about to unfold.

*Imagine now that you're no longer you. **Now, you're the Judge who decides the case.***

- As the Judge, after hearing all the testimony, are there reasons for finding the Defendant innocent?
- Now, are there reasons for finding the Defendant guilty?
- As the Judge, what's your decision? Do you find the Defendant guilty or innocent?
- If you've found the Defendant innocent, skip ahead to Step 5 – the Final Judgment.
- If you've found the Defendant guilty, continue with this step.
- If you found the Defendant guilty, you must sentence the Defendant for the wrongs committed. As the Judge, what's the harshest sentence or punishment you believe the Defendant should receive? The sentence can be anything you want, not only what a regular court would impose.
- As the Judge what's the lightest (least harsh) sentence or punishment the Defendant should receive? The sentence can be anything you want, not only what a regular court would impose.
- Now, it's time to decide. As the Judge, what sentence or punishment do you give the defendant?
- What's it been like for you to be a Judge and have the power to convict and sentence the Defendant? Think about it. How does it feel to have that kind of power and responsibility?

Okay, you're now finished being the Judge.

*Before we move on to Step Four, **switch roles back to being yourself (the Victim) again.** You've just heard the verdict and sentence handed down by the Judge against the Defendant. As the Victim, what was that like for you? Think about it. How did it make you feel? Take your time and be specific.*

STEP FOUR—THE PUNISHMENT

This is Step 4, The Punishment. Close your eyes again or do what you can to picture clearly in your mind what's about to unfold.

*Imagine now that you're no longer you. **Now, you've the Warden carrying out the Judge's sentence.** As the warden, it's your job to impose the sentence on the defendant. Imagine that you're there, at the time and place where the sentence must begin. The defendant's there, waiting.*

- First, where are you? What does it look, sound, and smell like? Who else is there?
- As the Warden, what do you say and do when you begin carrying out the sentence? What does the Defendant say and do?
- How long does the sentence go on? What happens? As the Warden, what do you say and do? What does the Defendant say and do? What does it look and sound like?
- What happens when the sentence is finished? As the Warden, what do you say and do? What does the Defendant say and do?
- As the Warden, what's it like for you to punish the Defendant? How does it make you feel? What effect does it have on you? What effect does it seem to have on the Defendant? Take your time and be specific.

Okay, you're now finished being the Warden.

*Before we move on to the final step of the trial, **switch roles back to being yourself (the Victim) again.***

You've just seen and heard the sentence being carried out on the Defendant. As the Victim, what was that like for you? How did you feel during it? How do you feel now that it's over? Take your time and be specific.

STEP FIVE—THE FINAL JUDGMENT

This is the last step, The Final Judgment. Close your eyes or do what you can to picture clearly in your mind what's about to unfold.

Imagine now that you're in a much larger and grander courtroom than where the trial of the Defendant just took place. The ceiling in this new courtroom soars high above you, many stories tall. There's an enormous judge's bench that goes almost to the ceiling so that you can't even see the judge.

Imagine that you're all alone in the courtroom. It's quiet. You're standing in front of the judge's bench, staring up at it in wonder.

Suddenly, you hear a voice from high above you. The judge begins asking you the following questions:

- Is the Defendant there in the courtroom with you, here and now? Think about it. If you're all alone, is the Defendant there?
- Are the things the Defendant did to you happening in this courtroom here and now? Think about it. Can events that happened in the past be happening in the present?
- Do the things the Defendant did to you in the past exist anywhere other than as memories inside your mind? Think about it. Can you see, hear, taste, touch or smell anything that happened in the past other than as memory?"
- Do your feelings of anger or rage against the defendant exist anywhere other than inside your mind? Think about it. Is your desire for justice against the Defendant anything other than a thought or feeling?
- Did putting the Defendant on trial make you remember and re-experience the pain of what the Defendant did to you?
- Imagine that you decide to practice nonjustice, which means to abstain from seeking justice against the defendant. You don't forgive the defendant, but you decide to stop trying so hard to punish the Defendant. Think about it. How would you feel if you did this?
- Now imagine that you decide to forgive the defendant. *Just imagine it.* You don't condone or excuse what happened, but for a moment imagine that it all happened in a distant past that no longer exists, like a wave crashing on a beach that can no longer be found. Think about it. You don't do this as a gift to the person who hurt you. You do it as a gift to yourself. How would you feel if you did this?

Ok, now switch roles from the person standing in front of the bench to being the Judge on the bench sitting high above, looking down at yourself.

From high on the judge's bench, you can see yourself far below, standing all alone. You can see how unhappy you are and how much you've been suffering. You can see now that the trial of the defendant has always really been about you. It's your peace, happiness, and freedom that are at stake, not theirs.

As the Judge, what is your Final Judgment about you? Do you sentence yourself to keep suffering? Or do you choose mercy and set yourself free?

YOU HAVE THE POWER

Your case against the person who hurt you is over. You can see now that it's really you who's been on trial. Your freedom, peace, and happiness are at stake, not theirs.

This is why the trial of your enemies is the most important trial of your life. This is also why the courtroom inside your mind is the most powerful courtroom in the world. And why the greatest judge and lawyer in the world is you.

You alone have the power to heal yourself from the pain of the past.
You alone have the power to restore your peace and happiness.
You alone have the power to give yourself mercy and set yourself free.
You alone have the power to win the most important trial of your life.

Thank you for using The Nonjustice System.

Go in peace.