

# WOMEN'S TIMES

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## Understanding violence

By Barry Allen

I was asked about love, and my thoughts turned to death and violence.

I thought of Freud and Gandhi. Freud changed his mind about love and violence. His first theory was that violence is the offspring of love. The ultimate psychological motive for violence is sexual desire. What drives us to destroy others is a twisted branch of the instinct that drives us to embrace and love others.

Believe it if you can. Freud was eventually sur-

exchanged letters for some years, when the elderly Russian was as famous for his religious heresy as for his novels (which in a pique of fanaticism he repudiated, both as art and property, giving away his copyrights). Tolstoy opposed violence because he wanted love to reign over all. That will never be when the seed of violence remains in our breast. We must extirpate this inhumanity, excommu-

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humane. He understood that if you break the cycle by which violence feeds violence, then even the greatest power, wielding the greatest violence, can be overcome. There is but one power that can overcome any violence, and that is the power of the victim to refuse to return violence for violence.

The principle is elegant and rightly persuasive. Gandhi does not deduce non-violence, as Tolstoy does, as the means to universal love. Instead it is the ultimate strategy against oppression, the one strategy that is practically guaran-

teered that when community fear and anxiety rise to intolerable levels, killing an innocent person works wonders.

Violence is like a genie. It isn't going back in the bottle, not for love or



*Justine Kotlarz, is healthy and happy. Please see page 15 for details.*

conceit. Death ultimately prevails over love because anything that comes together — and love is the power that holds together — ultimately comes apart. It is just a question of time. It's

long run, we're all dead. Yet I cannot write those words without being reminded of other words, by Gabriel Garcia Marquez: "It is life, more than death, that has no limits." It seems true that