

# Non-violent protest: dr. martin luther king

Sociology



**Non-violent protest: Dr. Martin Luther King**

This morning, I woke up to turn on the 7 o'clock news and listened to the reporter to inform America of violence around the world. There were stories ranging from a shootout in Homewood to wars amongst territories. If violence continues to breakdown communities, there will come a time where there will be no communities left to destroy. My grandmother was telling me how today is not the same day as yesterday; when brothers and sisters helped each other progress through struggles. During the the 1900s, society was unjust because of color. Whites wanted to rule the nation, but this was not in the interest of black people. Blacks wanted an end to segregation, injustices, and white supremacy. There were many different leaders that used different methods to strive for the achievement of this goal and many failed. Dr. Martin Luther King made a great contribution to the conclusion of oppression for blacks. What did Martin Luther King do differently to help blacks and whites walk together after centuries of oppression? During the 1900s, blacks were faced with major obstacles that still affect people today.

Blacks were not given opportunities to receive a great education. During that time, in Mississippi, three dollars was spent on an African American's education and sixty dollars was spent on a white person's education. Blacks were not allowed to vote and were not perceived as true citizens of the United States. Whites sought to terrorize black people by preventing them from living life freely. The world was separated and blacks were left with the trashy side of it. African Americans wanted change, but they did not know how to make a huge societal change. During the time of oppression against black people, there were people, organizations, movements, and protest that <https://assignbuster.com/non-violent-protest-dr-martin-luther-king/>

aimed for black power and separation. The Black Panther Party was formed in 1966 and aimed to overthrow their white oppressors. Booker T. Washington thought it would be a good idea to accommodate whites, integrate races economically, and be separate socially. Marcus Garvey advocated a “back to Africa movement” because he saw a future with no love between blacks and whites.

Black Muslims advocated racial separation and it was cultivated in their religion. Muhammad said “Your entire race will be destroyed and removed from this earth by Almighty God. And those black men who are still trying to integrate will inevitably be destroyed along with the whites” He showed much anger to white people and wanted total separation with black supremacy. Malcolm X was a leader that advocated violence if it was necessary to break down the walls of racial oppression. By any means necessary” is a famous quote stated by Malcolm X that shows his view on obtaining black power. These leaders are known to be great but oppression continued to build; there was still no peace. Whites continued to oppress blacks and looked for ways to make their lives miserable. Dr. King believed society would be demolished if everything continued. He decided to take a different approach. “Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that” is an infamous quote stated by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. King lived his whole life during a time where blacks were severely mistreated and faced enormous injustices. He felt if blacks continued to fight back with violence, then there would be a world with no peace until it is destroyed. Dr. King had a dream that blacks would not be judged by the content of their skin but by the content of their

character. He dreamed of a world with equal opportunities and civil rights. He wanted this dream to become sight and many people influenced his approach.

He advocated six principles to help society reach his vision. I would like to use this section of the paper to establish who and what inspired the practices and ideas of Dr. King. While pursuing a degree at the Crozer Theological Seminary, King listened to a lecture presented by Mahatma Gandhi. Being inspired by his words, King read different books written by Gandhi. He learned that Gandhi used non-violence against British rule in India. King believed this was a method that could possibly settle the injustices for blacks in America. For more influence, King studied the theories of Henry David Thoreau with the intent to make a societal change. King was familiar with the leaders who used non-violence such as Frederick Douglass, Philip Randolph, and Bayard Rustin, but King wanted everyone to get involved. King partnered up with Ralph Abernathy and Bayard Rustin and formed the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. King aimed for the SCLC to be attractive to the black church so that everyone would play a role. The 6 principles that King advocated. Do not humiliate or defeat. During this time of injustice, there was much hatred between black and white people. Blacks were always being defeated by whites, and they were tired of white supremacy. As a result, blacks aimed to defeat their oppressors to live life freely. Dr. King, the enlightened thinker, opposed the view. Dr. King said "the nonviolent resister should not seek to humiliate or defeat the opponent but to win his friendship and understanding." Dr. King practiced what he

preached. After Rosa Parks rejected to give up her seat to a white man on the bus, she was arrested.

Many community leaders and Dr. King developed a bus boycott. This allowed King to implement what he learned from Gandhi. Dr. King was arrested and his house was firebombed. After his house was bombed, he called out for his family. Instead of fighting back with violence, he said " Now let's not become panicky, if you have weapons, take them home; if you do not have them, please do not seek to get them. We cannot solve this problem through retaliatory violence. We must meet violence with nonviolence. We must love our white brothers, no matter what they do to us. We must meet hate with love. " However, that did not stop him. For about 13 months, 17, 000 black people in Montgomery refused to ride the bus. As a result, the company was losing too much money. On November 13th, 1956, the Montgomery Bus Boycott was known as a success, because the buses were desegregated. Non-violent resistance is not for cowards. Some may raise opposition and believe that they have too much pride to be disrespected. Many thought it was a cowardly act, however, King believed otherwise. King said non-violent resistance is passive and always seeks opportunities to convince the opponent of advantages in forming a loving relationship. Although one is not violent, one continues to drive on coming together. A person, who drives on togetherness despite opposition, is brave and strong because it is not easy to go against the masses. This was shown during the Greensboro sit-in on February 1st, 1960. Four black students from North Carolina A; T State University decided to sit at the " whites only" counter at a local restaurant.

They did not get served and decided to stay seated in the section until they were served. They continued to return day after day and brought friends with them. After a week, hundreds were waiting to be served. The restaurant eventually served the students and the protest influenced many non-violent protests throughout different cities. Instead of fighting, mirroring, and hating, the students looked to eat with other white people. The white people did not like it, but they had the chance to hear the black students. Non-violent resisters attack forces of evil. African Americans believed that they were always under-attack and had to defend themselves. If people are striving for a world full of peace, evil has to be non-existent. During the 1900s, blacks and whites had evil intentions, but it was acceptable for whites to behave on their intentions. King wanted evil intentions to exit the minds of everyone and out of the world. King said " We are out to defeat injustice and not white persons who may be unjust. " Instead of hurting the person who has done evil, attack the evil forces. He wanted everyone to concentrate on attacking the evil forces of injustice, instead of trying to defeat the white man. Given you have killed a white man; the evil forces will continue to live. However, if you attack the evil forces, everyone can walk together. In 1961, the Freedom Riders abided by this principle. Black and white Freedom Riders left Washington D. C. in 1961 and rode buses, trains, and planes from city to city to protest against the forces of evil that segregated interstate transportation. They reached opposition, mobs and were arrested.

After much perseverance, great support was gained from around the world. Non-violent resisters accept suffering without retaliation. King believed one should accept violence but never commit it. This would enable white people

to hear and listen to what they had to say. It may sound crazy because, in today's world, many problems are dealt with by using retaliation; just watch the news. However, earlier generations watched blacks accept the abuse, and later shake hands with white people. In 1963, the 16th Street Baptist Church was bombed and 4 black girls were killed. Instead of the parents and the community trying to kill Chambliss, the bomber, they accepted the suffering. They non-violently protested to let their voice be heard and Chambliss was sentenced to life in prison. If they had retaliated, there would have been more than four dead girls. By not retaliating, Chambliss, who had used forces of evil, left society. As a result, there was one less force to fight against. #5 In Non-violent resistance, one loves the opponent with " agape. " Agape means unconditional love, and King expected everyone to love their opponent with it. Many people struggled with this principle because people could not find anything within themselves to love someone who terrorized them for so long. King wanted everyone to love everyone despite the opposition and oppression. The avocation of this belief brought many colors together. King said " Along the way of life, someone must have sense enough and morality enough to cut off the chain of hate. " King wanted blacks to shine a light on breaking this chain of hate and to bring love into the relationships. #6 In Non-violence resistances, the universe is just.

Evidently, there are many people who share difficulty in loving your opponent. King believes the world was created to be just, but everyone is free to act with their own free will. People acted with their own free will and brought forces of evil into the world. The forces continued to grow since the start of time. King wanted everyone to understand that the world will evolve

into a just universe. King encouraged others to believe that God is moving us toward universal love and wholeness continual. He used this principle to reinforce to African Americans that justice will be served in God's time. He wanted African American activists to have and keep faith that justice will be served in the future. All of the work for justice will result in love, peace, and justice everywhere is a belief that King stood by. Some may say non-violence was not going to fix the injustices in society. In the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), non-violence was their method to help the conditions of black people. The non-violence approach did not work for the SNCC; however, they did not continue to persevere through the tough time. Perseverance is defined as steady persistence in a course of action despite difficulties. Dr. King is an infamous historical icon that held this trait. People should not have expected time to change immediately after many years of oppression. When Dr. King persevered and gained strong support, change happened, and he used the method of non-violence which brought everyone together. To conclude, Dr. King's approach to helping heal society was very different from the violent retaliation that people advocated.

Dr. King overcame much to achieve his vision. He dealt with blacks not wanting to support his method but to oppose it. He dealt with whites constantly trying to prevent him from making a change in society, but Dr. King continued to advocate and practice his principles. He was able to see that blacks had been trying to make a change by using violence for many years and it did not work. He understood that if blacks fought for black supremacy then it would just cause war and corruption. Whites feared being oppressed and became threatened when blacks retaliated; which drove for



more oppression. Dr. King knew if a change was going to be made, then there would have to be love in the world. His approach was successful because he got the attention of white people, and they listened to what he had to say. When blacks retaliated, whites had no time to listen because they had to look for new ways to oppress black people more. I admire Dr. King because he was able to bring blacks and whites together after the hatred between the two races for many years. Presently, we have blacks killing their brothers, sisters, and communities without the development of black society. This is an issue within the black community that needs to be fixed.

What should we do? We should apply the 6 principles presented by Dr. King. We have to teach our brothers and sisters not to aim to defeat each other but to love and lift up one another. We have to teach our brothers and sisters that life is not about being the “ baddest” person on the block; it is ok to walk away out of love. We need to attack the evil forces that are causing the bad behaviors of our brothers and sisters. The people within the black communities need to be taught how to accept it when someone strikes you in the face and to retaliate with love instead of a shot to the head. We have to show our brothers and sisters that we love them unconditionally; as a result, love will drive out hate. It will be hard to teach people that the non-violent principles work, just as it was hard for Dr. King. Many people are ignorant of his contribution to society and are unaware of his method. I think the ideas, values, beliefs, and history of the 1900s were not passed down from generation to generation effectively enough. When I was in elementary school, my grandmother told me “ if someone hits you, do not hit them back.

" She was able to see how effective non-violent protests were. My parents told me " if someone hits you, then you hit them back. " These are two different philosophies from two different generations on the same subject. If my grandmother's generation would have effectively passed down their values and beliefs, then the world would be different. The world would not be the same because retaliation may be out of the social norm. People have to educate everyone on the impact of non-violence. After we have done all we can do, we have to call on God and let he will be done. Works Cited Carman, J. (2010). 6 facts about non-violent resistance.

## Reference

1. <http://www.care2.com/greenliving/martin-luther-king-six-facts.html>  
Dyson, M. E. (2008).
2. Basic Books. Dyson, M. E. (2001).
3. <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAkingML.html> King, M. (1998).
4. The autobiography of martin Luther king, jr. New York: Warner Books. King Jr, M. (1957).
5. <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=1131> Mintz S. (2007)