

As a leader in the use of non-violence as a means of conflict resolution, Mahatma Gandhi expressed that, “Non-violence is not a garment to be put on and off at will. Its seat is in the heart, and it must be an inseparable part of our being.” He reflects that non-violence is a way of life and not a transient technique simply used to achieve something momentarily. Non-violence is the best approach to resolving disagreements because it serves as the ultimate juxtaposition to the use of aggression, hostility, and brutality. While residing in South Africa for 21 years, Gandhi witnessed scenes of intense racial segregation and thereby developed and discovered the successful use of nonviolent means of protest and conciliation. He continued his practice of non-violence upon his return to India where he ultimately succeeded in reaching “Swaraj,” India’s political independence from Britain. Gandhi’s political ideologies and moral principles have served as the epitome of resolution for the past several decades and will continue to serve as an archetype of inspirational philosophy for many decades to follow.

Although non-violence in its most basic definition is described as the “abstention from violence as a matter of principle,” the true conviction behind non-violence can be observed in the alternative methods used to obtain the ultimate result. Pioneers of non-violence including Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, and Martin Luther King Jr. participated in alternative demonstrations rather than contributing to violent protest. Each of these leaders spent time in jail standing up for what they believed in, despite the fact that they did not act violently to qualify their prison sentences. These leaders exhibited immeasurable patience in their advocacy of perpetual non-violence. They showed that true determination and perseverance would help them achieve their goals and dreams. While avoiding involvement in violence, Gandhi, Mandela, and King showed that many actions can be taken to fight for one’s beliefs while refraining from engagement in physical violence.

While Gandhi, Mandela, and King all utilized nonviolent means of conflict resolution to fight for their goals, they were best known for their use of silent protests. However, many other forms of nonviolence are extremely effective in achieving desired outcomes, too. Examples of different types of nonviolent methods include persuasion, negotiation, non-cooperation, and intervention. Many individuals have employed these techniques over time, demonstrating the success of nonviolence in meeting their objectives.

I believe that a qualified leader is one that is readily able to dissolve conflicts quickly between different groups of people. In my experience, I have recognized the value of conflict resolution, especially as it pertains to dissolving disputes in a leadership setting. As the current Associated Student Body President, I have encountered various conflicts, which included differences of opinion, arguments, and controversy. As a member of this organization, which allows us to serve as role models and leaders on campus, I have developed many skills in peaceful conflict resolution. One instance in which I utilized conflict resolution was in my campaign for the presidency. My opponent blamed me of cheating in the voting process and publicly criticized me on social networking sites, attempting to give my campaign a poor reputation. This upset me because this was the first time someone had spread negative rumors about me on such a grand scale. In response to this conflict, I elected to rise above the circumstances and continued my campaign with integrity.

Therefore, nonviolent means of conflict resolution is a significant factor in leadership both internationally and on a more local scale. Nonviolence is the most appropriate response in confronting conflict worldwide.

"Mahatma Gandhi Biography." *The Biography Channel*. AETN UK, 2005-2011. Web. 8 April 2013. <<http://www.thebiographychannel.co.uk/biographies/mohandas-gandhi.html>>.

"nonviolence." *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*. Merriam-Webster Inc., 2013. Web. 8 April 2013. <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/non+violence?show=0&t=1365527686>>.