I think that humanity is inclined for violence because it takes so little thought to engage in a violent action. We live in a world in which it is simple to transform anger into negative energy and destruction, easy to physically battle our problems and punch our way through to a short-lived success. For violence inherently creates an inequality: one side wins, one side loses, and the loser needs to compromise more than the winner to resolve a conflict. A resolution that stems from fear of another group will inevitably crumble at some point because of the instability of the situation.

Nonviolent methods of conflict resolution eliminate this unstable position because it embraces equality of all people. By protesting, for example, one pits himself or herself as an equal to the other party, resulting in resolutions that last longer because there is, in theory, no fear involved. If both sides come to an agreement without any intimidation or pressures, then there is a higher chance that this resolution is actually sound and both sides are satisfied. This satisfaction tends to last and do more permanent things to solve the problem.

For example, Martin Luther King, Jr.’s nonviolent fight for civil rights reform, though interrupted by violence from the opposing side, was effective in that it showed a desire for equality amongst the people: that all men should have dreams that they can follow without oppression. His work led to tangible reform: the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 were the results of the Civil Rights Movement, and they served to eliminate the inherent inequalities of the systems that emerged to replace slavery after it was abolished almost a century
earlier. We will not need to fight for these rights again, for they have become embedded in the law of the United States.

Similarly, Mahatma Gandhi’s fight for India’s independence was long and perilous, but in the end he helped achieve independence, which is not going to be relinquished anytime soon. He acted as a mediator for the demands of other, more violently inclined nationalists of the time period; through his willingness to compromise, independence was gained faster than would otherwise. In addition to promoting the independence of his country, he also wanted equality for women: Indira Gandhi’s Prime Minister position so early on in India’s modern history reflects a national agreement with Gandhi’s thoughts.

Overall, nonviolent means for resolving conflicts are incredibly powerful in comparison to violence. Perhaps this superiority stems from the courage and resolve required to continue with nonviolence without reverting to violence. It is easy to resort to violence to temporarily alleviate a situation; however, for permanency, nonviolent methods are best.