

So what's next? By Kazu Haga 11/09/16

For one thing, I've seen many people online posting that we need to escalate things and that nonviolence is no longer enough. For those that feel that way, while I empathize with the emotions driving that feeling, please read on.

1) It is violence and all its manifestations that got us here. It is hatred, ignorance, division, intimidation that brought us Trump. If we choose to be motivated by anger and hatred, if we choose to divide our communities even more, all we do is continue to feed the exact energy that got us Trump. Even if the anger is towards Trump and his supporters, we are empowering the forces that allowed him to rise to power. We need to be angry, but at the forces of injustice, not its human participants.

2) PLEASE study the work of [Erica Chenoweth](#), who started as a critic of nonviolence but found that nonviolent movements – even under the most repressive regimes, were statistically twice as effective as violent movements all over the world. And that gap is growing. Nonviolent movements are becoming more effective and violent movements are becoming less effective.

3) She also found that if a movement that can mobilize 3.5% of the general population, there has NEVER been a case where it has failed in meeting its stated objective (she ONLY studied cases where the objective was secession of land or revolution).

4) Violence breeds patriarchy, which is at the root of so much of the violence in our society. Once you introduce violence to the equation, you limit those that can be on the front lines and those that can lead. Mostly, you limit it to young able bodied men. And look where that has gotten us as a society. If we are not building a movement with leadership from the most disenfranchised – those that often CAN'T take up arms, we are fighting a never-ending losing battle. Erica's work also shows that ONLY nonviolent movements were able to mobilize that magical 3.5%.

5) Most people in this country have NO IDEA how radical and militant Dr. King was, and how aggressive a force nonviolence can be. King called for a movement that was just as attention grabbing and dislocative as a riot. As a society, we have studied violence for centuries. That's all we know, so we always assume that's the only thing that's going to work, and it's the most

radical thing, or the most effective thing as a last resort. Because that's what we've been taught BY THE STATE. We have not studied nonviolence. We do not know what it means or how to use it effectively. We have NEVER given it a real chance, despite the evidence that is out there. There is nothing radical about violence. There is nothing revolutionary about using a force that has destroyed communities forever, of using a force that we are all too familiar with, of using the same force that got us into this mess. What is radical and revolutionary is using a tool that is new.

6) If you resist violence with violence, you're not resisting violence. You're resisting people, and EMPOWERING violence. You are not addressing the root cause. Violence is the enemy. That idea that we can use force, fear and intimidation to get what we want, to force our will – THAT is the enemy. It is what the state has used against people forever.

7) Let's keep in mind that the most important struggle right now in this country, at least in my opinion – Standing Rock – has been an explicitly nonviolent movement. And even organizations like the Black Panthers, you can argue that their biggest contribution and their longest lasting legacy isn't the guns but the free breakfast programs and other revolutionary and nonviolent acts that were about serving community.

ALSO – The Democrats once again have failed us. They cheated their way to a Clinton nomination, when Bernie could have beaten Trump because he was speaking to the same frustrations that people all over the country have. We need to be real about who the Democrats are. We NEED to begin investing in alternatives, demanding people who actually represent us. AND, we also know that voting was never going to give us the changes that we need in the first place. We need to organize harder than ever, not just in electoral politics but in the spaces of social movements. I am committing myself to that more than ever.