

WORDS OF HOPE

Adrienne Rich, the famous lesbian poet, stated: "In a world where language and naming are power, silence is oppression, is violence."



In the 1930s, Septima Clark was an African-American teacher in Columbia, S.C. The white teachers in her school district made considerably more for doing the exact same job. She single-handedly began a movement that in 1936 forced the state of South Carolina to put black teachers on the same pay scale as white teachers. She had this to say about her justice-doing: "I always say that there's a time in your life when you're moved to say 'no,' and this was the time."

In 1933, Zilla Hawes Daniel organized the first Amalgamated Clothing Workers local in the South. She had this to say about her tumultuous activism: "Personally, I've never liked the idea of being arrested. I've never been particularly afraid of it, if it was necessary, and I have been put in jail a number of times, but I've never courted that kind of thing. But I think you can't function if you are going to allow yourself to be fearful."

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said: "Somehow we must be able to stand up before our most bitter opponents and say, 'We shall match your capacity to inflict suffering by our capacity to endure suffering. We will meet your physical force with soul force. Do to us what you will, and we will still love you.'"

Rosa Parks had this to say about refusing to stand silently by: "I think individuals can make up their own minds on what they can do to solve or help whatever problems are confronting them. I feel like each person should think and be aware of and learn as much as they can about what has occurred and realize that whatever is going on did not just begin with them. I think everybody should be involved if they want to see better opportunities. I don't think anybody should be eliminated from doing what they can to bring about whatever is necessary for full and complete freedom."

bell hooks, a contemporary feminist educator, has this to say about finding your voice: "Coming to voice is not just the act of telling one's experience. It is using that telling strategically—to come to voice so that you can identify freely with other people."

Gandhi stated: "I object to violence because when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary: the evil it does is permanent."

Author Maria Harris has this to say about the refusal to stand silently by: "Silence in the face of evil, allowing the false word to pass, is corrosive and deadly not only to the victim, but also to the bystander. Silence corrupts our spirituality."