



A Comprehensive Strategy for Nonviolent Change

Though each of the strategies you have studied has been used effectively on its own, the most powerful social movements have employed all three. The American Civil Rights Movement is one iconic nonviolent struggle for human rights that has inspired activists around the world. The movement succeeded thanks to the actions of countless people guided by the leadership of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. King described his strategy in a 1966 speech entitled, “Nonviolence: The Only Road to Freedom”:

The nonviolent strategy has been to dramatize the evils of our society in such a way that pressure is brought to bear against those evils by the forces of good will in the community and change is produced.

	Formal Systems	Direct Action	Community Dialogue
King Quote	<i>“All of the liberal legislation of the past session of Congress can be credited to this coalition.”</i>	<i>“When the idea is a sound one, the cause is a just one, and the demonstration a righteous one, change will be forthcoming.”</i>	<i>“To produce change, people must be organized to work together in units of power.”</i>
Method	Civil rights organizers began voter registration drives in the late 1950’s to increase political power among the black population. With increased pressure on these efforts, the Civil Rights Act was passed in 1964.	A series of marches led by students in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1963, followed by boycotts of businesses downtown, eventually led to desegregation in most of the cities’ businesses. Students went to jail and faced fire hoses and police dogs.	King often spoke of creating a “Beloved Community” and the need to befriend the white community rather than create more enemies. Thus, many of the actions in the movement educated white people about injustice and invited them to join the struggle.
Other examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Brown v. Board of Education · Voting Rights Act of 1965 · Voter registration drives · Election of civil rights leaders to local, state and federal offices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · March on Washington · Freedom rides · Lunch counter sit-ins · Sanitation workers strike 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Freedom songs · School desegregation · Formation of student groups · Letter from Birmingham Jail

For further reflection: *Which of these nonviolent approaches would you be most inclined to use to promote change? Explain your response in a brief essay.*