

In response to events happening at the national level in November of 2016, I wrote in my journal, “I will not allow someone else’s inhumanity to rob me of my humanity.” Feeling rudderless and looking for ways to broaden my usefulness, I attended a presentation of the Nonviolent Cities Project. At that meeting, I met a group of people who were interested in forming a local chapter. Thus, NonViolent Owensboro was born.

So today—June of 2020—I find myself writing the exact same words in response to events happening today-- “I will not allow someone else’s inhumanity to rob me of my humanity.” The difference between 2016 and 2020 is today I am not rudderless. Today I have the principles of nonviolent living to guide me and the support of the members of NonViolent Owensboro.

Members of NonViolent Owensboro commit ourselves to learning, living, and sharing the principles of nonviolence in our personal lives and in our community. We need more people willing to take that same commitment to nonviolence.

We have learned nonviolence is not the method for a coward—**it does require resistance**. That resistance causes tension. That’s the point—if we are comfortable, we have no need to change.

Because of my commitment to nonviolence, I cannot seek to defeat or humiliate an opponent but I must work to win his friendship and understanding—the ultimate goal is to be able to all live together in peace.

Nonviolence is directed against the FORCES or SYSTEMS of evil not against the people who are doing evil but I can, and should, hold individuals accountable for their actions (or inactions) for their words (or their silence).

But, most importantly, I must hold myself accountable for my actions (or inactions) for my words (or my silence). Living a nonviolent life requires rigorous honesty. I must acknowledge my prejudices, my biases, and the violence that resides in my own heart. I must find my soul force and put love into action.

Tonight is a start—another start—in the many starts that have happened in the long history of racial injustice in this country. Scholars of nonviolence say the longer that violence has been allowed to go unchecked the more ‘soul force’ and sacrifice it will take to stop it. If that is the case then we have a long road ahead of us but if, as a community, we truly want the best for every person we will find our ‘soul force’, we will find our voice, we will take actions and hold people accountable for theirs. We will root out the violence and prejudice residing in our own hearts. We will be strategic, disciplined and creative in our resistance to the status quo. NonViolent Owensboro has a commitment to this community. Join us. (Facebook/Website/meeting night) and if not NonViolent Owensboro than do something, showing up at a rally is A step. Find like minded committed people to take the next steps. Together we will be the change we wish to see in Owensboro so that no one will ever be robbed of their humanity.