Learning About Nonviolence Protesting

How does culture change? The American culture has changed a great deal over the past decades. It was 50 years ago when people could discriminate on the basis of race, religion, and gender. It was only forty years when interracial marriage was illegal in this country. It was only less than 10 years when gay marriage was also still illegal. How did all of this change? People say it was legislation and laws and the judicial system. While that is true for what was changed, a law cannot change what is in the heart of people. Only people can make that change in other people. Only people can change other people's feelings and thoughts. The way to change and teach people is by nonviolent protest. College should offer courses to students on nonviolent protest in order to teach about the historical aspects of nonviolent protesting such as its impact on society and how to protest nonviolently.

There is great importance on learning the history of nonviolent protesting. Learning history helps people to not make the same mistakes again and also learn what worked and how to improve on the factors that worked. According to the New England Nonviolence Trainers Network, which is a resource for nonviolent protesting, Around the world "The use of nonviolence runs throughout history. There have been numerous instances of people courageously and nonviolently refusing cooperation with injustice" (New England). Especially in this country, nonviolent protesting has impacted the culture of this country. The history of nonviolent protesting goes back to the civil war era and Harriet Tubman saving and rescuing slaves from the southern parts of the country. Women also achieved the right that they deserved to vote because of nonviolent protest. Autoworkers Union achieved better working conditions through the use of nonviolence. The most famous use of nonviolence protesting was to protest against racial inequality in this country at government offices and college campuses with the use bus rides and sitting at diner counters. The LGBTQ community has supported nonviolent actions to support the rights of LGBTQ people. Had it not been for nonviolent protesting, these changes in society might not have occurred and we would be living in a very different society and culture right now. While learning history is very important it is also important to learn how to protest nonviolently.

It is important how to learn how to protest nonviolently. The key to nonviolent protesting is in the name which is to be not violent. But is not a passive experience. The New England Nonviolence Trainers Network website states "Nonviolence is active. Although to some the word nonviolence implies passivity, nonviolence is actually an active form of resistance" (New England). It is standing up for what is right, while behaving with resilience. While one can control what they do, it is much difficult if not impossible to control how others such as counter-protesting or even government agents such as law enforcement will react. It is important that nonviolent protesters remain nonviolent and also know their legal rights and what to do when confronted with counter-protesting or law enforcement. For example, if a law enforcement officer gives a warning to nonviolent protesting it is important to what to do as a nonviolent protester. According to the New England Nonviolence Trainers Network, one should either stay in the area or leave the area but do not stop protesting nonviolently (New England). It is important to know the rights that one has such as non-cooperation with officials which as New England Nonviolence Trainers Network says can overburden the system and make it known the rights that the protesters have. It is important that people know what to do and how to protest nonviolence in order to protect

themselves and to make sure that protesting keeps on growing and is successful.

It is also important to teach students how nonviolent protesting has impacted this country and how it was changed this country. One of the biggest changes in this country over the past 50 years has been the support of the rights of the minority groups in the country. Because of nonviolent protesting, more Americans have more rights and support in this country. For example, the Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Act was passed because of nonviolent protesting. This an example of what Congressman John Lewis would call “good trouble, necessary trouble” (USA Today). This “trouble” is standing up for what is right and creating and enacting real change for the good of society. More people support the rights of LGBTQ people and support marriage equality and the rights of people who are trans. Women cannot be discriminated against because they are women and women have more control over their bodies and freedom for themselves. There has been much change in the country in it laws and how this country treats people and those are all great successes and should be celebrated. Protesting nonviolently helps to keep people aware of any issues that are ongoing and allows people to get involved to stop the taking away of human rights.

There are some people who would argue that college is not a place to teach nonviolent protesting. They would say that college should be teaching kids about their careers and educating students on the basics of grammar, science, history and other subjects. They would say college does not have the time to teach about nonviolent protesting. I would say that college is the perfect place to teach about nonviolent protesting because it is a safe environment and at the age of most college students is a perfect age to learn about nonviolent protesting. University should teach nonviolence protesting because college students should know how to enact change peacefully. Colleges can teach about nonviolence protesting and all other subjects at the same time. It is important that college students know about nonviolent protesting and be educated about it in order to make an impact on society.

It is important that colleges educate its student about nonviolent protesting. It can educate students in a classroom setting or free seminars at college. It is important that students know the history of nonviolent protesting so they can emulate the successful tactics of nonviolent protesting and create a new ideas for a new age of nonviolent protesting. It is important that students know their rights and what do when confronted in a nonviolent protest in order to protect themselves and protect others and protect the movement. It is also important to inspire students to protest nonviolently by showing how nonviolent protests have shaped and changed this country for the better. It is important to keep the knowledge of nonviolent protesting active in the minds of people. It is important that people do not forget what it took to earn these rights and freedoms that we have today. We need to stand up for the rights of people and defend those rights through the use of nonviolence.

References

1. New England Nonviolence Trainers Network. (2004). Retrieved November 29, 2019, from http://www.nonviolencetraining.org/.
2. USA Today. “Rep. John Lewis to grads: Get into 'good trouble'.” YouTube, Uploaded by USA Today, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R0DNg0FTvd8