

Martin Luther King Jr. once said, “One has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws” Have you ever felt like a law, rule, or social norm wasn’t fair? And you just wanted to break it? But you were scared of the consequences. Both Empress Theodora and Antigone show civil disobedience; they believed in breaking the law for the greater good.

Empress Theodora and Antigone were put in dire situations where they had to choose whether to break the law for a better purpose or suffer. “My lords, the present occasion is too serious to allow me to follow the convention that a woman should not speak in a man’s council.” This shows that Empress Theodora’s circumstances drove her to break the rule that said that women may not speak among men. This decision proved conducive after she persuaded Justinian to fight back against the rebels, and they won. Antigone, on the other hand, was put in a family crisis. After the king made a proclamation that her brother, who died in war, couldn’t be buried, Antigone stood up to him and gave her brother a burial because that’s what’s right.

These women didn’t just break the law to be rebellious, they did it for the greater good. Imagine if Empress Theodora kept her mouth shut. Maybe the rebels would have taken over Constantinople, killed or enslaved the people, and Justinian would have been long gone. That wouldn’t have been right and it would have happened just because of a dumb law that said women can’t speak in men’s conversations. Look at Antigone, if she had abided by the law she and her family would have lived in anguish, and all because the king had something against her brother. I would have done the same thing in their shoes.

At the end of the day it’s all about the person and how much they believe in what’s right. Both Empress Theodora and Antigone show civil disobedience; they believed in breaking the law for the greater good. Because don’t we all have a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws?