

Standing Up Without Violence: A Community Guide to Resisting ICE Enforcement in Minneapolis

Introduction

In Minneapolis, immigration enforcement has intensified – culminating recently in the fatal shooting of 37-year-old Renee Good by a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agent ¹. In response, tens of thousands of residents poured into the streets in peaceful protest, chanting “Abolish ICE” and “No justice, no peace – get ICE off our streets” ¹ ². This tragedy occurred amid an unprecedented federal crackdown, with some 2,000 ICE and Border Patrol agents dispatched to the Twin Cities in what the Department of Homeland Security called its largest operation ever ³. The surge in aggressive ICE activity has left many local families fearful and angry. How can communities respond effectively *and* safely to protect their neighbors and resist unjust enforcement?

This guide offers an empowering, practical approach: **nonviolent civil resistance**. Rooted in the teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. – and inspired by Mahatma Gandhi’s philosophy – nonviolent resistance has a proven track record of confronting injustice while maintaining moral integrity. We will explain the core principles of nonviolent civil resistance and why it works, in plain language. More importantly, we will outline how Minneapolis residents can use these methods in the current context of heightened ICE enforcement. The focus is on staying safe, acting in solidarity, and building a movement that can win change over time. All guidance here is general and **lawful** – it emphasizes disciplined, peaceful action and *does not* encourage any illegal activities. By standing together with courage, discipline, and moral clarity, our community can protect itself and push back against repression without violence.

What is Nonviolent Civil Resistance?

Nonviolent civil resistance means unarmed people using **collective action** – protests, demonstrations, vigils, strikes, refusal to cooperate, and other forms of noncooperation – to confront injustice and seek change ⁴. Instead of using physical force, people wield the “weapons” of **solidarity, truth, and persistence**. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who led the Civil Rights Movement through nonviolent campaigns, often said that nonviolence is “a way of life for courageous people” and *not* passive cowardice ⁵. It is active resistance to evil, **aggressive spiritually and mentally** but without physical aggression ⁵. In practical terms, nonviolent resistance can involve marches and rallies, community boycotts, sit-ins, volunteer patrols to monitor authorities, mass vigils, and many other creative methods – all carried out **peacefully**.

Importantly, nonviolent resistance is both a **moral stance** and a **strategic method**. Gandhi, who pioneered massive nonviolent campaigns against injustice, taught that *satyagraha* (meaning “truth-force” or “love-force”) harnesses the power of truth and love to compel change ⁶. He proved that disciplined nonviolence could rally ordinary people to defeat a mighty empire in India. Dr. King was directly inspired by Gandhi’s success: he called the Gandhian philosophy “the only morally and practically sound method open to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom” ⁷. In other words,

nonviolence isn't just **morally right** – it **works**. It allows the average person (not just soldiers or militants) to participate in change, and it exposes the injustice of the oppressor for all to see. When done with discipline, it appeals to the conscience of the broader public and even those in power. Throughout history, from the U.S. civil rights victories to the toppling of dictators, nonviolent movements have shown remarkable effectiveness and created lasting change. We turn now to the core principles that guide this approach.

Core Principles of Nonviolent Resistance (Lessons from Dr. King)

Dr. King outlined fundamental **principles of nonviolence** that guide how to think and act in a nonviolent struggle. Embracing these principles helps maintain moral clarity and strategic discipline. According to King's philosophy, six key principles are:

- **Nonviolence is a way of life for courageous people.** It is not passive submission, but active resistance to evil. It requires great courage to face aggression without striking back. ⁸
- **Nonviolence seeks to win friendship and understanding.** The goal is reconciliation and redemption. We aim to awaken the opponent's conscience and ultimately turn enemies into friends. ⁸
- **Nonviolence seeks to defeat injustice, not people.** The fight is against unfair laws and systems, *not* against individuals. Those who do wrong may themselves be caught in an unjust system. We oppose the **deeds**, not hate the doers. ⁸
- **Nonviolence holds that voluntary suffering can educate and transform.** Willingly accepting blows or jail without retaliating can shock the conscience of the community. **Unearned suffering** for a righteous cause can illuminate the truth and spur change. ⁹ ⁸
- **Nonviolence chooses love instead of hate.** We resist not only the urge to strike physically, but also to hate our opponents. We stay rooted in compassion and **moral love**, even as we oppose wrongdoing. As Dr. King said, "Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that." ¹⁰ ⁸
- **Nonviolence believes that the universe is on the side of justice.** This principle is about hope. It means having faith that justice will prevail in the long run. Oppressors may seem strong now, but with steadfast nonviolence, truth and fairness will ultimately win ¹¹ ⁸.

In simpler terms, these principles urge us to be **courageous and active** in opposing injustice – but never to descend into violence or hatred ourselves. We maintain that *every* human being, even an oppressor, has some capacity for good. We aim to **break the cycle of hatred** by meeting it with love and steadfast resistance. By accepting suffering without retaliating, we draw a stark moral contrast between the injustice and our justice-seeking. This moral clarity can **move hearts and change minds**, attracting more people to our cause.

Dr. King's principles were influenced by Gandhi's teachings as well as Jesus's message of loving one's enemies. Both King and Gandhi practiced **self-discipline and training** for their activists – they prepared people not to retaliate when provoked. Such discipline is hard, but it's powerful. It keeps the focus on the injustice of ICE's actions rather than any violent reaction from our side. As we shall see, maintaining nonviolent discipline is not only right but **strategically smart** because it helps our movement grow and win.

Why Nonviolent Resistance Works (Power, Legitimacy, and Backlash)

Nonviolent civil resistance isn't just a noble ideal – **it works**. Political science research and historical evidence show that nonviolent movements succeed at achieving their goals far more often than violent

ones. One landmark study of hundreds of conflicts found that campaigns of nonviolent resistance had about a **53% success rate**, versus only 23% for violent insurgencies ¹². In other words, **peaceful movements were more than twice as likely to achieve their aims**. This pattern holds true across different countries and decades. But *why* is nonviolence so effective? Let's break down the dynamics in plain language:

- **People Power:** Nonviolent movements draw in a much **broader base of participants** than violent struggles ¹³. When people don't have to take up arms or risk harming others, many more are willing to join – including women, elders, youth, professionals, religious leaders, and others who might shy away from violence ¹³. This swelling of numbers gives the movement greater strength and legitimacy. Think of the civil rights marches where families, clergy, and community members of all ages took part – their very presence was a statement. In Minneapolis today, we see diverse crowds coming out to protest ICE's actions, from students to shopkeepers to grandmothers. A large, diverse movement is harder to ignore or crush. It also signals to those in power that the **public does not consent** to their policies.
- **Shifting the Moral Balance:** When activists remain nonviolent, any **repression by authorities tends to backfire** against the authorities. This is often called the "*paradox of repression*" or backlash. If armed agents attack or brutalize peaceful people, it creates sympathy for the protesters and outrage against the enforcers ¹⁴. The public – and even insiders within the system – start questioning the legitimacy of the crackdowns. As one analysis explains, security forces themselves "don't want to fire on unarmed civilians, especially when the crowd might include their mothers, daughters, friends, and neighbors," and if peaceful protesters *are* attacked, "other citizens are likely to mobilize, and the government loses support" from the wider society ¹⁴. We have seen this dynamic in Minneapolis: the sight of a U.S. citizen like Renee Good being killed while *unarmed* and *documenting ICE* shocked many and fueled a wave of protest across the country ¹ ¹⁵. Each act of unjust violence by ICE agents (against nonviolent people) only **undermines their moral authority** and rallies more people to oppose them.
- **Undermining State Power at its Roots:** Power ultimately depends on people's cooperation – even a repressive agency like ICE relies on various "pillars" of support (political leaders, local law enforcement cooperation, public tolerance, etc.). Nonviolent resistance can **chip away at these pillars**. For example, if the public clearly withdraws its support and local institutions refuse to collaborate, the enforcement machine is weakened. We already see Minnesota's state and local leaders pushing back: Minneapolis's mayor and Minnesota's congressional representatives have criticized ICE's tactics, and lawsuits have been filed to challenge ICE's overreach ¹⁶ ¹⁷. Nonviolent protests increase pressure on officials to distance themselves from ICE abuses. Even within ICE or police ranks, officers are more likely to blow the whistle or refuse extreme orders if they see a principled, peaceful mass movement outside. By contrast, if protesters used violence, it would *unify* the authorities and justify more repression. Nonviolence instead **divides the oppressors' support**: it makes some police, judges, journalists, or politicians more inclined to side with the community, because it's clear who is instigating violence – and it's not the protesters.
- **Maintaining the High Ground:** Nonviolent discipline also means the movement **retains the moral high ground** in the eyes of the broader public. Neighbors on the fence, the media, and ordinary Americans watching events unfold will sympathize with a community that responds to injustice with dignity, compared to an agency that responds with rifles and raids. This matters hugely in democratic societies. Ultimately, ICE and its directives operate under public and political consent – and that consent erodes when their actions are seen as illegitimate or cruel. By showing America the courage of families standing peacefully outside an ICE facility, or

marching with candles and “ICE Out!” signs, we shine a light on what’s happening. We make it impossible for people to ignore or accept it. The community’s **moral clarity** can change the narrative. For instance, a coalition of activist groups intentionally organized the “ICE Out for Good” rallies to be *overwhelmingly peaceful* and to end by nightfall, specifically to draw a “**stark contrast**” between the nonviolent demonstrators and the “unrepentant, ruthless violence” coming from federal agents ¹⁸. Peaceful action highlights the injustice of the other side’s violence, whereas if we used violence too, the message would be muddled and support would evaporate.

In short, *sticking to nonviolence is not only right, it’s smart. It allows us to leverage our strengths – numbers, unity, and justice – against the opponent’s weaknesses – their dependence on public legitimacy and moral standing. Nonviolent resistance has toppled dictators and overturned unjust laws by following this logic. Our community can use the same approach to resist aggressive ICE enforcement. Now, let’s talk about* how** we can put nonviolent resistance into practice during immigration enforcement situations here in Minneapolis.

During an ICE Operation: How to Respond Safely and Peacefully

When ICE agents or other federal officers show up in our neighborhoods, it can be a tense and frightening moment. It’s important to be prepared **before** such an event happens, and to know what to do **during** the incident. By responding in an organized, nonviolent way, we can **protect our neighbors’ rights, de-escalate potential violence, and document what happens** – all without breaking any laws. Here are some practical steps community members can take during an ICE enforcement action, grounded in nonviolent principles:

- **Stay Informed and Mobilize Quickly:** Consider joining a **community alert network** (text message trees, WhatsApp groups, neighborhood watch organizations) that shares information when ICE is spotted in the area. Neighbors looking out for each other can give everyone a few minutes’ warning. For example, in some cities activists literally patrol for unmarked ICE vehicles and, once they **verify** ICE is in the neighborhood, they **notify hundreds of followers via social media and group chats** ¹⁹. Minneapolis has had volunteers like Renee Good engaged in monitoring ICE operations (Good was part of a community network that observed and recorded ICE’s actions) ¹⁵. If you hear that ICE is conducting raids or stops nearby, **spread the word** calmly and quickly to others so people know to pay attention and possibly respond.
- **Gather Peacefully at a Safe Distance (Be a Witness):** If it’s safe to do so, community members can **show up near the scene** of an ICE enforcement action as *peaceful witnesses*. There is power in numbers – if ICE agents know the community is watching, they are less likely to use excessive force or violate rights in plain view. For example, neighbors have blown whistles or simply called out to alert others when ICE is at someone’s door, leading more people to come out of their homes and observe. When you arrive, **stay on public property** (sidewalk, street corner) at a reasonable distance. Do **not** interfere physically with agents doing their job – interfering or blocking officers may be unlawful. Your role is to **observe and record**, not to obstruct. As long as you remain peaceful and do not hinder the operation, **your presence and filming are legal First Amendment-protected activities** ¹⁶. (In fact, the ACLU recently filed a lawsuit in Minnesota defending the right of citizens to assemble, observe, and protest ICE operations in public ¹⁶.) By calmly standing witness, you help **keep everyone accountable** and safe.
- **Document Everything:** One of the most powerful nonviolent tools today is a **camera**. Use your phone to video record the enforcement action from where you stand. Focus on capturing

interactions and any use of force. You might say out loud the date, time, and location for the recording. If you are comfortable, you can also **livestream** to social media or to your community group so that the footage is saved offsite. Make sure you do this **openly and without interfering** – you have the right to film federal agents in a public space as long as you are not obstructing them. Documenting is crucial: it creates an evidence trail in case agents violate anyone's rights or if abuses occur. (Many unjust incidents – from family separations to rough arrests – only came to light because someone filmed or took notes.) If agents order you to stop filming or to back up, you can respectfully assert your right to observe from a safe distance, but do comply with lawful orders that do not impede your ability to witness. **Never attempt to grab an agent or physically intervene** – *the camera is your best nonviolent weapon*. As Gandhi would say, it's about exposing the truth. In this context, video evidence *is* truth-finding.

- **Know (and Assert) Your Rights – Calmly:** In the heat of the moment, knowledge is power. Remind yourself and those around you of basic rights: For example, *everyone* in the U.S. has the right to **remain silent** if questioned by ICE. If you are not the target of the enforcement and an agent asks you something, you can politely say, "I am going to remain silent" or "I want to speak to a lawyer," and then stay quiet. You do not have to let ICE into a home without a judicial warrant, and you do not have to consent to any search of your belongings. It helps to carry "know your rights" cards or have the number of an immigration attorney or the local rapid-response hotline. However, **do not yell or argue aggressively** with agents – assert rights in a calm, measured tone if needed. Remember, **nonviolence also means controlling our tone and body language** under stress. If an agent issues an order (like "Back up to the sidewalk" or "Stop blocking the door"), it's usually wise to comply – you can continue observing from a slight distance. The goal is to **avoid escalation** while not surrendering basic rights. By staying calm and knowing our legal rights, we make it harder for ICE to trample those rights.
- **Support and Solidarity (Without Obstruction):** Show the person being targeted that they are *not alone*. If a neighbor or stranger is being detained, you might calmly call out encouragement like, "We are with you," or "Don't sign anything without a lawyer." This simple solidarity can give them strength in a frightening moment. If you know the person's family, you can tell the agents, "We will make sure their children are cared for," etc., which signals that the community is watching out. Make sure any children at the scene are looked after and kept at a safe distance from the officers. If possible, **take note of names or badge numbers** of agents (often they won't provide them, but note distinguishing features) and details about vehicles (license plates). Do all this without laying hands on any agent or impeding them. Even standing silently with a phone in hand is a form of support – the person being arrested sees sympathetic faces rather than being whisked away in secrecy. Nonviolence is about **solidarity** in action.
- **Avoid Provocations and Violence – Maintain Discipline:** This point cannot be overstated: **stay disciplined** and do not respond to anger with anger. ICE agents or accompanying officers may shout, push, or even wield weapons to control a scene. You might witness something heart-wrenching or infuriating, like a family being separated. But we *must not* give in to the understandable urge to lash out. **Do not throw things**, do not insult or threaten the agents, and do not touch them. Such actions will *only* make the situation more dangerous and undermine the moral stance of the community. Remember that some in power "*want us to take the bait*" and turn violent ²⁰ – it would justify their crackdown. As Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey said amid recent protests, "*We are standing up to Donald Trump's chaos not with our own brand of chaos, but with care and unity.*" ²¹ In practice, this means even if one or two hotheaded individuals start to act out, the rest of us should politely intervene to calm them or distance the group from them. If someone starts vandalizing property or behaving violently, **that is not our way** – it should be stopped or the person should be urged to leave. The **vast majority** must remain peaceful. By

maintaining nonviolent discipline, we keep the focus on ICE's actions rather than giving ICE or the media a story about "rioting protesters." In Minneapolis so far, protesters have been overwhelmingly peaceful, and even city officials note that when some isolated incidents of property damage occurred, the "*vast majority*" of demonstrators still remained nonviolent and were **praised** for it ²² . We should be proud of that and continue that discipline in any future incidents.

- **De-Escalation and Safety First:** Nonviolence also means trying to **de-escalate** conflict. If tensions rise – say an agent yells or someone in the crowd yells back – it can spiral. Instead, we can use tactics like **chanting or singing** together to keep the mood collective and calm (singing a civil rights song or chanting "Peaceful protest!" can set a tone). If law enforcement declares an "unlawful assembly" and orders the crowd to disperse, you face a choice: you may calmly **step back** and reconvene at a distance (live to fight another day), or you may choose deliberate civil disobedience (refuse to leave and risk arrest) as a form of protest. This guide does not encourage any illegal action, so the general advice is to **follow lawful orders** and regroup rather than get into a physical clash. If arrests start happening, do not resist arrest – it's better to comply and then fight the legal battle afterward with attorneys than to tussle with police on the street. Look out for each other: if you see someone injured, call for medical help. If tear gas or pepper spray is used (a possibility in "crowd control"), try to stay calm, help others rinse their eyes with water, and move to fresh air. We hope such measures won't be used, but being mentally prepared helps.

In summary, during an ICE operation, your role as a community member is to be **the eyes, ears, and conscience** at the scene – *not* an obstruction. By rapidly gathering (legally), calmly observing, recording, and refusing to be provoked, you provide a measure of safety and accountability. You also send a powerful message: *This community stands together*. Even federal agents are human – when they see a crowd of concerned neighbors standing peacefully with phones and signs, it can influence how they behave and certainly creates pressure for them to act lawfully. And if they don't, we will have the evidence. Through it all, we uphold our dignity and courage, which is the essence of nonviolent resistance.

After the Enforcement Event: Building Resilience and Solidarity

What happens **after** the ICE raid, arrest, or confrontation is just as important as the immediate response. Nonviolent resistance is not a one-time act; it's an ongoing commitment to support our community and **change the conditions** that allow injustice. In the aftermath of an enforcement action – whether it ended quietly or in tragedy – there are many ways we can come together, heal, and continue the fight in a lawful, constructive way. Here are some steps for after an incident:

- **Attend to Victims and Families:** First and foremost, check on anyone directly affected. If a neighbor was detained or injured, rally the community to support their family. This could mean organizing meal trains, childcare, or fundraising for legal fees. It's crucial that families who lost a breadwinner to detention or who are traumatized by an ICE encounter know the community has their back. For example, after Renee Good was killed, community organizers and neighbors created a makeshift memorial at the site and ensured her family received support ²³ . This kind of compassionate response turns a moment of pain into an opportunity for **collective healing** and solidarity. Nonviolence teaches us to respond to hate with love – in practice, that means taking care of one another after an oppressive act. Even simply gathering a few friends to visit the family, express sympathy, and offer help with errands can mean a lot. Such gestures strengthen the bonds in our community and reduce the fear that ICE wants to instill.

- **Document and Report the Incident:** Once the dust has settled, gather all the documentation of what happened. Save those videos, photos, and eyewitness accounts. Write down everything you remember as soon as you can (time, sequence of events, any verbal exchanges). This information can be shared with lawyers, the press, or advocacy groups investigating ICE misconduct. Minneapolis community organizations often work with the ACLU or immigrant rights groups to collect evidence of civil rights violations. In fact, the ACLU of Minnesota has been **observing and documenting** ICE's activities as part of a legal effort to hold the agency accountable ²⁴. By contributing your on-the-ground evidence, you become part of that accountability process. If laws were broken by agents (e.g. entering a home without a warrant, using excessive force), formal complaints can be filed. Work with established groups (like the Minnesota Immigrant Rights Action Committee or MIRAC, or the ACLU) to channel the information appropriately. Publicizing the truth is itself a form of nonviolent resistance – it creates pressure for justice. Remember: *Sunlight is the best disinfectant*.
- **Public Vigil or Rally:** Organize a **community gathering** to respond publicly to the incident. This might be a candlelight vigil, a peaceful rally at a significant location, a march through the neighborhood, or a community meeting at a local church or community center. Such gatherings serve multiple purposes: they help people emotionally process what happened, they honor those affected, and they send a unified message condemning the injustice. For example, in the days following Good's death, local activists (MIRAC and others) held an "ICE Out of Minnesota" march that doubled as a memorial for Renee ²³. People stood before a makeshift memorial with candles and photos, transforming their grief into a call for change ²³. These events were entirely peaceful and garnered media attention – focusing the story on the community's pain and demands, rather than any rioting. When organizing a vigil or rally, continue to emphasize nonviolence: make it clear in announcements that it's a peaceful event, and have marshals or volunteers on hand to help maintain order if needed. Invite local faith leaders or elders to speak – their presence can set a respectful tone. Chants, signs, and speeches should keep a message of **unity and justice**. By coming together in public shortly after an incident, we reinforce community morale and ensure the narrative centers on **our humanity and ICE's overreach**, not on chaos.
- **Engage the Media and Public Officials:** In nonviolent movements, **telling your story** is vital. After an enforcement incident, try to get the truth out to the wider public. This could mean contacting local journalists or TV stations (many will cover a press conference or rally if invited). Speak from the heart about what the community witnessed and why it was wrong. If there were rights violations, state them clearly. It often helps to have a unified message or set of demands – for instance, "We call on city leaders to refuse cooperation with ICE" or "We demand an investigation into this incident and a halt to the operation." Leverage sympathetic public officials as well. Minneapolis and Minnesota officials have already shown willingness to stand up to federal overreach – for example, three Minnesota members of Congress literally went to an ICE facility to demand entry and oversight (they were denied, which only underscored the lack of transparency) ²⁵. You can call or email your City Council members, mayor's office, and state representatives to inform them of what happened and ask them to take action (whether it's issuing a statement, holding a hearing, or pressing ICE for answers). Nonviolent resistance works hand-in-hand with political pressure. Our voices, when peaceful but insistent, push those in power to act. A letter-writing campaign or petition after an incident can amplify the cause in a lawful way.
- **Legal Follow-up and Support:** If community members were arrested for peacefully protesting or simply caught in a raid, support them through the legal process. Ensure they have legal representation – groups like the Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota or volunteer attorney

networks might assist. Raise funds for bail if necessary. Attend court hearings as a show of community support (a courtroom filled with respectful supporters sends a powerful signal to judges and prosecutors). Also consider legal actions against any abuses: for instance, if agents violated protocol, lawsuits or official complaints can be filed. As noted earlier, one such lawsuit (Tincher v. Noem) was filed to challenge ICE's **violence and misconduct toward Minnesotans exercising their First Amendment rights** ¹⁶. These legal channels are a form of nonviolent resistance within the system. By pressing our case in court, we demand justice through law, not brute force. Support those efforts by providing testimony if you witnessed something, or simply by donating to organizations mounting these challenges. It's empowering to turn a painful incident into a catalyst for legal victories that protect others in the future.

- **Education and Training:** After an enforcement event, the community's awareness is heightened. This is an ideal time to hold **workshops or trainings** so that more people are prepared next time. You might organize a "Know Your Rights" workshop for immigrants and allies, invite experienced activists to teach **nonviolent protest tactics**, or start a neighborhood team for a rapid response network. Use what was learned in the incident: for example, if communication broke down, set up a better phone tree; if people were unsure how to act, do role-playing exercises on how to calmly intervene. Share inspirational examples from other cities or from history – how nonviolent actions have helped elsewhere. By investing in community education, you build **resilience**. Next time ICE comes around, even more people will be ready to respond calmly and effectively. Nonviolent movements are essentially **communities of training and discipline** – Dr. King's activists in the 60s trained for weeks before sitting in at lunch counters or marching, so that they could endure abuse without striking back. While we hope no one in Minneapolis has to endure abuse, being mentally and emotionally prepared is key. Consider linking up with local peace organizations or faith groups that offer nonviolence training. Every additional person who understands these principles is a win for the movement.
- **Build Coalitions:** Don't let the energy dissipate. Use the momentum to **widen the circle** of support. Reach out to churches, synagogues, mosques, labor unions, student groups, and others in Minneapolis who care about justice. Perhaps organize a community forum where different groups can pledge support for immigrant neighbors. Broad coalitions make it harder for ICE and the federal authorities to isolate or target any one group. It shows that the **whole community** – immigrants and citizens alike, people of all races and religions – rejects the tactics of fear. This unity is our strength. In practice, this could look like forming a "Minneapolis Immigrant Solidarity Coalition" if one doesn't exist, where various organizations coordinate response strategies and share resources. Coalition-building is a nonviolent strategy to amass social power.
- **Practice Self-Care and Foster Hope:** Lastly, acknowledge that these incidents take a toll on everyone. Fear, anger, grief – these are natural emotions after witnessing aggressive enforcement. Part of sustaining a nonviolent movement is **healing** those emotional wounds and preventing burnout. Hold space for community members to talk about what they experienced – maybe a healing circle, prayer service, or community potluck where people can decompress and encourage one another. Celebrate small victories (e.g., "we had 50 neighbors show up in 10 minutes – that's solidarity!"). Encourage one another to keep faith that, as Dr. King said, *"the universe is on the side of justice."* Hope is a renewable resource in a movement. By caring for each other, we prevent despair and cynicism from taking root. Remember that nonviolence is not just what we do *outwardly* but how we relate to one another *inwardly* – with love, patience, and trust. A strong, loving community is the greatest antidote to the fear ICE tries to sow.

Every action we take after an enforcement incident – from comforting a neighbor to rallying at City Hall – contributes to a culture of resistance. We are showing that our community refuses to be terrorized or

divided. Instead, we come out stronger, more united, and more determined to change the policies that hurt us. This long-haul work of solidarity is how a movement wins. It's not overnight; it's step by step, family by family, block by block. But each time we respond to repression with purposeful nonviolence, we **build momentum and moral power**.

Discipline, Unity, and Moral Clarity: Our Keys to Victory

At the heart of effective nonviolent resistance are three interlocking strengths: **discipline, community unity, and moral clarity**. These qualities are our strategic advantages in the struggle against aggressive enforcement. Let's reflect on why they matter, and how we've seen them in action in Minneapolis:

- **Discipline:** Nonviolent discipline means we *refuse* to be provoked into violence or chaos, no matter how much ICE or others try to intimidate or anger us. This requires self-control and training, but it pays enormous dividends. Authorities who rely on force actually *expect* or even *want* protesters to turn violent – it would justify their narrative that we are “dangerous” and allow them to crack down even harder ²⁰. As one immigrant rights leader observed, *“They want to provoke us into responding to violence with violence, to meet hate with hate. They are desperate to justify their cruelty with ever more brutality.”* ²⁶ We must deny them that justification. By staying nonviolent, **we rob the oppressor of his excuse**. In Minneapolis, the vast majority of protesters maintained peaceful discipline even when a few incidents of vandalism occurred, and this restraint was praised by city leaders ²². It showed that *our side* stands for order and principle, whereas the other side (ICE agents, in this case) had just killed an unarmed woman and brought chaos to our city. Discipline also keeps ourselves and each other safer in dangerous moments. It's not easy to stay cool when faced with armed agents, but every time we do so, we're essentially saying: *We will not fight on your terms; we will win on ours*. As an example, during the large Minneapolis marches, organizers ended events before nightfall and had volunteer marshals precisely to keep things orderly and prevent any spiral into conflict ²⁷. The result? **Demonstrations remained mostly peaceful**, and our message wasn't drowned out by images of violence ¹⁷. Sticking to nonviolent discipline is how we ensure the story stays about *justice*, not about riots.

- **Community Unity:** Unity is our strength. Nonviolent resistance is a *collective* act – it's about **standing together**. Oppressive forces like ICE operate by isolating and scaring individuals. Our job is to replace that fear with connection. When neighbors link arms (figuratively or literally), it creates a shield of solidarity. The community patrols in San Diego we discussed are a small example: volunteers banded together to watch for ICE and **people “felt empowered” because “they have the contacts, they have the network...They don't just end up in fear and staying home.”** ²⁸. Unity turns anxiety into action. In Minneapolis, we've seen an unprecedented coalition of immigrant communities, long-time residents, faith groups, and even local officials speaking in one voice against these raids. The chants of “ICE out now!” echoing through our streets show a *collective will*. This unity confers practical benefits: it means more resources (more people to call, more skills to share), and it sends a powerful signal that **the community is of one mind**. It also provides emotional sustenance – it's easier to be brave when you know everyone around you has the same commitment to nonviolence and will have your back if things get tough. As Pablo Alvarado of NDLOM put it during the recent protests, *“We are not afraid or discouraged. And we will not be defeated. The more we stand together as a community of determination and love, the harder it will be for them to divide and destroy us.”* ²⁹. That statement captures it perfectly: **unity makes us indestructible** in spirit. When thousands march shoulder to shoulder, or neighbors pack a courtroom in support of a detainee, it's unity in action – and it

puts ICE on notice that they're not just dealing with isolated individuals, but an entire city that is united and awake.

- **Moral Clarity:** Nonviolent movements draw power from a clear moral contrast. **Moral clarity** means the justice of our cause is undeniable and visible. By refusing to use hate or violence, we keep that clarity sharp. The public can easily see the difference between *peaceful people defending their community* and *armed agents dragging someone away* – and that clarity wins hearts and minds to our side. Dr. King spoke of “*the beloved community*” and always rooted his demands in fundamental morals: equality, compassion, dignity. We should continue to frame our struggle as a moral one: it is *wrong* to rip families apart, *wrong* to terrorize communities, *wrong* to kill unarmed civilians. And it is *right* to stand up for our neighbors, *right* to insist on humane treatment, *right* to demand accountability from our government. When we protest nonviolently, **our very behavior reflects our message**. We come with care and unity (as Mayor Frey said) ²¹, not with destruction. We come with prayers, songs, and signs invoking justice. This contrast between our conduct and ICE’s conduct creates a narrative that even skeptics can grasp. It builds pressure on decision-makers and sows doubt among those carrying out the orders. One powerful example of moral clarity: after the shootings in Minneapolis and Oregon, communities across the country held vigils *mourning the lives lost and demanding accountability*, explicitly framing ICE’s actions as cruel and unacceptable ³⁰. These were peaceful gatherings, often with photos of the victims and families speaking. The moral message was clear: this is about **human lives and values**. As a result, public opposition to ICE’s tactics has been “growing by the minute” ³⁰. When the community takes the moral high ground and sticks to it, it forces everyone watching to confront the injustice at hand, rather than get distracted.

In practical terms, maintaining moral clarity means constantly reminding ourselves and others *why* we resist: because we seek a city and nation that uphold human dignity, fairness, and safety for all. Our tactics must align with those noble goals. Nonviolence ensures they do. If we ever stoop to the same tactics of fear or aggression that ICE uses, we would muddle that clarity and weaken our cause. But if we persevere with love and discipline, we keep the light shining on the truth.

To conclude, responding to aggressive ICE and federal enforcement with nonviolent resistance is not easy – it demands courage, restraint, and cooperation. But it is **effective** and **empowering**. We have seen its effectiveness historically and we are seeing it now in Minneapolis: the nationwide outcry and planned “**ICE Out**” rallies in the wake of recent events show that peaceful protest can galvanize action ²⁷. Our community can stay safe by using **solidarity as our shield** – watching out for each other, flooding enforcement scenes with witnesses rather than weapons. We can act in **disciplined unity** so that even the mightiest enforcement machine cannot break our spirit or our organization. And we can build a movement that wins by appealing to the **best in people** – their sense of justice and empathy – rather than to base fears.

Dr. King wrote from a Birmingham jail that “freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be **demand**ed by the oppressed.” Our demands, made through nonviolent action, carry moral weight. Every Minneapolis resident who joins hands in a human chain, who holds a candle at a vigil, who documents a raid, or who speaks out at City Hall is part of that demand for freedom and dignity. We do this not with fists or guns, but with **the strength of our convictions and our community**.

In the face of federal agents with guns, it might seem that standing there peacefully is insignificant. But history shows – and our collective experience affirms – that **nonviolence is powerful**. It can disarm opponents not by force, but by **awakening conscience** and by rallying the broader populace to our side. It turns one incident into a movement, and fear into resolve. As one organizer declared amid these protests: “*We will resist the government’s attacks by building community, by documenting atrocities, by*

protesting nonviolently, by showing kindness and solidarity at all times... And we will win.” ³¹ In that spirit, let us move forward together.

United, disciplined, and clear in our purpose, Minneapolis can meet this moment. We can keep each other safe. We can uphold our values. And through unwavering, nonviolent resistance, we can press for the day when our immigrant neighbors no longer live in fear – when ICE’s aggression has no place on our streets, and when justice, at long last, prevails. ³² ²⁹

¹ ² ³ ¹⁵ ¹⁷ ²⁰ ²³ ²⁵ ²⁷ Tens of thousands protest in Minneapolis over fatal ICE shooting | Reuters

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/fatal-ice-shooting-minneapolis-activist-sets-stage-national-protests-2026-01-10/>

⁴ The Future of Nonviolent Resistance | Journal of Democracy
<https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/articles/the-future-of-nonviolent-resistance-2/>

⁵ ⁹ ¹⁰ ¹¹ The King Philosophy - Nonviolence365® - The King Center
<https://thekingcenter.org/about-tkc/the-king-philosophy/>

⁶ ⁷ Gandhi, Mohandas K. | The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute
<https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/gandhi-mohandas-k>

⁸ Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Six Principles of Nonviolence - civiced.org
<https://civiced.org/six-principles-nonviolence>

¹² ¹³ ¹⁴ Violent Versus Nonviolent Revolutions: Which Way Wins? | Psychology Today
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/sex-murder-and-the-meaning-of-life/201404/violent-versus-nonviolent-revolutions-which-way-wins>

¹⁶ ¹⁸ ²⁴ ²⁶ ²⁹ ³⁰ ³¹ ³² ICE Out For Good Concludes Day One With Overwhelming Peaceful Actions | American Civil Liberties Union
<https://www.aclu.org/press-releases/ice-out-for-good-concludes-day-one-with-overwhelming-peaceful-actions>

¹⁹ ²⁸ Activists launch community patrols in response to promised ICE raids | KPBS Public Media
<https://www.kpbs.org/news/border-immigration/2025/02/20/activists-launch-community-patrols-in-response-to-promised-ice-raids>

²¹ ²² Nationwide anti-ICE protests call for accountability after Renee Good’s death - OPB
<https://www.opb.org/article/2026/01/11/anti-ice-protests-across-u-s-demand-justice-in-goods-death/>