

## **DEFINITION**

the refusal to accept or comply with something; the attempt to prevent something by action or argument.

From the Latin verb *resistere*, “to hold back.”

**SYNONYMS:** defiance, refusal, struggle, obstruction, opposition

## **Taking It Home:**

**Activity: Join the Conversation at JUC About Moving the Needle for Justice**

On January 30<sup>th</sup> & February 13<sup>th</sup> from 9:30-11:00am we'll have a pair of conversations with Patty Lawless, Lead Statewide Organizer with Together Colorado about how JUC can use community organizing to address root causes of injustice in our community.

**Your assignment:** Show up on both days and see if our work through Just Neighboring is a way you can resist injustice right here.

### **Books:**

*All the Light We Cannot See:* by Anthony Doerr

### **Article:**

Civil Disobedience: by Henry David Thoreau

<http://tinyurl.com/jgt66j6>

### **Video:**

Milk: The Harvey Milk Story-

[http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1013753/?ref\\_=fn\\_al\\_tt\\_1](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1013753/?ref_=fn_al_tt_1)

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These materials are part of the small group ministry program at Jefferson Unitarian Church. For more information on using them, or to set up your small group, please contact Rev. Eric Banner.

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# **Jefferson Unitarian Church January 2016 Small Group Session: Resistance 1.0**

**Opening/  
Chalice  
Lighting:** As we come together,  
I go into myself.  
I dig into myself for a deep answer.  
I have patience with everything that remains  
unsolved in my heart, and I live the question.  
What is required of us is that we love the difficult  
and learn to deal with it.  
In the difficult are the friendly forces, the hands  
that work on us.  
It is clear that we must embrace the struggle.  
Right in the difficult we must have our joys, our  
happiness, our dreams.  
We create this space to go into ourselves and see  
how deep the place is from which our  
lives flow. **(RM Rilke, adapted by Scott Rudolf)**

**Check In:** Up to 2 minutes per person to share what they  
bring with them since the last time the group met

**Reading:** The moment we begin to fear the opinions of  
others and hesitate to tell the truth that is in us,  
and from motives of policy are silent when we  
should speak, the divine floods of light and life no  
longer flow into our souls. -- **Elizabeth Cady  
Stanton**

**Resting in  
the  
Silence:** Take 2 minutes to just sit. If your group is up to it,  
go longer, as long as you let people know how  
long the silence will be.

**Questions  
and  
Quotes  
From The  
Common  
Bowl:** Share the quotes and questions for today's  
session in the way that is customary in your small  
group. You can pass the sheet, you can select  
them randomly from a bowl after having cut them  
into individual pieces. Or whatever works well for  
your small group.

**Sharing/  
Deep  
Listening:** Allow each person up to five minutes to share  
what has come up for them about today's topic. If  
someone does not use the full five minutes, make  
sure you count to ten full breaths before moving  
on to the next person, in case the speaker is not  
truly finished.

**A Second  
Share:** If time allows, you may have a brief second share  
from those who have found they have more to  
say, keeping in mind your commitment to going  
no longer than ninety minutes.

**Closing  
Reading:** Our lives begin to end the day we become silent  
about things that matter. -- **Martin Luther King,  
Jr.**

**Extinguish  
the  
Chalice:** Join hands and say the following together:  
**May we go into the week ahead knowing what  
is worth resisting, and what we are resisting  
for.**  
And then, extinguish your chalice until you meet  
again.

Yes, this month's theme is among the most complex of them all. But it also may be the most simple. The complexity is clear:

Sometimes being a people of resistance involves struggle and requires us to disobey; other times it asks us to just be ourselves and not hide who we really are. Sometimes it involves defeating the enemy; other times it is a matter of noticing that treating them as the enemy defeats us all.

Sometimes being a person of resistance is about fighting all the way to the top; other times it's about picking yourself up off the floor and taking one tiny step. Sometimes it depends on the will to never let them win; other times it hinges on the wisdom to follow the path of least resistance.

It certainly takes the form of speaking our truth. But more often than not, it's about the harder task of speaking the truth in love.

We all know being a people of resistance involves refusing to comply and demanding change, which requires great courage. But sometimes the most courageous thing is to stop resisting and accepting that things just aren't going to work out the way we hoped.

Bottom line: being a people of resistance is tricky business and takes multiple forms.

But beyond this complexity lies the simplicity of Marge Piercy's words. In all cases, she reminds us, being a people of resistance starts when we say *we*.

January puts this in stark relief. Think about all those New Year's resolutions that try to overcome our personal inertia? Who of us ever accomplishes that without help? Without someone holding us accountable or cheering us on?

Martin Luther King Jr Day makes it just as clear. Although we celebrate him as a great leader, he himself preached that change requires a movement. Simply put, none of us resist alone.

Or maybe it's better to say that none of us **have** to resist alone. We all know what it is like to **want** to resist. Think of all those voices we hear in our heads and feel in our hearts: I'm not going to take it any more. I will not go along. I will not submit. I refuse to conform. I will no longer be numb. I will not give up. I will not forget. I will not go to sleep. I will ignore it no longer. I will not turn a blind eye. And yet, we also know that those voices are hard to hear and hold on to by ourselves. The blessing, of course, is that we don't have to hold on alone.

It is one thing to be told, "Resist!" It is quite another to be told, "Resist together!" But often what we need most is simply to be reminded that we don't have to resist alone.

May this be the gift we give each other this month. Let's help each other remember to start by saying *we*! It may be as simple as that.

If it is of such a nature that it requires you to be the agent of injustice to another, then, I say, break the law. Let your life be a counter-friction to stop the machine. What I have to do is to see, at any rate, that I do not lend myself to the wrong which I condemn. – Henry David Thoreau

What would happen if you saw praise, joy or the creation of beauty as your primary form of resistance? What if the world needs your praise as much as your picket signs? What if it needs the creation of beauty as much as the elimination of injustice?

In these downbeat times, we need as much hope and courage as we do vision and analysis. We must accent the best of each other even as we point out the vicious effects of our racial divide and the pernicious consequences of our maldistribution of wealth and power. -- Cornell West from “Race Matters”

Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote, “Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.” How is life asking you to end your silence?

Is it really an insurmountable and futile challenge? Or just a matter of taking the next small step in front of you?

Resistance is thought transformed into feeling. Change the thought that creates the resistance, and there is no more resistance. — Robert Conklin

The psychiatrist Carl Jung wrote, “What you resist, persists.” So, is it possible that your resistance is the source of the struggle you are in? Would the fight end if you stopped fighting? Would the wall fall down if you stopped pushing on it?

Change means movement. Movement means friction. Only in the frictionless vacuum of a nonexistent abstract world can movement or change occur without that abrasive friction of conflict. -- Saul Alinsky

Is it possible that your refusal to give up and give in may be a way of avoiding the pain?

A certain amount of resistance is good for anybody. It keeps you awake. — Joan Didion

Are your efforts to save the world leaving room to savor it?

Change is never painful. Only resistance to change is painful. -- Buddha

What would happen if you saw your justice work not as saving the world or bending the arc of the universe towards justice, but simply as “being a pest”? (Inspired by the Dalai Lama, who wrote: "If you think you are too small to make a difference, try sleeping with a mosquito.")