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Aggressive Love

In late November, I found myself at the front lines of a protest against police brutality in Boston. We marched peacefully until we reached a police barricade. The crowd stood, dazed and confused for about 5 minutes. Then an unknown voice over a megaphone yelled, "Push!" I instantly knew this was a bad idea, however before I could move I was being jammed by the crowd into the police men who were pushing me back into the crowd. As I stood dazed between two opposing forces, getting shoved back and forth, I realized something was missing in this protest: Love.

I proceeded to push my way out of the front lines and I realized after three rows of people there was a divide and 80 percent of the crowd was not pushing. This part of the crowd knew pushing the policemen was not an act of mutual respect and love. Yet everyone was passively watching the front three lines push and push. We came here to show solidarity for those who have died and ramming through a line of policemen is shameful and unnecessary to our greater cause. The front rows quickly grew tired of pushing and then we decided to turn around and to continually walk peacefully through the streets of Boston in an act of loving civil disobedience.

After reflecting on this story, I realized in this society aggression seems to be linked only to hate. Unfortunately love is often seen as corny. We see the bully as an aggressive hateful force that leaves all of the loving kids cowering in fear. Those who tend to act in this society are driven by anger or hate, while those who love passively look upon issues with disdain, but not action. This cannot continue. We must reverse this paradigm. We need those who advocate love to advocate it aggressively. When love and intelligence work together then idealism and realism also cohere smoothly.

Martin Luther King writes zealously on this topic and he calls it having a tough mind and a tender heart. First, we must tackle what does it mean to have a tough mind. People generally are scared to think in depth. We tend to take as fact what our teachers, the news, or textbooks say. In stead we need to think critically about what information we are fed and develop our own well thought out opinion. Once we have developed our tough minds we must pair them with a tender heart. For intelligence with out love leads to cold hearted irresponsibility. An intelligent and hardhearted man will tend to view the value of humans solely in their usefulness to him.

Instead a tenderhearted man will see the divine spark that exists in the soul of every man. Both of these traits are equally important and both are necessary. If we have intelligence without love we will be realistically pessimistic without hope for an idealistic state and if we have love without intelligence we will be overly idealistic without realistic means for a better world.

In our daily lives we can love aggressively by offering to return dining hall trays for friends or strangers, by not engaging in talking about people behind their back, or sometimes when we fall into the ritual of asking people, "how are you?" You could truly stop, look them in the eye and genuinely ask, "How are you?" Then through patience and direct questions you can see if there is any way you could help. One of the best feelings is when you pour your heart out to someone and then they text or email you late at night, saying they love you and hope you are doing well. People don't always need advice, but we always need love.

This is why I want to encourage all of us to be aggressive in our love. Love is the only way for us to truly be bipartisan. Love is the only way for religions to coexist. As seen throughout past and present history love is the only way for civil disobedience to work. Hate only begets more hate, and love is the only force that can turn an enemy into a friend. Love should not be less passionate than hate. Society necessitates an aggressive love. For if your love is passive then you might as well have not loved at all. Be aggressive in your love, because it is the only way to exist.