**INSPIRATIONBASE**

*A collection of ethical leadership speeches*

Dolores

Huerta



Dolores Huerta, an American activist and labor leader, is known for her efforts to improve the work conditions for migrant farmworkers, thus leading to the establishment of the *United Farm Workers of America*. Together with César Chávez, a *Community Services Organization* official, she cofounded the National Farm Workers Association in 1962, which preceded the influential union of the *United Farm Workers*. In 1975, her efforts resulted in the first law that recognized the right of collective bargaining for California farmworkers. She has also helped raising funds and has spoken out for immigration policies and the health of farm laborers. In 2002, she founded the *Dolores Huerta Foundation* that focuses on community organizing. She has received numerous honors, such as the 1993 induction into the *National Women’s Hall of Fame* and the 2012 *Presidential Metal of Freedom*. The documentary *Dolores* was released in 2017.

(<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Dolores-Huerta>)

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| **DH 1*.*** *Dolores Huerta Interview* | | | |  |
| Well, I was very fortunate that I met a great man named Fred Ross, Sr., and he showed me how to do organizing. And he was also the person that taught César Chávez how to organize. When I talk about organizing, it’s not like organizing your closet. This is like actually going into people’s homes and really teaching them that if they come together, they can really solve the issues in their community. But nobody can do it by themselves. They have to come together with other people. And then if they take direct action, you know, kind of challenge the public officials that are there that they can really make a lot of changes. And not only that, but we also get them to run for office also. And of course, many of them, as the people that we organize, many are immigrants. They’re first-time citizens, many of them, but we get them to run for office also. So here we have farm workers and construction workers, people who work as maids in hotels. And guess what? They’re sitting on the school board. They’re sitting on the water board, and then city councils, and, you know, recreational boards. And so it’s about them taking the power because that way they know that if they can serve on these decision making positions, then they can really help their community. Because it is the people on these boards that make the decisions how our resources are going to be spent. When you see that you go from community to community and you are able to get people to become engaged and make changes, it’s very, very powerful and exhilarating. And so you wanna continue doing that work because you wanna go to as many communities as you can.  […] [W]hen we have setbacks, it means that we have to do things in a different way to reach more people. But I was very fortunate because I had a very strong mother. She was a dominant figure in our family. She worked two jobs until she had enough money to build her own business. And so I was very fortunate that I was able to have a good education you might say. And […] I lived in the library. When I came home from starting with the grammar school, because my mother always had to work two jobs, and so I would go straight to the library and I would stay there until the library closed. And I did that in elementary school, I did that in high school, and I did that in college. […] And, you know, there’s something that people don’t think about because, you know, I grew up during World War II, and I remember when our President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, they wanted to take money from the schools and the library for the war effort, and he said, “No, we will not take one dime out of our libraries. Because our libraries, our education system is the soul of the country, the soul of our nation.” That’s how important libraries are, I think, to everybody.  […] I think helping to get farm workers some of the basic human rights and necessities that they needed like water, cold drinking water, having toilets in the field, having rest periods, giving them the right to organize. You know, this is very important. And I think that’s one of the things we don’t have in our educational system: to teach people about what labor unions have won. ‘Cause a lot of things we take for granted. Like if you ask people, “How did we get the eight-hour day?” Everybody celebrates the eight-hour day, but do we know how we received that? A lot of people don’t know. The union labor leaders have fought for that the eight-hour day; they were executed. They were hung in Chicago. And so we don’t include that in our education system. So we have to have more books on labor unions. Even public education. We wouldn’t have public education and libraries if it were not for the labor movement. So that’s what we have to think about: making more books on labor.  […] Regardless of what kind of job that we have or what kind of work that we do, […] part of our life has got to be: how can we help other people? And then we can volunteer to help somebody else or help another organization, but I think that’s what really keeps our country strong. When we are compassionate, and we care about the most helpless people that need our help.  […] [I]think we wanna leave a legacy of justice. We know that we live in the richest country in the world, the United States of America, and yet we don’t allow somehow that a lot of our people don’t have the resources that they should have for food, for shelter, for education, for health care. […] Getting people involved in voting and trying to bring more money into our educational system so that we can have smaller class sizes, more libraries. […] We know that learning is very important, and libraries supplement what children learn in school. Because there’s no way that teachers can teach everything that children need to know. But if they have a library, they can go find the books and the things that they need, not only to help them learn but to entertain them also. And reading good stories, that is so important. And you can’t have democracy if people are not educated. And so if we are going to have justice in our United States of America, then we need to have people that are educated and people that can learn and continue learning. | | | | |
| **Date** | 3/10/19  Accessed on 3. May 2021 | **Source** | LA Public Library on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36FYxLYY2gc>), min. 1:29 - 3:07, 3:30 - 4:54, 5:14 - 6:13, 6:46 - 7:09, 9:06 - 10:23; close captioning available | |

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| **DH 2*.*** *How to End Racism / Dolores Huerta / TEDxOakland* | | | |  |
| I would like to talk about something that is really causing a lot of destruction in our society. That is hurting many, many people. That affects how our resources are distributed. And many people whose futures are really maimed and destroyed. And that is racism. And actually, there’s one simple way that we can get rid of racism. And it’s a scientific explanation about our human origins: we are actually only one human family. W have a lot of different ethnic groups, we have a lot of different cultures, we have a lot of different nationalities, but we only have one human race: Homo sapiens sapiens. And we just have to remind people where our human race began. Our human race began in Africa. And as Homo sapiens traveled across the planet, they went to Asia, came down to the Bering Strait to the Americas, and people got a little lighter in skin. Well, one of our tribes ended up in Europe, where it’s very cold and they co-mingled with the Neanderthals, and they lost their color. So now those folks have to go to the beach to get their color back, or to the tanning salon. So it is so important that we remember that we are all one human family. And so we can say to all of those white nationalists, “Get over your Africans, okay? Just get over it!” And we know that the racism has been really sharply targeted to Latinos. And I just want to say to everybody, “Google the map of the United States of America before 1848. And when you see that map of the United States of America, you’re going to be shocked because guess what? A third of the United States was Mexico. So when they tell us, “Go back where you came from,” we have to say to them, “You know, we are where we came from, okay? We were here before the border. So we didn’t cross the border. The border crossed us.”  […] [W]hy are they leaving their beautiful lands to come here? Well, we know a lot about is due to poverty. And then we think of the word “bananas.” Bananas? Yes! How many bananas do we consume in the United States every single day? Does that money go to the people in Guatemala? El Salvador? Or Honduras? No! The money that we spend on bananas goes to Chiquita Banana. To Dole Banana. To the fifty banana companies. And it never reaches the people on whose lands the bananas are produced. Or the people who work to produce the bananas. So this is something that we have to think about in terms of our foreign relations. And then we punish the people who we have exploited to make our corporation, our banana corporations, rich. And we know that this is wrong. So we have to do something about this. And Coretta Scott King said this: “We will never have peace in the world until feminists take power!” So this is what we have to work on. But to do that we’ve got to get rid of another evil that we have in our society, which Helen Keller said is that the worst one that scientists have never been able to find a cure for, and that is apathy. So that means that all of us have to become organizers. We’ve got to go out there. We’ve got to talk to our friends. We’ve got to talk to our relatives. We’ve got to talk to our neighbors and say to them, “Please, join us. Please, help us organize, so we can get rid of the racism and the bigotry and the misogyny, the homophobia. You’re thinking about our environment and how we have to save our planet. And we could all do this. But that means that we’ve got to get out there. We’ve got to get to work and make sure that all of our public institutions, our private institutions, every single organization, that they will join us in this movement to get rid of racism, sexism, homophobia, bigotry against our labor unions, against our working people. But if all of us work together, we can actually make it happen. So I’m going to ask you all a question, and I think you know the answer. And the question that I’m going to ask you is, “Who’s got the power?” Don’t, wait a second, okay? I’m gonna ask you, “Who’s got the power?” I want you to say, “We’ve got the power!” And when I say, “What kind of power?” I want you to say, “People power!” Can we do that? Okay. Let’s go! - Who’s got the power? - What kind of power? - So all of us working together, can we make sure that we end the racism, can we do that? - Okay, the bigotry? - The misogyny? - The homophobia? Okay? And save our planet? Okay, so let’s all do it together with an organized hand clap, and yes, we’ll say it in Spanish. Yes, we can, which means “Sí, se puede.” Let’s go! | | | | |
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