

# The Core Values of César Chávez

1. **Acceptance of all People** – An essential ingredient for success in organizing diverse forces to achieve social change, create community, and actualize democracy is the acceptance of all people; an absolutely indispensable necessity to the well-being of this country.

*"We need to help students and parents cherish and preserve the ethnic and cultural diversity that nourishes and strengthens ... this nation."*

2. **Celebrating Community** - Sharing the joyous and respectful expression of cultural diversity through the reinforcement of the values of equity and responsibility to and for one another.

*"We cannot seek achievement for ourselves and forget about progress and prosperity for our community ... Our ambitions must be broad enough to include the aspirations and needs of others, for their sakes and for our own."*

3. **Respect for Life and the Environment** – Respect that holds as sacred the land, the people, and all other forms of life.

*"However important the struggle is and however much misery and poverty and degradation exist, we know that it cannot be more important than one human life."*

4. **Non-Violence** – Invoking non-violence as the most powerful tool for achieving social/economic justice and equality; action that requires boldness and courage versus meekness and passivity.

*"Non-violence is not inaction. It is not discussion. It is not for the timid or weak ... Nonviolence is hard work. It is the willingness to sacrifice. It is the patience to win."*

5. **Innovation** – A creative capacity to find pragmatic strategies and tactics to resolve problems and situations that often seem insurmountable to others.

*"A lasting organization is one in which people will continue to build, develop and move when you are not there."*

6. **A Preference to Help the Most Needy** – A concerted effort to support programs that reach the most needy, the most dispossessed, the most forgotten people in society no matter how difficult the challenge that choice may bring.

*"We are tired of words, of betrayals, of indifference ... the years are gone when the farm worker said nothing and did nothing to help himself... Now we have new faith. Through our strong will, our movement is changing these conditions... We shall be heard."*

7. **Knowledge** - The pursuit of self-directed learning and the development of critical thinking and constructive problem solving skills; overcoming ignorance through education.

*"Students must have initiative; they should not be mere imitators. They must learn to think and act for themselves and be free."*

8. **Sacrifice** – Sacrifice that is spiritual; that is courageous and steadfast in its willingness to endure great hardship for others.

*"I am convinced that the truest act of courage, the strongest act of [humanity], is to sacrifice ourselves for others in a totally non-violent struggle for justice. To be [human] is to suffer for others. God help us to be human."*

9. **Service to Others** – Service that is predicated on empowering others; engendering self-help, self-determination, and self-sufficiency versus charity.

*"When we are really honest with ourselves we must admit that our lives are all that really belong to us. So, it is how we use our lives that determines what kind of [people] we are. It is my deepest belief that only by giving our lives do we find life."*

10. **Determination** – Determination that is characterized by an attitude that with faith, steadfast commitment, patience, and optimism, human beings can prevail against all odds.

*"We draw our strength from the very despair in which we have been forced to live. We shall endure."*