The Times They Are a-Changin'
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https://msu.edu/~kalush/The_Times_They_Are_AChangin.pdf

The Times They Are a-Changin'! Remember that old 1960s era Bob Dylan song or maybe you preferred the version by the Byrds, Peter, Paul and Mary, Simon & Garfunkel or one of the many other musicians that performed it. When I was a young woman this song made me feel really good because it spoke to me of all the doors that were opening for me that were new in my generation. And in view of recent events maybe we need to feel that way again.

Bob Dylan - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e7qQ6_RV4VQ
The Byrds - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uq4pe0cKQc0
Peter, Paul and Mary - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rIZ1QAwkZSg
Simon & Garfunkel - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=afLyjnmYnz0

Come gather 'round people
Wherever you roam
And admit that the waters
Around you have grown
And accept it that soon
You'll be drenched to the bone.
If your time to you
Is worth savin'
Then you better start swimmin'
Or you'll sink like a stone
For the times they are a-changin'.

Come senators, congressmen
Please heed the call
Don't stand in the doorway
Don't block up the hall
For he that gets hurt
Will be he who has stalled
There's a battle outside
And it is ravin'.
It'll soon shake your windows
And rattle your walls
For the times they are a-changin'.

Come mothers and fathers
Throughout the land
And don't criticize
What you can't understand
Your sons and your daughters
Are beyond your command
Your old road is
Rapidly agin'.
Please get out of the new one
If you can't lend your hand
For the times they are a-changin'.
We've all been either watching or ignoring in frustration the Kavanaugh nomination, the Larry Nassar case and many other recent events relating to the #MeToo movement. The #MeToo movement is about women having courage to speak up when they're mistreated and supporting each other. I realized today that I feel a lot better about it now that I'm looking at the difference in what's happening today compared to what was happening twenty or thirty years ago. We really are making some progress! Let's look at some differences between now and then.

Thirty years ago martial arts practitioners were just beginning to realize that the martial arts had benefits not just for men and teenage boys but for young children and women too. Our Chief Grandmaster Robert H. Dearman was one of the pioneers in doing this. In 1987 when I started Sanchin Ryu, women usually joined our class either because they had experienced rape or were concerned about their safety or because it was an activity to do with their children. My husband Ray bugged me until I agreed to come to class with him and Ben (7) because he wanted me to share Sanchin Ryu with him and my sons. Before going to class that first night I was having a BIG problem with seeing any way that a woman could do karate. It was a guy thing! I arrived in class and met Master Sheila Pawlowski, who at the time was a fourth degree black belt. Sheila was a young, tiny and feminine woman and really had a good grip on doing karate and still acting like a woman.

There are a few stories about Sheila that are interesting. The first is from 1982. My friend Master Denise Roman was a white belt in a class at Mason Middle School in Mason, Michigan. The class was lead by Bob Dearman but it was before he started Sanchin Ryu. He was a master in the Ichin Ryu style which arranged their classes in rows with the black belts in the front row, brown belts behind them, and so on with the white belts in the back. Poor Denise was in the back row and couldn't see what was going on at all. Sheila, who was a green belt at the time, took Denise under her wing and showed her how to the basics. This is an example of the age old practice of women banding together in support of each other.

Sheila told all of us ladies this story about how when she was promoted to black belt, she told Bob Dearman that she didn't really care that much about being a black belt, what she really wanted was to be a sensei. When the CGM heard Sheila say this in 1983, he told her that he had a lot of confidence in her ability to lead a class but he was concerned that people wouldn't take a woman seriously as a karate instructor. But he took a chance on Sheila and this opened the door for Denise and I and many women that followed.

When I became a sensei in 1988, he warned me that it was going to be harder for me because I was a woman. He also told me (and Denise was told the same thing) that he was giving me a new class because he had already experienced rejection of female senseis when they took over a class previously taught by a man. Denise actually had the experience in 1984 of a new female adult student refusing to attend a Women's Self Defense class on the first night of a session because she was a substitute instructor and "obviously a woman couldn't teach the class and she'd come next week for the regular male instructor." Today, most people don't seem to have a problem believing in a woman's ability to lead karate classes. All of the previous instructors of the class I'm current teaching in Carson City/Crystal had been men and when I took over in 2005, I got nothing but respect.
During my first years in Sanchin Ryu when I worked with men, there were two types of men. The first type treated us like china dolls that might break and were afraid to hit us with more than light contact. These same men often also thought there was no way a woman could dump them on the floor and were stupid enough to tell us, thereby giving us an invitation to prove them wrong - splat! The second type were determined to treat us the same as they treated men and as a result could be pretty scary to have as a partner. It took us all a while to learn to find out that it doesn't matter if your partner is a man or a woman. What matters is what they feel comfortable doing and part of working with another person is to find that out. And today that's part of what senseis teach their classes. This learning that to treat women as equals doesn't mean that you should treat them like men but like the people they are applies to a lot of the interactions between men and women today.

Now, let's get back to what brought this all on - all the recent news about these decades old rape accusations.

When a woman is raped, it is very common to feel for her to feel ashamed that she didn't do more to try to stop it and to be afraid of her attacker. When instructing women's self defense we always have said two things:

(1) This isn't your fault.
(2) It's easy now to think of things you could have said or done that might have helped, but I believe and you should too, that you did the best you could to prevent it.

We also recommended two more things but we understood and told women that we understood that they would be difficult to do. Today many more women are able to do both of these things. In the future, most women will be able to do them.

(1) Don't keep this a secret
(2) You should report this to the police

There are a few things that make rape different from having your house burgled. People feel comfortable complaining to others about their house being burgled and reporting it to the police. We didn't back then and don't now feel that way about rape, though the level of societal support for rape victims is increasing. We all know that rape victims have to deal with their peers not believing them or ridiculing them, and with being put through the wringer by law enforcement and the court trial process if they choose to report the rape.

In the last few decades, society is slowly evolving to treat rape victims better. One big step in this direction is that law enforcement and society in general are taking seriously so many of these accusations for events that happened decades ago. Twenty years ago it was hard enough to get law enforcement to take seriously an accusation about a rape in the last year.
This Kavanaugh nomination is actually way more important than you may realize. This is not just about whether he did it or not. It's about what kind of person our country wants to have making major legal decisions for our country. It's about to what extent we want to hold a person responsible for what they did when they were young and foolish, what we're going to consider regrettable but forgivable behavior and what a person has to do to cancel out their past mistakes. When Congress makes this decision, they will actually being saying whether or not they believe that supreme court justices should hold themselves to the standards that we all hope that society will do a better job of adopting.

In the future we can hope that society will progress to the point where most rape victims will feel comfortable telling others about what happened and reporting it to the police and that society will take a more active role in supporting victims and dealing with their attackers. We already know from dealing with bullies that having their peers talk about their bad behavior can be a big deterrent and when other children know about it they can take steps to protect themselves from known bullies.

So, let's work together to make this happen. And for now, let's all sing The Times They Are a-Changin' again for inspiration.