



2018 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Art, Essay, & Multimedia Contest

The world is an ugly place. It has a face of hatred and anger. Its tongue speaks injustice. Its heart pumps prejudice throughout its body. It does cruel deeds. Today, the world has a few less blemishes that it once did because Dr. Martin Luther King gave himself the task of wiping away all blemishes and ugly scars within his grasp. Because of his work, the world's snarl is less menacing and it speaks less hatred; however, there is still much work to be done, and there is only one way to complete this work. It starts with every individual, including myself.

I must look at my own face. I must remove the marks of hatred and the snarl of prejudice. I must take control of my tongue, teach it kind words, and encourage it to speak an abundance of love rather than hatred. Dr. Martin Luther King said himself that "Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that." I must look at my heart. I must force out the toxins and the corruption within my blood and begin with fresh blood that is made of empathy just as much as it is made of oxygen and that tastes of kindness as equally as it does of iron. I must sweat out the fever of injustice. I must look into my own soul and my own mind, and, through an intervention of introspection, declare that I am no longer a lonesome passerby in a world begging for upstanders.

I will instead be a soldier of love and tolerance. A fierce contender with hate. The Hercules of doing what is just. I will be like Samson, but no one shall touch what gives me strength. I will decimate my small town mindset and remove the thoughts of prejudice which my community would have me keep intact. I will use the eyes of my soul to recognize my own privilege and make myself aware of the struggle of others less fortunate than I. I must make my motivation the well being of others instead of myself. As a result, I can hopefully do unto others as I would have then do unto me.

Others make up a large part of the issue, especially in a small and uniform town such as Dover. Fortunately, I am able to take some responsibility and make an effort to educate others on the topic of prejudice in the United States. This will require care and respect in order to be effective. King knew this as well. Even in the most difficult and intense situations, he refused to resort to violence because he knew it would take him further from his goal of peace rather than bring him closer. If I am disrespectful, insulting, or pretentious in my efforts to explain the beauty of empathy to those in my community, then it will all be in vain.

Each person on this planet can only see the world through his or her own eyes. This means that those who have not experienced injustice may be unable to comprehend how extreme the matter is. This rule applies to me as well; however, fixing the issue will require more than merely adjusting my vision of the world. I must adjust my heart. If I truly wish to be compassionate and understanding of those less fortunate than I, then I must put my heart where their hearts have been. A necessary search for an emotional understanding of the situations of others is imperative. I must search for love to give to those who are in need of it. Only then can I adjust my eyes and see past the color, race, gender, or sexual orientation of a person. I want to see nothing more than a human being when I look upon a person. In the end, everyone is human.

It is a drastic change. It is a change that the world wants to stamp into the same dirt of intolerance and blindness on which it treads. The vacuous soldiers of intolerance stand firmly, but love can drive out any foe. Every person on the Earth must try to start the same fire within them that Dr. King carried years ago. It starts with the tiniest spark of realization. It starts with the witness of injustice and the dowry of sadness placed on our shoulders. It starts when we witness our fellow humans being crushed by a weight parallel to that of Atlas's. It starts with you. It starts with me.

Lane Moore
12th Grade Essay Winner
Dover High School, Dover
Laurie Wallick, Teacher
Theresa Alberts, Principal

Be the Change

