



2020 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Art, Essay, & Multimedia Contest

There I stood just watching as a person's life was slowly torn apart. This enormous man overpowered and slowly pounded away at her. I just stood there, frozen, not knowing what to do. This man hailed down insulting appellations on her and pushed her down the stairs outside. It was bright and beautiful outside, which was in stark contrast of this man's soul, which was dark and hostile. Why couldn't I be the light shining for her? How could I muster up the courage to actually say something to prevent this woman from living a life full of intolerable levels of hardship?

As I sat and watched her feelings become deeply pierced, something in me lit a fire. I could no longer bare the burden of inaction. I yelled, "Stop!" and proceeded to walk towards the perpetrator. The woman replied "NO! I'm ok. Just leave," and gestured me to move away. I could see the pain in her eyes and I knew she was far from ok, and so did she. The man looked at me with a sinister glare and left the area. I ran to help the woman, feeling a sense of relief knowing that my courage allowed me to help somebody in need.

As I reflect back on this moment, I am fully cognizant that in any situation like this one, I understand that there are consequences to whatever action I decide to take. Like so many brave souls before me, I must always speak up and be the support for those things that matter. I can't ever let the burden of inaction stop me from doing what is right. Throughout history, there have been many times where people have put their lives on the line to speak up for something. Even if it didn't matter if it was negatively affecting somebody, they spoke up. They used their courage to fight for something that truly mattered. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. had the courage to speak up for human rights, every chance he could. If we continue to fall back on a time in America where racism and segregation ruled the United States, we will never realize the dream of Dr. King. Sure, we can remember all the bad things that happened, but we can also remember all the brave people who stood up against what was happening and put their lives on the line, some paying the ultimate price. Their courage may have been their cause of death, but their courage set up a better future for individuals being discriminated against. I fully understand what their sacrifice has done for me and many other people across the world. It is this determination, bravery, and courage that moves me to strive for a world closer to equality, peace, and harmony. At the end of the day nobody should ever be afraid to stand up for something, especially if it matters because that one moment could benefit the whole world. That one moment where courage lit that fire in my eye, slowly changed my mother's life for the better.

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