

Advancing the Dream: The Time is Now

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On August 28, 1963, when Martin Luther King Jr. stepped up to a podium in front of thousands at the nation's capital and passionately belted out his immortal diction characterizing his belief and dream of equality, his words instilled a fire inside citizens across the United States to materialize this dream to fruition. King served as a catalyst of knocking down segregation with the Civil Rights Act that not only empowered citizens across the country but also offered hope to those who continued to struggle with discrimination. Recently another of King's visions was fulfilled with Barak Obama's election as president smashing a barrier and entering new territory for the future. With all of the arousing success achieved on the coattails of King's inspirational dream for equality, it is easy to stay stagnant and be satisfied with the steps taken so far that have created a completely different world than the one fifty years ago. However, this would be counterintuitive to the change King advocated for. Despite the substantial change in destroying segregation in the African American community, much can still be done today to advance the dream given to inspire others of continual change for betterment and equality. Currently religious persecution, sexism, ethnic profiling and racism, and LGBT hatred tarnish a nation known as the melting pot of the world.

But what can I do to continue Martin Luther King's dream, ideals, and legacy? To fully answer this question we must first look at what is King's vision that was laid in his iconic speech. The inspiration and core meaning of it comes from the epicenter of American belief, the creed laid by the founding fathers, the belief that holds America together- that "we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal." The power and truth of this quote

resonated with King and drove him to open the nation's eyes to how this fundamental principle was being overlooked. King carries this motif throughout his speech where he preaches of an end to oppression that will result in a truly equal, united brotherhood that encompasses America. He envisions a nation where rich stand next to poor, black to white, Muslim to Christian, gay to straight, old to young in order to form one cohesive unit the way an artist uses a plethora of hues to create an astounding final work.

This vision may sound heartwarming and theoretically agreeable, but that is not enough; it must be put into action. To properly carry on King's vision we must turn this idea into fruition. You do not have to be the next Rosa Parks, James Farmer, John Lewis, or Malcolm X. You are not expected to lead extravagant marches through the streets or passionately stand in front of congregations of people to advocate change. What can be done, though, are little actions in everyday life that consist of kindness to all peoples that speak to the legacy to King. Advance King's dream by not participating in bullying the new peer at school or work. Advance King's dream by refusing to discriminate against a person or group with differing ideas. Advance King's dream by offering an encouraging compliment or smile to the man sitting on the bench with the weight of the world on him. Advance King's dream by giving some change to the tarnished veteran at the side of the street. Even though these actions may seem menial, small actions add up to big actions as a whole which in turn instill the positive change that King preached of. Legendary UCLA basketball coach John Wooden said "little things make big things happen." This idea rings loud and true to the basic idea on how to carry on King's dream. By doing little deeds that help others and show kindness, unity is formed as hatred and discrimination trickle away. If everyone were to offer up kindness then the need for racism, sexism, religious persecution, and sexual orientation hatred would become nonexistent since the

community could see these just as sectors that add to the united cornucopia that is the community. Little deeds show love to others which creates equality and brotherhood of all peoples despite perceived differences. This is how to carry out Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream for the future by creating a world without hatred of others where everyone is able to coexist in peace together. This change is up to each individual person and their decision to accept and abide by this credo in their life. If individuals are able to successfully carry the idea of small deeds of love and acceptance in their life then it will domino into a bigger movement across society that leads to a change throughout America. In this way we will be able to unite, hold hands together in peace, and exclaim as we break the mold of discrimination "Free at last, Free at last, Great God a-mighty, We are free at last."