

Advancing The Dream
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The words freedom and equality have had significant changes in meaning and interpretation throughout history. One man who impacted the way those words are interpreted is Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Through his marches, speeches and peaceful public protests, he fought to change America's perspective on segregation and equality. The success of these attempts led to the way the world is today, a fully integrated and productive society. However, sentiments of segregation and inequality in society still exist. Individually and collectively, we can advance Dr. King's dream by accepting one another, helping to make everyone feel welcome, and by learning about one another's cultural differences and similarities.

People come from all over the world, classes, and backgrounds. By putting our differences aside, we can come to know a person by who they are, not what they are perceived to be. Although it may sound cliché, don't judge a book by its cover, everyone's story is different. By talking to others and focusing on the similarities between one another, not only will you be making a new friend, but both will leave the conversation with a greater sense of unity. Communication is key when trying to achieve an increased sense of equality. Learning to accept one another for who we are will provide a greater sense of equality. Individually, if everyone did this on a regular basis, it would make it much easier to get along with one another and would also help newcomers feel welcome.

Another way to achieve a greater sense of equality is by trying your best to make everyone feel welcome and as if they belong. When coming into a new society, many people are frightened by the thought of being rejected and not being able to "fit-in" with their new peers and

environment. They fear that their differences will not be accepted, and they will be treated as an outcast. If someone new moves to your school, try your best to make them feel welcome and learn where they moved from. This will help them to adapt and feel closer to their new environment, which will increase their sense of unity. In no time, they'll begin to feel like they belong and will feel equal to their peers.

Learning where others come from not only brings people closer, but shows you how even though they come from different places, they are still a human being just like you. Another way of advancing Dr. King's dream of equality is by spreading awareness of different places and cultures. At my school we have many diverse clubs, like Students Associated for Africa, Spanish Club, and French Club. They provide members with a fun and interactive way of learning about other places and cultures through volunteer activities. When inequality is an occurrence, most of the time it is due to a refusal to accept the different cultures that are found in society today. Through the awareness provided by these clubs, we are increasing the knowledge of other cultures, thus leading them to gain the respect they deserve. By adding more clubs like these to schools, collectively, many more people can be educated on the differences shared by different cultures around the world, heightening the sense of unity and equality.

Individually and collectively, we can all work together to advance Dr. King's dream of equality. The biggest factor determining whether or not this dream can be fully achieved all comes down to the level of communication between members of society. Only through communication can you gain the knowledge and perspectives of those whose cultures and lives are different than yours. By making everyone feel welcome and as if they belong, and spreading awareness of other cultures and places to society, we can achieve a greater sense of equality. Fulfilling Dr. King's dream may take some work, but in the end, it will all be worth it.