

Advancing the Dream - Our Greatness, My Service

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“Everyone has the power for greatness -- not for fame, but greatness, because greatness is determined by service.” This quote epitomizes the living legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King.

For without his sacrificial service and the legions of Americans, the rights, freedoms, and opportunities that I freely enjoy, as young man of color would be limited at best.

I am grateful for those young, old, black and white for their tenacity, strength, compassion, heart and perseverance to look beyond the struggle of the day; to believe in the victory of tomorrow.

Dr. King’s dream was three fold, in the historical “I Have a Dream” speech; which he delivered on August 28, 1963, on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.

The speech encompassed his love of country, his love of people, and the broken promises of the country; by its people.

The magnitude of the speech implored all people to act for justice, fairness and live up to the creed of this great land.

Forty-six years later, this great nation has experienced great highs like, electing the first African American President and great lows, like the 9/11 Terror attacks, which threw our country into war.

But through it all, the unifying or common thread at the crux of our existence, is our common belief in the greatness of our country, the strength of our people, and the power to make a difference in the world through service.

As an American, we seek out the opportunities, to invest in the wealth and the success of our families, but what about those who are less fortunate or who have fallen in rough times and can’t seem to find a way out of the storm.

The late, great Dr. King, once said, “That anyone can be great because anybody can serve.” You don’t have to have a college degree to serve; you don’t have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only “need a heart full of grace, and a soul generated by love.” Dr. King so profoundly stated.

These legendary words should be the motto of volunteers across this great country. These simple words give purpose and life to the vision and instruction for service demonstrated by the late doctor.

Service is what the nation is in need of during trying times and what we develop and practice in times of prosperity.

There are a plethora of people, in a variety of places, who are pleading for the help of good Samaritans; but few show up. As a believer, I know through my own experiences of serving those less fortunate than I, that the harvest is plenty; but the laborers are few.

That's why people young people who serve and give up their time for the betterment of others; make a difference locally, statewide, nationally and globally!

Young people, often receive criticism and ridicule from adults due to their perceived inexperience; however, it is the young people that will grow up and one day take their place as the leaders of this nation.

"The way that youth of America look today, I fear for our countries future". I've heard this statement going around social circles of the older generations, and I ask myself, what example has been set so that we can better ourselves and the community?

The example that many youth have experienced have been detrimental to the development of our society. Dr. King said "nothing in the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity."

These words cannot be truer and more descriptive than today.

The youth of the millennial age have number of negative examples set before them; however, this cycle can be stopped and even reversed; with the service of other positive, young people in negatively affected areas.

Service in the areas that are in need the most, is exactly what this generation needs. The more positive things and actions that people are exposed too... the more they are likely to share their positivity with others.

If people witness acts of kindness and generosity they are more likely to follow or mimic the acts of kindness and generosity toward someone else.

It's like a domino effect: more and more people will experience positivity and share it in their everyday experience. Just volunteering at a homeless shelter could be enough to start a domino effect of service, kindness, and generosity. The task starts with the service to and for others to inspire, encourage and motivate.

Although it might seem difficult or frightening, the service of helping someone gives a feeling that can't be described.

Dr. King once stated "never, never be afraid to do what is right especially if the well-being of a person or animal is at stake. Society's punishments are small compared to the wounds we inflict on our soul when we looked the other way."

Although the task seems more challenging than it sounds; it can be accomplished with the combined talents of older and younger generations standing together side-by-side; in service for a common purpose or goal.

I plan to do my part in service to my country, just as my father, grandfather, and great-grandfather by submitting my application to the US Naval Academy for the Class of 2019!

Dr. King's statement on service means more to me and my family than just mere words....it is our commitment to each other and to this nation.