



Martin Luther King Jr. had a dream that one day, all the world would join their voices in unity, sing freedom's song and all nations would celebrate the end of all strife.

This vision was the principal message that entrenched the person he was and how he would be forever remembered in history.

Martin Luther King Jr. was a foremost [social activist](#) and leader of the civil rights movement from 1954.

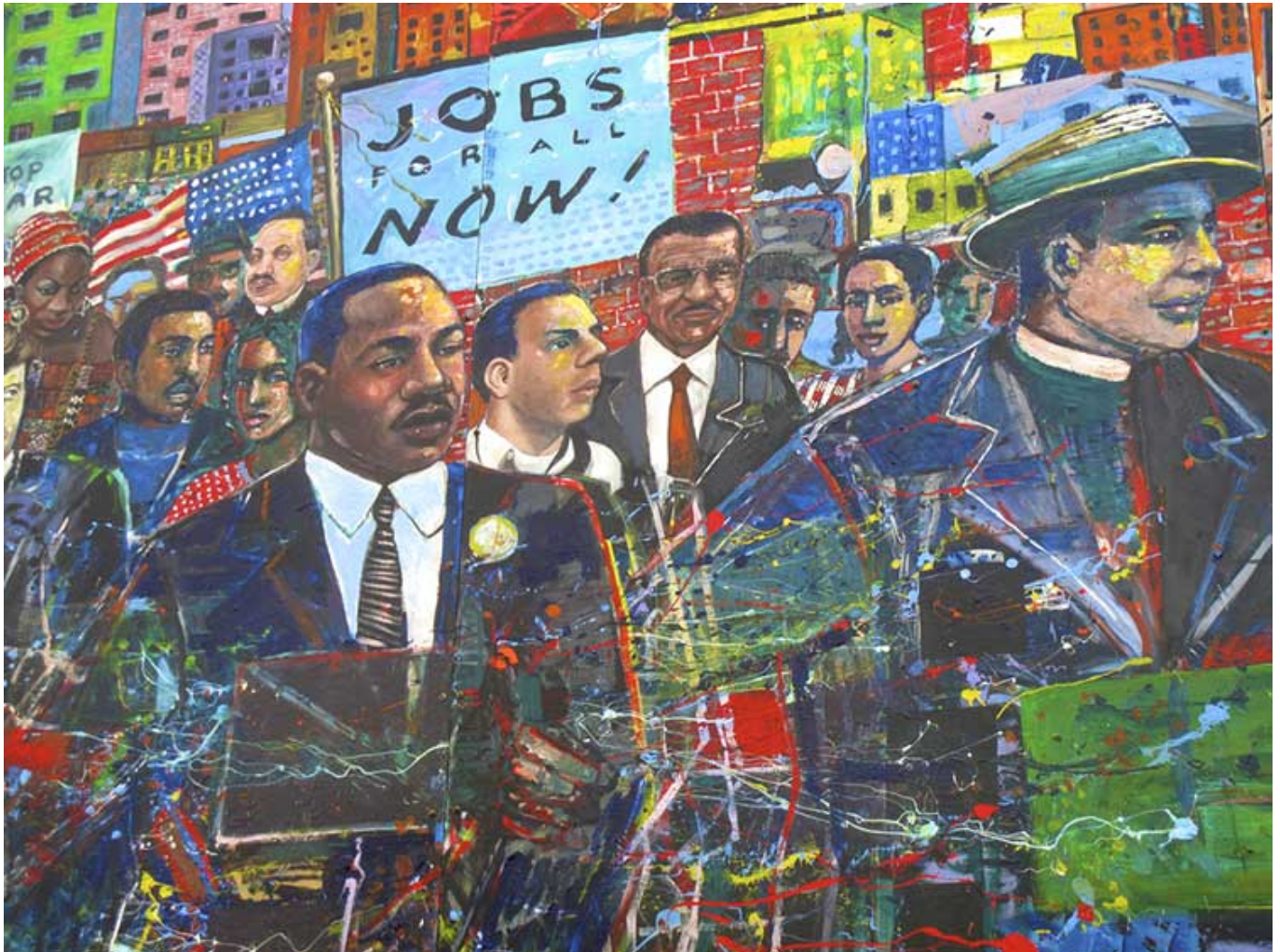
He advanced the cause for the end of racism and segregation of African Americans through nonviolent methods in America.

His pacifist [stand](#) was a testament of his upbringing.

His father, Martin Luther King Sr., was a pastor and Martin Luther King Jr. also became a Baptist minister.

Therefore, his kind of activism was rooted in his Christian beliefs

And he was also influenced by [Mahatma Gandhi](#) who had also propounded nonviolence as a veritable tool in activism.



The first popular demonstration under King's leadership was the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955.

The protest had been kick-started by the courageous act of Rosa Parks, a strong participant in the civil rights movement and a secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), who had refused to give up her seat on the bus to a white passenger.



This had prompted activists to go on a protracted bus boycott for 381 days which eventually forced the hand of the government to declare segregation in buses as unlawful by November 1956.

King was the prominent face and voice of this protest and spurred by its success and courage.

He and other activists established the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)

A sect established to drive the equality cause for blacks through nonviolent means.

In 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. led the Birmingham campaign to protest the injustices meted out to blacks in cities across America.

He was arrested for his involvement in the protest in April 1963 and from jail, he wrote a letter which captured the core of the civil rights philosophy.

In that same year, he led the chief of all protests - 'A March on Washington' which became a turning point in the efforts of the civil rights movement and birthed the signing of the Civil Rights Act in 1964.

It was after this march that King delivered his most renowned speech;

'I have a dream'



On the steps of the Lincoln Memorial to pay tribute to the president who had legislated the end of slavery in the United States of America.



Image Courtesy of Time Magazine

In 1965, Martin Luther King Jr. received the Nobel Peace Prize.

In that same year, King organized a voter registration crusade in Selma, Alabama which erupted into a violent fight between the white segregationists



and the black protesters.

The incident attracted many sympathizers for the black people and this eventually led to the passing of the Voting Rights Act in August 1965 which granted all African Americans the right to vote.

As the civil rights movement grew, so did other factions who did not agree with the nonviolent methods of King and wanted him out of the picture.

On April 4, 1968, Martin Luther King was murdered in Memphis.

In 1983, President Ronald Reagan authorized a day to celebrate Martin Luther King in the U.S.

The MLK day was first celebrated on the third Monday in January of 1986.

That said, here are 79 greatest Martin Luther King Jr. quotes for your ultimate perusal.



79 Most Famous Martin Luther Jr. King Quotes (In Alphabetical Order)

“A genuine leader is not a searcher for consensus but a molder of consensus.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



“A lie cannot live.”



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



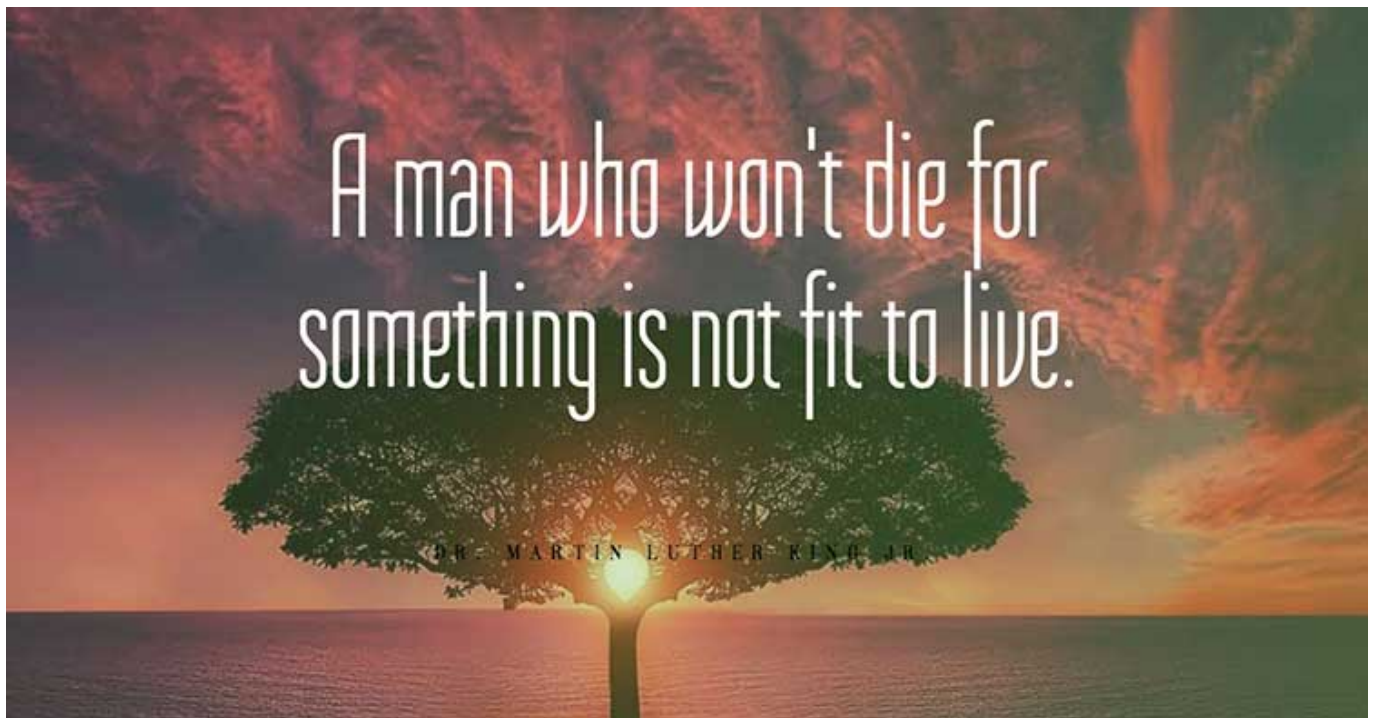
“A man can’t ride your back unless it’s bent.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



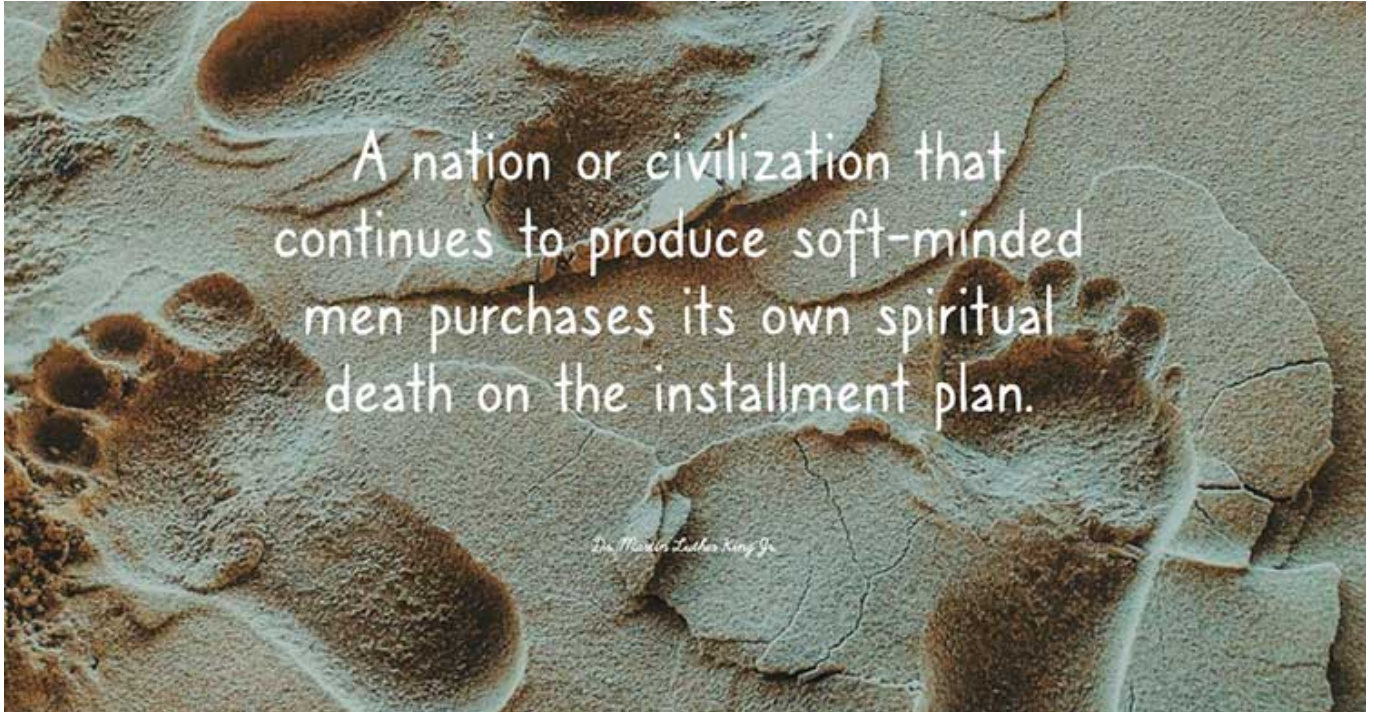
“A man who won’t die for something is not fit to live.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



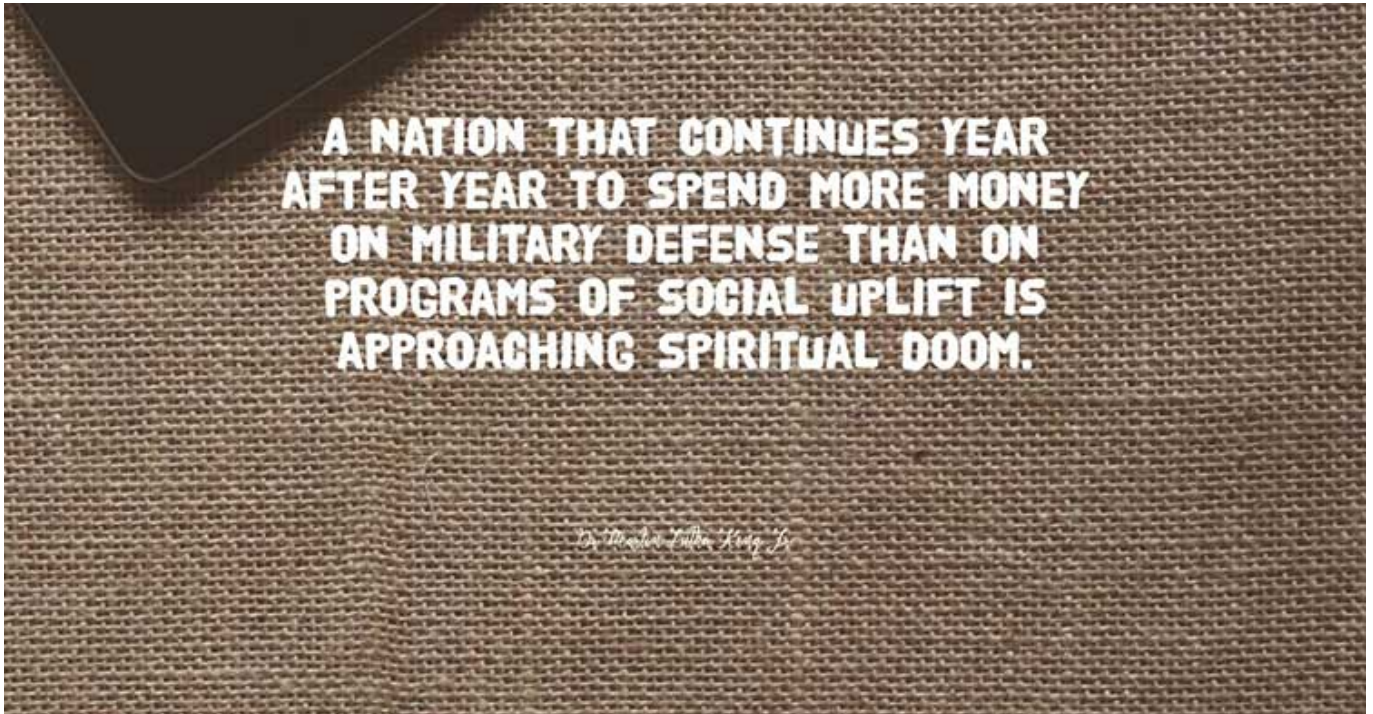
“A nation or civilization that continues to produce soft-minded men purchases its own spiritual death on the installment plan.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



“A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual doom.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



“A right delayed is a right denied.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



“A riot is at bottom the language of the unheard.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



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DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

“All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



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DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

“Almost always, the creative dedicated minority has made the world better.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



“An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

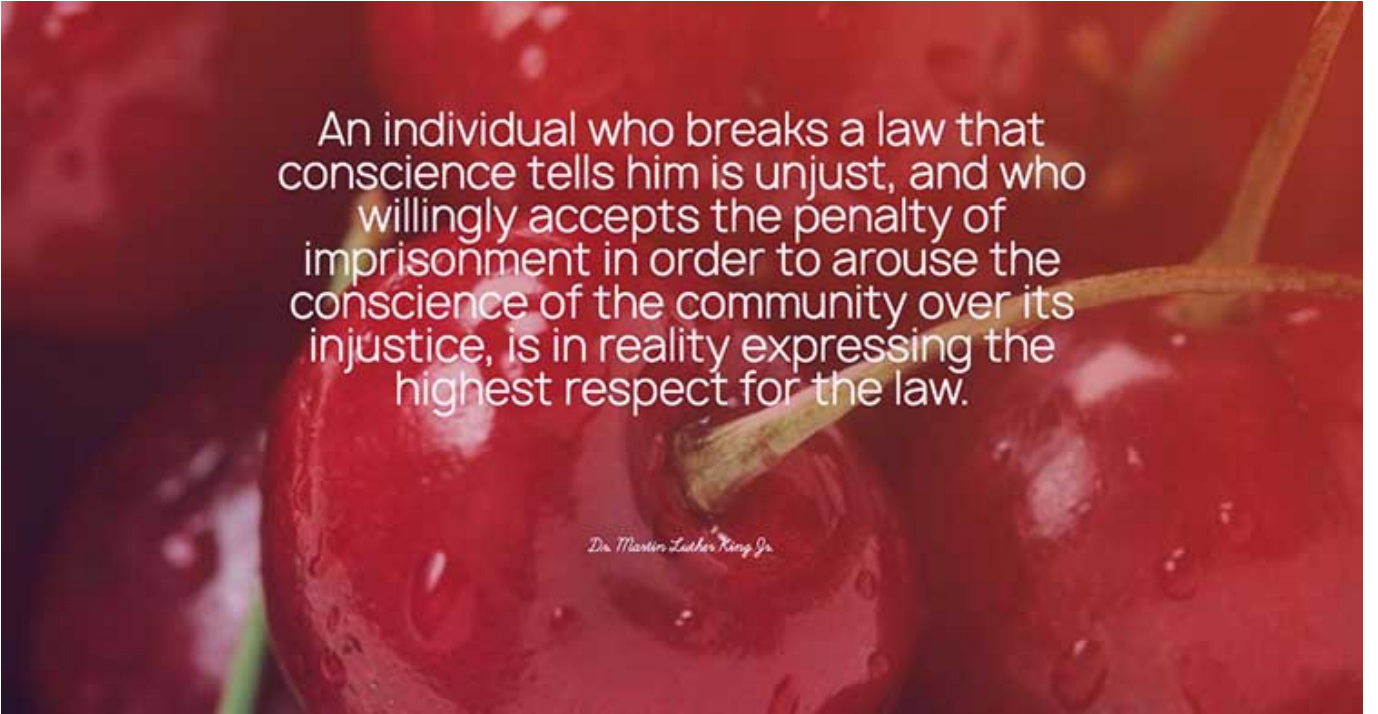


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Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“An individual who breaks a law that conscience tells him is unjust, and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for the law.”

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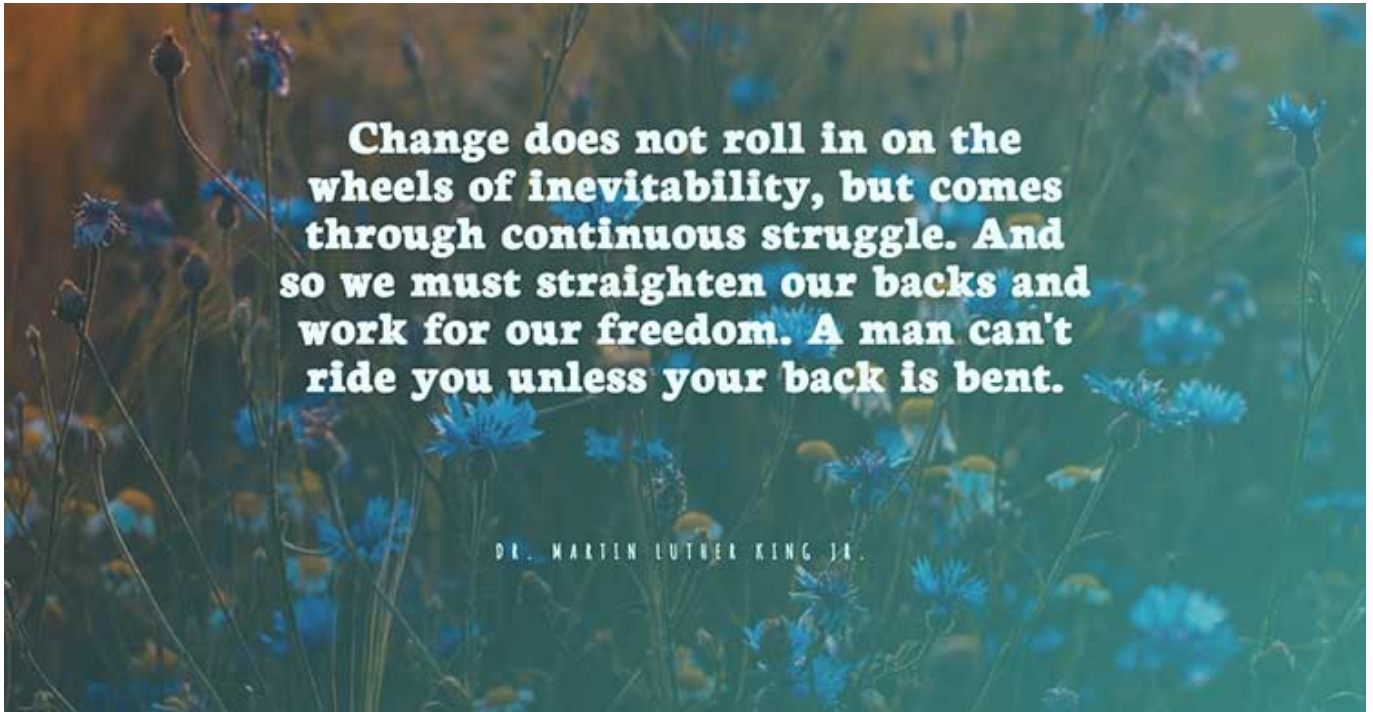


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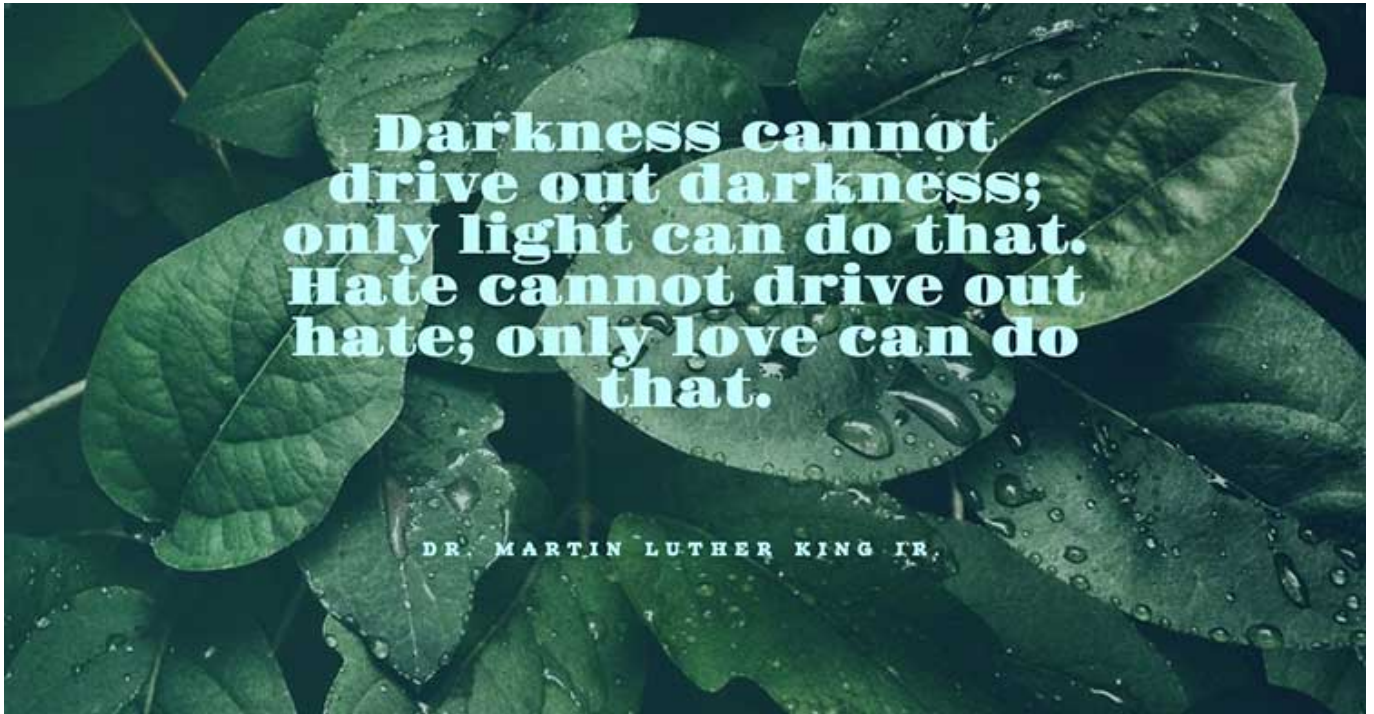
“Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability, but comes through continuous struggle. And so we must straighten our backs and work for our freedom. A man can’t ride you unless your back is bent.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



“Discrimination is a hellhound that gnaws at Negroes in every waking moment of their lives to remind them that the lie of their inferiority is accepted as truth in the society dominating them.”

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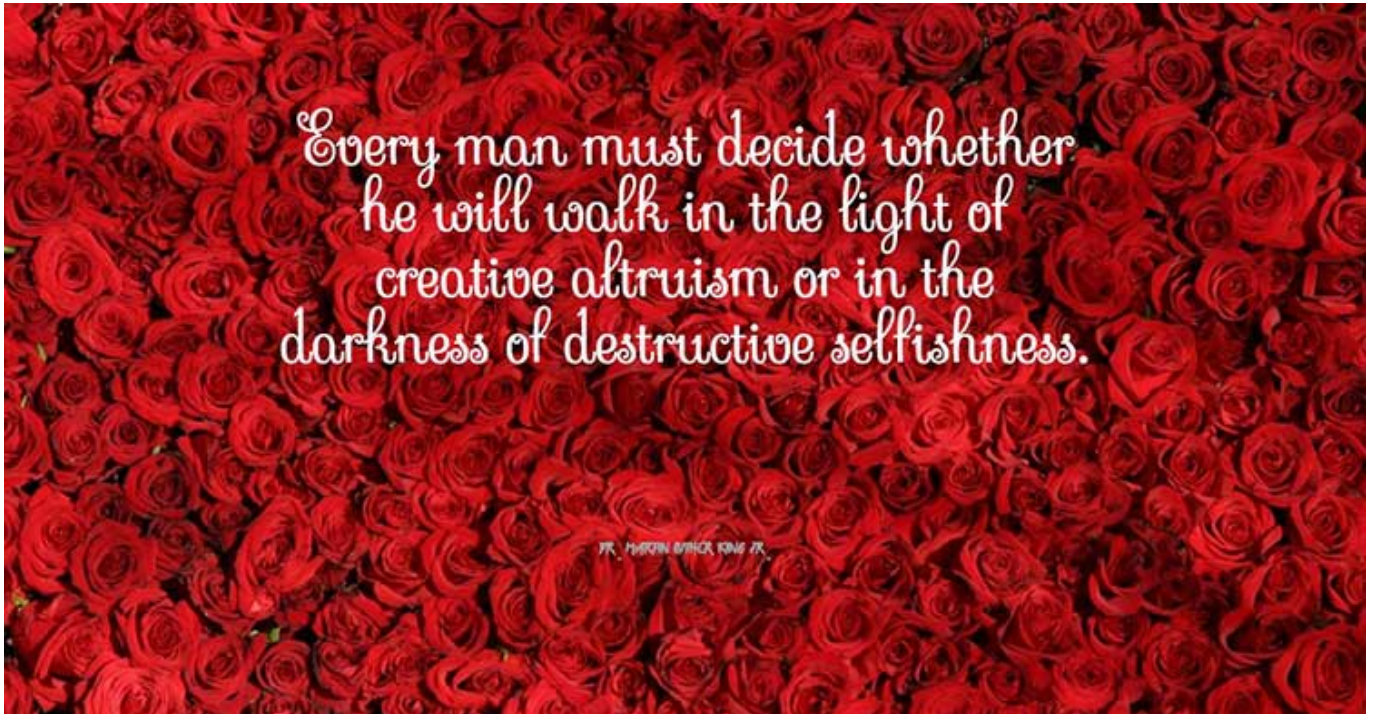


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Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“Every man must decide whether he will walk in the light of creative altruism or in the darkness of destructive selfishness.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



“Everything that we see is a shadow cast by that which we do not see.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



“Faith is taking the first step even when you don’t see the whole staircase.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



“Have we not come to such an impasse in the modern world that we must love our enemies - or else?”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

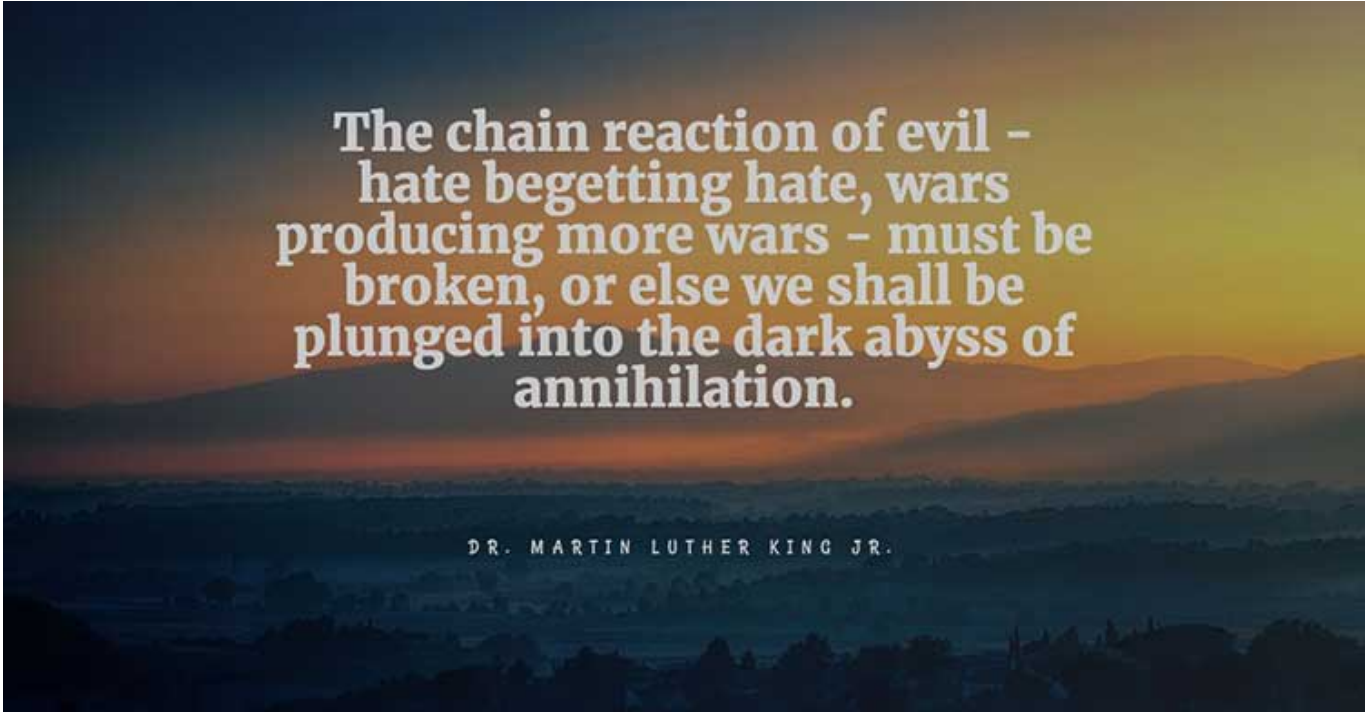


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Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“The chain reaction of evil - hate begetting hate, wars producing more wars - must be broken, or else we shall be plunged into the dark abyss of annihilation.”

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“He who passively accepts evil is as much involved in it as he who helps to perpetrate it. He who accepts evil without protesting against it is really cooperating with it.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“History will have to record that the greatest tragedy of this period of social transition was not the strident clamor of the bad people, but the appalling silence of the good people.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable... Every step



toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“Human salvation lies in the hands of the creatively maladjusted.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“I am not interested in power for power’s sake, but I’m interested in power that is moral, that is right and that is good.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. This is why right, temporarily defeated, is stronger than evil triumphant.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



“I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made straight and the glory of the Lords hall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit together at the table of brotherhood.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“I just want to do God’s will. And he’s allowed me to go to the mountain. And I’ve looked over, and I’ve seen the promised land! I may not get there with you, but I want you to know tonight that we as a people will get to the promised land.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality... I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



“I submit to you that if a man hasn’t discovered something that he will die for, he isn’t fit to live.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“I want to be the white man’s brother, not his brother-in-law.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“If a man hasn’t discovered something that he will die for, he isn’t fit to live.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“If physical death is the price that I must pay to free my white brothers and sisters from a permanent death of the spirit, then nothing can be more redemptive.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“If we are to go forward, we must go back and rediscover those precious values – that all reality hinges on moral foundations and that all reality has spiritual control.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



“It is incontestable and deplorable that Negroes have committed crimes; but they are derivative crimes. They are born of the greater crimes of the white society.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“It is not enough to say we must not wage war. It is necessary to love peace and sacrifice for it.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“It may be true that the law cannot make a man love me, but it can keep him from lynching me, and I think that’s pretty important.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, ‘What are you doing for others?’”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into friend.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“Man must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects



revenge, aggression and retaliation. The foundation of such a method is love.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“Means we use must be as pure as the ends we seek.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“Never forget that everything Hitler did in Germany was legal.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“Never succumb to the temptation of bitterness.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“Nonviolence is a powerful and just weapon. which cuts without wounding and ennobles the man who wields it. It is a sword that heals”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“Nonviolence means avoiding not only external physical violence but also internal violence of spirit. You not only refuse to shoot a man, but you refuse to hate him.”



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“Nothing in all the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“One of the greatest casualties of the war in Vietnam is the Great Society... shot down on the battlefield of Vietnam.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“Our scientific power has outrun our spiritual power. We have guided missiles and misguided men.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“Philanthropy is commendable, but it must not cause the philanthropist to overlook the circumstances of economic injustice which make philanthropy necessary.”



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“Pity may represent little more than the impersonal concern which prompts the mailing of a check, but true sympathy is the personal concern which demands the giving of one’s soul.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“Rarely do we find men who willingly engage in hard, solid thinking. There is an almost universal quest for easy answers and half-baked solutions. Nothing pains some people more than having to think.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“Science investigates religion interprets. Science gives man knowledge which is power religion gives man wisdom which is control.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“Take the first step in faith. You don’t have to see the whole staircase,



just take the first step.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“That old law about ‘an eye for an eye’ leaves everybody blind. The time is always right to do the right thing.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“The first question which the priest and the Levite asked was: “If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?””

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“But... the good Samaritan reversed the question: “If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?””

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“The hope of a secure and livable world lies with disciplined



nonconformists who are dedicated to justice, peace and brotherhood.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“The limitation of riots, moral questions aside, is that they cannot win and their participants know it. Hence, rioting is not revolutionary but reactionary because it invites defeat. It involves an emotional catharsis, but it must be followed by a sense of futility.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“The means by which we live have outdistanced the ends for which we live. Our scientific power has outrun our spiritual power. We have guided missiles and misguided men.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“The moral arc of the universe bends at the elbow of justice.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“The quality, not the longevity, of one’s life is what is important.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



“The question is not whether we will be extremists, but what kind of extremists we will be... The nation and the world are in dire need of creative extremists.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“The sweltering summer of the Negro’s legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“The ultimate tragedy is not the oppression and cruelty by the bad people but the silence over that by the good people.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“Wars are poor chisels for carving out peaceful tomorrows.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“We are not makers of history. We are made by history.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“We have guided missiles and misguided men.”



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“We may have all come on different ships, but we’re in the same boat now.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“We must concentrate not merely on the negative expulsion of war but the positive affirmation of peace.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“We must develop and maintain the capacity to forgive.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love. There is some good in the worst of us and some evil in the best of us. When we discover this, we are less prone to hate our enemies.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“We must use time creatively.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



“We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the vitriolic words and actions of the bad people, but for the appalling silence of the good people.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“We will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. This is the interrelated structure of reality.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“Whatever your life’s work is, do it well. A man should do his job so well that the living, the dead, and the unborn could do it no better. ”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

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