

Dr. King

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was born into a world that looked at him as inferior, treated him as a second-class citizen, and expected nothing from him but to follow in the footsteps of his father and grandfather as pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church (Noble Lectures). Dr. King would do so much more with his life than what others expected. He became an iconic figure of the civil rights movement in the south. He was at the forefront of every great effort by African Americans to gain the equality that was promised to them so long ago.

Martin Luther King Jr. was born January 15, 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia to a fairly privileged middle-class family. After attending segregated grammar and high schools, King completed his education at Morehouse College, then attended Crozer Theological Seminary, and finally got his doctorate at Boston University (Noble Lectures). In 1954, King became pastor of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, where he would begin to make his mark on the Civil Rights Movement by organizing a 382 day bus boycott, inspired by Rosa Parks, which culminated in the Supreme Court ruling that stated segregation on busses was unconstitutional and from that day forward whites and blacks rode the busses as equals. But this victory was not without its cost, King was harassed, arrested, and his home was bombed during this period (“Martin Luther King Jr.)

Now on the National Stage, King organized the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), which brought together some of the most prominent African-Americans of the time, and helped mobilize other communities to perform their own protests against discrimination and racism. King would spend the rest of his life traveling

over six million miles, speaking twenty-five hundred times, publishing five books, organized the peaceful March on Washington of 250,000 people, where he delivered his famous “I Have a Dream” speech, and meeting with President John F. Kennedy (Noble Laureate). But King’s work came at a high price, he was arrested as many as twenty times and assaulted at least four. King was the youngest person to ever receive the Noble Peace Prize, and was *Time* magazine Man of the Year in 1963. Tragically, King’s life was ended in Memphis, Tennessee on April 4, 1968 by the assassin’s bullet (“Martin Luther King Jr.”)

The impact of Martin Luther King’s life is felt today in every imaginable place in this country. When blacks and whites use the same bathrooms, drinking fountains, and seating areas, attend the same schools, and have equal opportunities at success. Racism still exists today, but not in nearly the same fashion that it thrived in only 50 years ago. King opened up a world of opportunity to millions of black people and opened the eyes of millions of whites to what ignorant nonsense racism is. The selfless, and ultimately self-sacrificing, work of Martin Luther King has transformed the way an entire country views people unlike themselves.

But his work did not end with his death. There is still much to be done and many more hearts to transform. Like Martin Luther King Jr., I am a part of a minority group that has to fight against prejudice and stereotyping even in the modern world. And like Dr. King, I am trying to change the opinion of people through my education, attitude, and work ethic. Hispanics in this country are still trying to make their way into a productive foothold in our society, and many people, including many public figures in my own city, think of us as inferior. They think we should be content with the most degrading jobs and

the lowest levels of poverty. But with the help and opportunity my family has worked to provide me with, I am trying, through my own example, to show that my ethnicity has absolutely no bearing on what potential I hold and what I can achieve in my lifetime.

I may not be doing it in the same extreme fashion that Martin Luther King fought against racism in the 1960s, but I still carry his same messages of equality, freedom, and opportunity for every American, despite where they come from or what they look like. My family and education has shown me that I am capable of changing people's opinions through my quiet hard work, dedication, and drive for whatever goals I may seek to achieve. King is a role model for anybody fighting for equal treatment in a world that doesn't always see them for *who* they are, but *what* they are and what they think that means.

Citations

[Nobel Lectures](#), *Peace 1951-1970*, Editor Frederick W. Haberman, Elsevier Publishing Company, Amsterdam, 1972

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<<http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/special/mlk/>>.