

Martin Luther King, Jr Day - Let Light Drive out Darkness, Let Love Drive out Hate

Demian Dunkley
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"Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend." – Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

We all love getting January 20 off for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, but how many of us actually know who this man was and why there is a federal holiday named after him?

In the 1960s, America was a divided country, and a leader who would speak out against racial injustices and discrimination needed to come forth. That leader was Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He was an African American Baptist minister, orator, humanitarian, activist, civil rights leader and writer. In his "I Have a Dream" speech at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in 1963, King emphasized that "this situation [of segregation] can and will be changed." He hoped to one day see children of different races sitting down together at a table, therefore establishing one human race.

This year, celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day through supporting what he stood for by pushing the darkness out of society and replacing it with a loving light.

Be aware of your own "darkness"

In his book *Strength to Love*, King said, "Returning hate for hate multiplies hate, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot

drive out hate, only love can do that." King's humility shows us that loving one's enemy is the greatest weapon, and that peace comes with a handshake, not a gunshot.

An old Cherokee tale talks about an on-going battle within each of us, the battle between the good and bad characteristics of our nature. As human beings, we have a tendency of projecting our "darkness" onto others -- anger, greed, pride, false superiority -- and dissociate from our own challenging qualities because it's easier. By detecting our challenging characteristics, they no longer crave our attention; they are transformed and prove less demanding. As the Cherokees sensibly noted, "How you choose to interact with the opposing forces within you will determine your life. Starve one or the other, or guide them both."



"Be the change you wish to see"

During the march in Selma, Alabama in 1965, King said, "If a man hasn't found something to die for, he isn't fit to live." We must find the things in society we wish to change and fight for them. There are so many causes to support and stand up for. [Find an organization](#), a job, or an action that you're passionate about to help make a change in the world.

Contribute to a day of service

This year, 2020, marks the 25th anniversary of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, which is identified by its slogan "Make it a day on, not a day off." Instead of taking your day off to relax, contribute your paid holiday to the national day of service. This day of service is intended to empower individuals, strengthen communities, bridge barriers and create solutions to social problems. Sign up to volunteer for numerous organizations who aim to feed the hungry, clothe the homeless, honor service men and women, help the elderly, and much more. [Click here](#) to find out more or to get involved!

Let's remember and honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and all the early activists, who, amidst the darkest times, were beacons of loving light.