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Equality is an elusive objective. It is a concept unachievable without means of sacrificing freedom, individuality, and compensation. The classless society has been an unachievable goal for social reformers and philosophers for centuries. It is the intolerant and selfish nature of western society that puts up the barricades for these reformers, and the complexity of the seemingly simple concept of equality that makes achieving this goal impossible for frustrated idealists.

Yet they persist. Men like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. saw the value in fighting to diminish the distance in the evolving gap between social classes. He realized the futility of total equality, yet bore the courage to chip away at the wall that held back all oppressed cultures. In his Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech, he declared that all persons deserve the right to a healthy lifestyle, opportunities for education, pride in their way of life, and freedom to live that life to the best of their ability. This is not a declaration of the necessity of total equality, but the declaration of the rights of all humans to be humans.

The impact of a more just and tolerant society should not be constrained to the trivial influence of one's community, neighborhood, or school. It is the impact that it will have on our culture as global citizens that will determine its value in the future. I will mean the end of ignorance, replaced by educated awareness. Our collective influence over the planet's ecosystem will be willingly diminished through cooperative efforts of governments around the world to create laws and restrictions that deter factories and industrial centers from using inefficient forms of energy and expelling more polluting gasses into the atmosphere. Equality will mean the end of a mega corporations trading the humanity of foreign sweatshop laborers for the capability to produce shoes that cost six dollars cheaper than one produced by fairly compensated labor. Classlessness will mean the end of consumerism, the satisfaction with a material lifestyle, the willingness to replace human love and compassion with the cold touch of computer keys and television screens.

The only hope students will ever have in making a dent in this oppressive wall of inequality that men like Martin Luther King, Jr. have pounded against for centuries is to study hard and educate themselves. Students must take advantage of the education and information offered to them, and apply the things they've learned in the classroom to their everyday lives. They must research not only their subjects in school, but also the political, economic and social events going on in their generation. They must question all that is fed to them from their parents, friends, teachers, media, and government, and create their own ideology, so that they may grow up to be free thinking and mindful individuals. The cracks in the wall of social imbalance will only be beaten in by students who think freely, live thoughtfully, and educate themselves at every opportunity.