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Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, one of the world's most inspiring, prestigious civil rights movement leaders, is still known today for the sacrifices he made in his strive for equality of all men. He left behind a legacy for human beings to build off of, and to hopefully someday live the dream that he desired. His dream consisted of a world where blacks were of the same equality of whites, where nonviolence overpowered violence, and where the human race learned to love each other despite ethnic back ground, religion or how much money is possessed. Martin Luther King spent many years of his life hoping that his encouraging, heart-felt words would leave a mark on those he was speaking to, and give them the strength and wisdom to overcome problems such as racial barriers, war, and poverty. John Quincy Adams, the 6th President of the United States once said, "If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader." Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. fulfilled all of the above requirements for being a leader. King's positive outlook and nonviolent actions put him in the forefront of the NAACP and their mission to eliminate racial discrimination.

In Martin Luther King Jr's Nobel Lecture, "*The Quest for Peace and Justice*", he suggests throughout the entire speech how peaceful and non-violent tactics can be solutions to the societal problems that he feels are critical to fix. The first problem that he addresses is that of racial injustice. King classifies racial discrimination as one of the major struggles in this time period. He explains to the readers that progress has been made in the fight for equality of blacks and whites but that there are many more obstacles to overcome. Dr. King compares the long journey that is ahead of both blacks and whites to the story of Egypt and the Red Sea. He claims, "Until the rough places of injustice are transformed into a smooth plane of equality of opportunity; and until the crooked places of prejudice are transformed by the straightening

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process of bright-eyed wisdom.” In simpler terms, King wants to emphasize that there will always be room for improvement when dealing with this problem but, with wisdom, courage and a non-violent outlook, achievements will surely be made. King defines nonviolence as the spirit and the outward form or tactic that he believes is the only method for solving racial injustice problems. He is extremely confident in his belief that nonviolence is the answer. He continues by suggesting that the sole purpose of turning to nonviolence in any circumstance is to ensure to the whites that the Negroes do not seek victory over them, but rather seek to share the rights and the privileges that they do not acquire. King believes, “Through nonviolence a broken community can be reestablished and brotherhood can be made possible.” Although MLK is well aware of human weaknesses and imperfections, both his head and his heart remind him every day that with courage, nonviolence will prove to be the most effective solution to racial injustice both morally and practically. In my own life, I can specifically relate to a time when I felt nonviolence was crucial because I have always been taught to use my head rather than my fists when I encountered a problem with another person. As a little girl I can remember many instances where my older cousins would gang up on me and take my favorite doll. When they would refuse to give it back to me, I usually kindly asked for it back or told one of our parents. Although this may seem much less complex than the problems Dr. King and his people faced with the whites, the two situations reinforce the use of nonviolence during confrontation.

The social issue of poverty is the next topic that Martin Luther King Jr discusses. Dr. King recognizes the problem of poverty, but even more so identifies the fact that the wealthy are often times unaware or oblivious to the plight of the poor. He emphasizes that the world is capable of supporting the poor if men are willing to mend the broken bridge

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between the “haves” and “have nots” of the world. Nothing has changed about the issue of poverty except that resources are now available to rid the world of this horrible dilemma. Dr. King declares that individuals and nations, whether they are aware of poverty or not, are only hurting themselves when they show little concern for those who are less fortunate. King continues to stress his belief in nonviolence as the solutions to problems by suggesting that the wealthy recognize that all men are interrelated and that it is merely their responsibility to reach out to help those in need. In addition, King does not promote that those in poverty rise up and turn to violence in order to relieve them of their poor conditions. After hearing Dr. King’s message, I am more aware of my responsibility in helping to eliminate poverty in the world. In the past I have donated canned goods to Second Harvest Food Bank and given clothes of mine to younger girls whose families had a difficult time affording new things. Martin Luther King’s lecture made me realize the importance of helping those who are facing difficulties in a world where poverty is a way of life for a majority of people.

Dr. King’s Nobel lecture “*The Quest for Peace and Justice*” addresses a third and final problem known as war. He states that men are prone to engage in war but that does not by any means make it a wise solution. Dr. King concludes, “If we assume that life is worth living and that man has a right to survive, then we must find an alternative to war.” War cannot be something that is turned to in hope of settling a misunderstanding or disagreement for it brings with it only a temporary solution instead of long-term peace. War is the complete opposite of Martin Luther King’s nonviolent tactic and so he advises that it is both imperative and urgent to put an end to it. King then continues to explain that “We must concentrate not merely on the

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negative expulsion of war, but the positive affirmation of peace.” Dr. King refers to Greek literature and the story of Ulysses and the Sirens to explain how Ulysses and his crew learned a way to save themselves from the Sirens by listening to the sweeter melodies of Orpheus. When Ulysses and his men discovered a melody that was sweeter to their ears than that of the Sirens, they saved themselves from death. The point that Dr. King attempts to make here is that in order to eliminate conflict it is crucial that a “sweeter melody” is discovered and becomes superior to the discords of war. King hopes that the people he is speaking to will learn to resort to nonviolence rather than assuming that war is a right solution to the problems in the world. I cannot specifically think back upon a time when I was involved with a type of “war” or violent conflict, however, if I were ever put into a position where I had the opportunity to choose between violence and nonviolence, nonviolence would be my immediate answer. Nonviolence is a practical and moral way of achieving justice. It is a wise method that ultimately brings permanent peace and thrives on love. It serves as a fair weapon in which most cases brings a more positive result. The most valuable piece of information that I took away from this lecture is that nonviolence will always be the right answer.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s Nobel lecture, “*The Quest for Peace and Justice*” identifies and provides in depth reasoning as to how societal problems such as racial injustice, poverty and war can be easily solved by nonviolence. He carefully examines these three dilemmas and gives those he is speaking to a sense of optimism that with perseverance, progress can be made. He carves a tunnel hope through the layers of despair. In some of King’s final words he reveals that “Love is the key to the solution of the problems of the world.” Dr. King believes that mankind is

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capable of overcoming the problems of racial injustice, poverty and war but only through courageous, profoundly meaningful acts of nonviolence. Dr. King's journey through the fight for racial justice, the fight to end poverty and the fight to eliminate war was not only an inspirational act of dignity but a heroic approach in which left an everlasting mark upon thousands of people years ago and today.