

In the United States today, we have a very different world than when Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was alive. As Dr. King would have asked, have technological advancements helped mankind to step up, join together, or stop poverty? Have we changed the horrific "nuclear arms race" into a "peace race?" I believe that we have not. If we could bring back Dr. King today, I am sure he would not be pleased. We have made small changes over the years, but there are many challenges left to face. Racial discrimination still goes on, though perhaps not as frequently as in 1964. People still live in poverty. We are still fighting wars. People continue fighting even though it could be avoided through nonviolent actions and peaceful communication.

Poverty could be reduced through the generosity of those who are wealthy. Sadly, some people would refuse to give up anything even though they are better off than others. Generosity is a rare and amazing gift that few are blessed with. In my life I try to follow a peaceful path and I hope through my actions I can improve my community in a way that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. would be proud of.

I am a Unitarian Universalist. We believe in free spiritual exploration for everyone. My church consists of many people who know that racial injustice exists, what it is, and want to stop it. I will attend a meeting about ways to avoid racial injustice within our community. I believe if more people were aware of this we could reduce racial injustice and bullying in my community.

Another way I try to improve relations is in the Olweus anti-bullying program that takes place at my school. This program is a way to try to achieve peace and justice through nonviolent acts. It teaches kids about bullying and what they can do to help prevent it. At my school, this class is held once every week. I believe it deserves a chance to become an everyday class. Bullying is an enormous problem throughout the country. This is just the start of anti-bullying programs. I hope every school in the United States or even the whole world can adopt this program. This is one thing in our world today that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. would like. It nonviolently corrects something very wrong. Bullying is not as severe as

racial discrimination, but it is definitely a problem in our current world that we need to fix.

My sister Greta is eight. She is white with blond hair and has to be one of the least racist people on the face of this earth. Her best friend is a black boy. One day my mother jokingly said, "If we cut off your hair you would look just like your best friend." She replied, "Mrs. VanDoren (her teacher) couldn't tell us apart. " She does not see any difference at all between herself and her best friend. I am so glad she does not. After all there should not be a difference. Black or white, Hispanic or Asian, it does not matter what race you are. All people are equal.

It is important actively to oppose racism. Eventually, people will not tolerate racism any more and will start requiring people not to be racist. Jobs will require applicants to be totally and completely against racism and bullying will become a crime.

When it comes to the fight against poverty, it is not only the big things that help. The little things matter too. There are so many ways an ordinary person can help against poverty. If someone were to donate a can of food, they would be helping. If someone were to help another person get a job, they would be helping. If someone were to give young children a better Christmas by donating presents they would be helping. They do not have to be Dr. King to help people they just have to have a heart.

Anyone can help people by volunteering to ring the bell at stores for the Salvation Army, as I have in the past. All the money that people donate while the bell is being rung goes to helping other people. In my town anybody can help the needy by donating money to the Viola Startzman Free Clinic. This clinic helps people below the poverty line who need medical care. They do not ask for a fee from their "customers" but simply ask they pay what they can.

All these things I have mentioned can help fight against poverty, as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. made us aware in his Nobel lecture. Everybody can help win the fight against a monster called poverty.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s speech made an impression on me when I first read it. It called out to me. It told me to stand up and fight for what was right, but no one person can do this on his own. In the words of John Donne "No man is an island, intire of its selfe: every man is peece of the continent." Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. referred to these words in his poem. Donne is saying that all people are part of the same group. There are no blacks and whites; it does not matter. That is my interpretation and I believe it is something to live by. Dr. King described poverty as an octopus. I think that this octopus has inked the water and blinded us but I believe that the ink is slowly clearing. We are coming more aware and taking action. It is time for us to examine Dr King's words and to figure out the correct answers to all these riddles and conundrums puzzling us today.