



2017 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Art, Writing, & Multimedia Contest

Life Without Living

The golden rule is that you should treat others the way you wish to be treated. So why, if we wish to be treated with affection, acceptance, compassion, and benevolence, do we not display these attributes to others in hopes they will return them? Is it just human nature to be cruel or dominant to others? Is there comfort behind manipulating people who are unlike us? Is it what we do because that is how we were raised? Every day the news bombards us with stories about hatred and intolerance: a dictator of a country controlling people who do not desire to be controlled; people discriminating against others because of social, economic, religious or physical differences; a student bullying others just to feel domination or power. Every day we become bystanders or partake in these acts of intolerance or hatred towards others who are actually more similar than different from us. Freedom is not freedom if not given freely to those who deserve it. Happiness cannot be achieved until those who desire happiness also choose to offer it. Life is not living until you take the reins and stop letting other people mandate your life.

From a very young age, people push hatred and intolerance towards the ones they do not like, or feel they can manipulate. Grade school bullies take advantage of the "weaker" kids who struggle because of mistreatment. I do not and will not stand around and let people bully others. I have had too many traumatizing childhood experiences where bullying has led to a misfortune in my life. When a close friend commits suicide and the believed reason for it is depression caused by bullying, it becomes a matter which can no longer be shoved to the side and ignored until it happens again. Making fun of people because they dress differently, or are not as pretty as some people, or are not as smart as some, or because they are not athletic is not right. Just because someone is different does not mean that they need to be treated differently.

Watching friends go through the hatred on their own and waiting until someone else finally speaks up to make a change is not an option. I have chosen to be that person who steps up to make a change because I believe I can make a difference. I have been between a rock and a hard place, and risked losing a close friend who sent an embarrassing picture of another friend. I have confronted a bully. I have told a trusted adult. I have comforted a victim. There will always be good that comes from helping the victim.

The smallest and simplest ways to terminate the intolerance and hatred toward others are often the ones right under our noses. We just have to stop, look, listen, and think. Together is stronger than apart, and together anything is possible. All you need is faith in the choices you make and trust that others will follow along in your footsteps.

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Driving out Hate

