

Sixty Years of a Persevering Dream: A Call to Remembrance and Action

Today marks the 60th anniversary of one of the most famous, impactful and transformational speeches in American history. On this day in 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke to more than 250,000 people from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial as part of the March on Washington, organized to advocate for the civil and economic rights of African Americans. The speech itself - and for that matter the entire day - has come to be defined by the incredible refrain "I have a dream..."

Designed to inspire hope and movement, it also inspires connection as the words weren't only directed toward people of color. Legions of people from every race, creed and geography are part of the journey to help in assuring that indeed all people are created and treated equal and are deserving of equal standing, equal opportunity, equal respect.

Through the brilliance of his words, Dr. King celebrated the progress in our great nation while at the same time calling out our shortfalls, evoking emotion and inspiring action in describing what might be and what his "dream" may manifest. As we celebrate today and remember his words, I am convinced that we would not be as far along on our collective journey without champions like Martin Luther King and those that supported his cause, often behind the scenes, including Bayard Rustin, a key organizer and close adviser to Dr. King who chose a background role to prevent his sexuality from negatively affecting the Movement.

I'd encourage you to read the transcript of this historic speech; it moves beyond rhetoric and is indeed a call "for" action as much as a call "to" action.

I would also encourage all of us to take note in the possibility for impact that exists in each and every individual. Dr. King was a blessed man and his blessings remain unique as evidenced in how they continue to impact our world. But while Dr. King's blessings are worthy of headlines, we should not ignore the many smaller blessings that may go unnoticed but also have the potential to impact incredible change too. This weekend I watched (again) a movie from 1967 - "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner". Released four years after Dr. King's speech and two years after the passage of the Civil Rights Act, this powerful and beautiful film hinges on the will (and love) of two people prepared to move into a new world in which they pray that they and their children will be judged on "the content of their character, not the color of their skin." I'd encourage all you all to check this out too.

There's inspiration to be found and on this day, August 28th, it's worth noting at least two things. The first is that Martin Luther King invited us to come together and move our nation to a better place by means of connection, understanding and conviction. The second is that fictional characters like Joey Drayton (from the aforementioned movie) and very real people including those among us would not have the same standing to move toward needed change without the courage of Dr. King and those brave people that supported his efforts six decades ago.

Beyond taking note and maybe watching a movie, I'd also ask that we all look for those moments where we can speak to the things that we care about that may have a positive impact on our own unique circumstance and the world around us. As much as we should celebrate, we should also be sobered by the reality that good work is ongoing especially given the awful events that went down in Jacksonville, FL this weekend and the far too many events in our country that remind us that we have to keep forging toward a dream that may always be just outside our grasp, but certainly always

worth reaching for.