

A wonderful collection of quotes by Martin Luther King, Jr. from his many speeches, this is a must read!

Somehow this madness must cease. We must stop now. I speak as a child of God and brother to the suffering poor of Vietnam.

I speak for those whose land is being laid waste, whose homes are being destroyed, whose culture is being subverted. I speak

for the poor in America who are paying the double price of smashed hopes at home and death and corruption in Vietnam. I

speak as a citizen of the world, for the world as it stands aghast at the path we have taken. I speak as an American to the

leaders of my own nation. The great initiative in this war is ours. The initiative to stop it must be ours.

[Martin Luther King, Jr., The Trumpet of Conscience, 1967.](#)

A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.

[Martin Luther King, Jr., Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?, 1967.](#)

The limitation of riots, moral questions aside, is that they cannot win and their participants know it. Hence, rioting is not

revolutionary but reactionary because it invites defeat. It involves an emotional catharsis, but it must be followed by a sense of futility.

[Martin Luther King, Jr., The Trumpet of Conscience, 1967.](#)

Nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral questions of our time: the need for man to overcome oppression and

violence without resorting to oppression and violence. Man must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects revenge,

aggression and retaliation. The foundation of such a method is love.

[Martin Luther King, Jr., Nobel Prize acceptance speech, Stockholm, Sweden, December 11, 1964.](#)

Man was born into barbarism when killing his fellow man was a normal condition of existence. He became endowed with a

conscience. And he has now reached the day when violence toward another human being must become as abhorrent as eating

another's flesh.

[Martin Luther King, Jr., Why We Can't Wait, 1963.](#)

The curse of poverty has no justification in our age. It is socially as cruel and blind as the practice of cannibalism at the dawn of

civilization, when men ate each other because they had not yet learned to take food from the soil or to consume the abundant

animal life around them. The time has come for us to civilize ourselves by the total, direct and immediate abolition

of poverty.

Martin Luther King, Jr., [Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?](#), 1967.

[I]t is necessary to understand that Black Power is a cry of disappointment. The Black Power slogan did not spring full grown from the head of some philosophical Zeus. It was born from the wounds of despair and disappointment. It is a cry of daily hurt and persistent pain.

Martin Luther King, Jr., [Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?](#), 1967.

Discrimination is a hellhound that gnaws at Negroes in every waking moment of their lives to remind them that the lie of their inferiority is accepted as truth in the society dominating them.

Martin Luther King, Jr., [speech, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Atlanta, Georgia, August 16, 1967.](#)

When we ask Negroes to abide by the law, let us also declare that the white man does not abide by law in the ghettos. Day in and day out he violates welfare laws to deprive the poor of their meager allotments; he flagrantly violates building codes and regulations; his police make a mockery of law; he violates laws on equal employment and education and the provisions of civil services. The slums are the handiwork of a vicious system of the white society; Negroes live in them, but they do not make them, any more than a prisoner makes a prison.

Martin Luther King, Jr., [The Trumpet of Conscience](#), 1967.

It may be true that the law cannot make a man love me, but it can keep him from lynching me, and I think that's pretty important.

Martin Luther King, Jr., [Wall Street Journal, November 13, 1962.](#)

Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that. Hate multiplies hate, violence multiplies violence, and toughness multiplies toughness in a descending spiral of destruction....The chain reaction of evil--hate begetting hate, wars producing more wars--must be broken, or we shall be plunged into the dark abyss of annihilation.

Martin Luther King, Jr., [Strength To Love](#), 1963.

Success, recognition, and conformity are the bywords of the modern world where everyone seems to crave the anesthetizing security of being identified with the majority.

[Martin Luther King, Jr., Strength to Love, 1963.](#)

Like an unchecked cancer, hate corrodes the personality and eats away its vital unity. Hate destroys a man's sense of values and his objectivity. It causes him to describe the beautiful as ugly and the ugly as beautiful, and to confuse the true with the false and the false with the true.

[Martin Luther King, Jr., Strength To Love, 1963.](#)

Human salvation lies in the hands of the creatively maladjusted.

[Martin Luther King, Jr., Strength to Love, 1963.](#)

I am aware that there are many who wince at a distinction between property and persons--who hold both sacrosanct. My views are not so rigid. A life is sacred. Property is intended to serve life, and no matter how much we surround it with rights and respect, it has no personal being. It is part of the earth man walks on; it is not man.

[Martin Luther King, Jr., The Trumpet of Conscience, 1967.](#)

The bombs in Vietnam explode at home; they destroy the hopes and possibilities for a decent America.

[Martin Luther King, Jr., Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?, 1967.](#)

We must combine the toughness of the serpent and the softness of the dove, a tough mind and a tender heart.

[Martin Luther King, Jr., Strength to Love, 1963.](#)

The church must be reminded that it is not the master or the servant of the state, but rather the conscience of the state. It must be the guide and the critic of the state, and never its tool. If the church does not recapture its prophetic zeal, it will become an irrelevant social club without moral or spiritual authority.

[Martin Luther King, Jr., Strength to Love, 1963.](#)

Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice. Justice at its best is love correcting everything that stands against love.

[Martin Luther King, Jr., Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?, 1967.](#)

The Negroes of America had taken the President, the press and the pulpit at their word when they spoke in broad terms of freedom and justice. But the absence of brutality and unregenerate evil is not the presence of justice. To stay murder is not the same thing as to ordain brotherhood.

Martin Luther King, Jr., [Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?](#), 1967.

Many of the ugly pages of American history have been obscured and forgotten....America owes a debt of justice which it has only begun to pay. If it loses the will to finish or slackens in its determination, history will recall its crimes and the country that would be great will lack the most indispensable element of greatness--justice.

Martin Luther King, Jr., [Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?](#), 1967.

Man is man because he is free to operate within the framework of his destiny. He is free to deliberate, to make decisions, and to choose between alternatives. He is distinguished from animals by his freedom to do evil or to do good and to walk the high road of beauty or tread the low road of ugly degeneracy.

Martin Luther King, Jr., [The Measures of Man](#), 1959.

A good many observers have remarked that if equality could come at once the Negro would not be ready for it. I submit that the white American is even more unprepared.

Martin Luther King, Jr., [Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?](#), 1967.

Nonviolent action, the Negro saw, was the way to supplement, not replace, the progress of change. It was the way to divest himself of passivity without arraying himself in vindictive force.

Martin Luther King, Jr., [Why We Can't Wait](#), 1964.

If a man hasn't discovered something that he will die for, he isn't fit to live.

Martin Luther King, Jr., [speech, Detroit, Michigan, June 23, 1963](#).

To be a Negro in America is to hope against hope.

Martin Luther King, Jr., [Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?](#), 1967.

Being a Negro in America means trying to smile when you want to cry. It means trying to hold on to physical life amid psychological death. It means the pain of watching your children grow up with clouds of inferiority in their mental skies. It means having your legs cut off, and then being condemned for being a cripple. It means seeing your mother and father spiritually murdered by the slings and arrows of daily exploitation, and then being hated for being an orphan.

Martin Luther King, Jr., [Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?](#), 1967.

