



Montefiore

From the OFFICE OF THE DEAN



Dear Einstein Community:

Virtually all Americans know that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., had a dream—one that he articulated with great power and clarity on August 28, 1963, in full view of the U.S. Capitol, which came under vicious attack by domestic terrorists last week. Today, nearly 60 years later, our nation is still struggling mightily to realize that dream.

In reviewing the words Dr. King spoke that day, along with many others delivered with equal poignancy, it seems like he had a crystal ball that allowed him to envision the events of last Wednesday—a day that is among the darkest in our nation's history.

Dr. King said, "The more there are riots, the more repressive action will take place, and the more we face the danger of a right-wing takeover and eventually a fascist society."

But he also advised us, "An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity." And he observed that, "Every man must decide whether he will walk in the light of creative altruism or in the darkness of destructive selfishness."

Dr. King reminds us that "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."

While these words describe with disturbing accuracy the recent acts of domestic terrorism, they also put a glaring spotlight on the gravity of our nation's current and continuing divide. Yet, we should not be deterred in our belief in our better angels. For Martin Luther King, Jr., had sage words on this subject, too, telling us, "I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality... I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word."

As a preacher, Dr. King sought to teach the Lord's lessons, but he also appreciated the role of science in advancing knowledge and ideas. He said, "Science investigates; religion interprets. Science gives man knowledge, which is power; religion gives man wisdom, which is control. Science deals mainly with facts; religion deals mainly with values. The two are not rivals." He also noted that "The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education."

In that Einstein is an institution whose aims include scientific excellence and educating compassionate, thoughtful scientists and physicians, these words of Dr. King resonate, as they aptly express all that members of our campus community seek to do and to support. So, as we reflect on the difficulties before us and our nation—both in the continuing challenges of an unprecedented and relentless pandemic and in the highly charged and uncertain environment ignited by last week's events, let's remember that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., always strove to protect basic human rights and defeat systemic racism wherever it existed.

As we prepare to mark his birthday on Monday, January 18—and during our [MLK Service Day Challenge](#) throughout next week—let's make a commitment to be guided by Dr. King's insights on love, learning, and humanity. If undertaking a volunteer activity, consider these words: "If I cannot do great things, I can do small things in a great way."

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Tomaselli', with a stylized, flowing script.

Gordon F. Tomaselli, M.D.

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