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Quotes by King Jr. Martin Luther

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Martin Luther King, Jr., (January 15, 1929 - April 4, 1968) was one of the main leaders of the American civil rights movement, a political activist, a Baptist minister, and was one of America's greatest orators. In 1964, King became the youngest man to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize (for his work as a peacemaker, promoting nonviolence and equal treatment for different races). On April 4, 1968, King was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee.

We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

The quality, not the longevity, of one's life is what is important.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

There can be no deep disappointment where there is not deep love.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

Now, I say to you today my friends, even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: -- we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation when they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed; We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal

- King Jr. Martin Luther

He who passively accepts evil is as much involved in it as he who helps to perpetrate it.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

If a man is called to be a streetsweeper, he should sweep streets even as Michelangelo

painted, or Beethoven composed music, or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, here lived a great streetsweeper who did his job well.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

The question is not whether we will be extremists, but what kind of extremists we will be.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

Freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

When we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of that old Negro spiritual, Free at last! Free at last!

Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!

- King Jr. Martin Luther

The Negro needs the white man to free him from his fears. The white man needs the Negro to free him from his guilt.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

Everybody can be great... because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college

degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. you only need a heart full of grace. a soul generated by love.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

Hatred paralyzes life; love releases it. Hatred confuses life; love harmonizes it. Hatred darkens life; love illuminates it.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

The hottest place in Hell is reserved for those who remain neutral in times of great moral conflict.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

Mankind must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects revenge, aggression, and retaliation. The foundation of such a method is love.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

Nothing in the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

Occasionally in life there are those moments of unutterable fulfillment which cannot be completely explained by those symbols called words. Their meanings can only be articulated by the inaudible language of the heart.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

Law and order exist for the purpose of establishing justice and when they fail in this purpose they become the dangerously structured dams that block the flow of social progress.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

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.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen's Council or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

Darkness can not drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

I have decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

At the center of non-violence stands the principle of love.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

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

- King Jr. Martin Luther

Morality cannot be legislated, but behavior can be regulated. Judicial decrees may not change the heart, but they can restrain the heartless.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

It is my hope that as the Negro plunges deeper into the quest for freedom and justice he will plunge even deeper into the philosophy of non-violence. The Negro all over the South must come to the point that he can say to his white brother: We will match your capacity

to inflict suffering with our capacity to endure suffering. We will meet your physical force with soul force. We will not hate you, but we will not obey your evil laws. We will soon wear you down by pure capacity to suffer.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

The past is prophetic in that it asserts loudly that wars are poor chisels for carving out peaceful tomorrows.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

Peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

All progress is precarious, and the solution of one problem brings us face to face with another problem.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

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.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

We who in engage in nonviolent direct action are not the creators of tension. We merely bring to the surface the hidden tension that is already alive.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

One who breaks an unjust law that conscience tells him is unjust, and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for law.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. That is why right, temporarily defeated, is stronger than evil triumphant.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

A riot is the language of the unheard.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

I want to be the white man's brother, not his brother-in-law.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

That old law about an eye for an eye leaves everybody blind. The time is always right to do the right thing.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

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

- King Jr. Martin Luther

Riots are the voices of the unheard.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

In this Revolution no plans have been written for retreat.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

When you are right you cannot be too radical; when you are wrong, you cannot be too conservative.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

We have genuflected before the god of science only to find that it has given us the atomic bomb, producing fears and anxieties that science can never mitigate.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

Life's most persistent and urgent question is: What are you doing for others? Living is a form of not being sure, not knowing what next or how. The moment you know how, you begin to die a little.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

I look to a day when people will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

Pity may represent little more than the impersonal concern which prompts the mailing of a check, but true sympathy is the personal concern which demands the giving of one's soul.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

Nothing pains some people more than having to think.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

We must use time creatively -- and forever realize that the time is always here to do great things.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

There is nothing more tragic than to find an individual bogged down in the length of life, devoid of breadth.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill-will.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

The time is always right to do what is right.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over, and I've seen the Promised Land.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

War is a poor chisel to carve out tomorrow.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

Whatever your life's work is, do it well. A man should do his job so well that the living, the dead, and the unborn could do it no better.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

Yes, I see the Church as the body of Christ. But, oh! How we have blemished and scarred that body through social neglect and through fear of being nonconformists.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

I submit that an individual who breaks the law that conscience tells him is unjust and willingly accepts the penalty by staying in jail to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the very highest respect for law.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

We may have all come on different ships, but we're in the same boat now.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

We must build dikes of courage to hold back the flood of fear.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

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

- King Jr. Martin Luther

Occasionally in life there are those moments of unutterable fulfillment which cannot be completely explained by those symbols called words. Their meaning can only be articulated by the inaudible language of the heart. Such is the moment I am presently experiencing. I experience this high and joyous moment not for myself alone but for those devotees of nonviolence who have moved so courageously against the ramparts of racial injustice and who in the process have acquired a new estimate of their own human worth. Many of them are young and cultured. Others are middle aged and middle class. The majority are poor and untutored. But they are all united in the quiet conviction that it is better to suffer in dignity than to accept segregation in humiliation. These are the real heroes of the freedom struggle: they are the noble people for whom I accept the Nobel Peace Prize.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain.

And I've looked over, and I've seen the promised land. I may not get there with you, but I want you to know tonight that we as a people will get to the promised land.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

Free at last, free at last Thank God almighty We are free at last

- King Jr. Martin Luther

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal. I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

Let us therefore continue our triumphal march to the realization of the American dream. for all of us today, the battle is in our hands. The road ahead is not altogether a smooth one. There are no broad highways that lead us easily and inevitably to quick solutions. We are still in for the season of suffering. How long? Not long. Because no lie can live forever. our God is marching on.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

The ultimate weakness of violence is that it is a descending spiral, begetting the very thing it seeks to destroy. Instead of diminishing evil, it multiplies it. Through violence you may murder the liar, but you cannot murder the lie, nor establish the truth. Through violence you may murder the hater, but you do not murder hate. In fact, violence merely increases

hate. So it goes. Returning violence for violence multiplies violence, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

I feel that we will continue to have a non-violent movement, and we will continue to find the vast majority of Negroes committed to non-violence, at least as the best tactical approach and from a pragmatic point of view as the best strategy in dealing with the problem of racial injustice. Realism impels me to admit, however, that when there is justice and the pursuit of justice, violence appears, and where there is injustice and frustration, the potentialities for violence are greater, and I would like to strongly stress the point that the more we can achieve victories through non-violence, the more it will be possible to keep the non-violent discipline at the center of the movement. But the more we find individuals facing conditions of frustration, conditions of disappointment and seething despair as a result of the slow pace of things and the failure to change conditions, the more it will be possible for the apostles of violence to interfere.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

The church must be reminded that it is not the master or the servant of the state, but rather the conscience of the state.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

I am coming to feel that the people of ill will have used time much more effectively than the people of goodwill. We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the vitriolic words and actions of the bad people, but for the appalling silence of the good people. We

must come to see that human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability. It comes through the tireless efforts and persistent work of men willing to be co-workers with God, and without this hard work time itself becomes an ally of the forces of social stagnation. We must use time creatively, and forever realize that the time is always ripe to do right. Now is the time to make real the promise of democracy, and transform our pending national elegy into a creative psalm of brotherhood. Now is the time to lift our national policy from the quicksand of racial injustice to the solid rock of human dignity.

- King Jr. Martin Luther



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