

***“And there comes a time when we must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but one must take it because his conscience tells him it is right.” (Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.)***

In this time of hardship and suffering, it can be difficult to do the right thing. It is not always the easiest or the most convenient thing to do. Most of the time doing the right thing may not be a very popular decision and may be met with opposition. While it is easy to do what is best for us it is harder to stand up against immoral things that do not affect us directly. Due to this, many people make the “right decision” for themselves, knowing that this may hurt others.

Being right is a very vague concept, generally, it is having the best solution or having the moral high ground. I think that in the quote above, Dr. King was speaking about being morally correct. He is saying that there will be a time in which you will find something that goes against your morals and that you will have to take a stand against it whether or not it is safe. This is what I think the true message of the quote is, and what Dr. King meant by the right thing. This is the reason why slavery was abolished. Segregation is also morally incorrect, which is why Dr. King and others followed their conscience and took a stand against it.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was a person who lived by what he taught. Rather than fight back against the people who were hurting him and his community, he chose pacifism which is morally just. Similarly, people such as Rosa Parks also chose the morally correct choice; while she could have given up her seat on the bus and moved on with her day, she decided to take a stand against segregation because her conscience told her it was the right thing to do. Although she knew her decision was not safe and that she would be arrested, she still chose to do what would benefit the black community, not herself. Dr. King did many similar acts, but the one that we can learn the most from is his arrests. Dr. King was arrested many times, and for many different charges, but not once did he waver from his ideals. He always upheld the motto of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) “Not one hair of one head of one person should be harmed.” He lived, worked, and died by this motto. He was not influenced by politics, safety, or popularity but by what he felt was the right thing to do.

Though today’s world is not the same as the 1950s, the world still needs people who act like Dr. King, people who do what is not popular, but necessary, people who listen to their conscience and do what is right. The need for people like him is always necessary but now they are even more important. Even though segregation is illegal, implicit segregation and other injustices such as racial bias and gender inequality, still exist in the world. These are the injustices we must take a stand against, just like Dr. King. Although a single person cannot do much, if they are persistent, and they are morally correct more people will join the cause, similar to the civil rights movement.

Taking a stand against things that go against your morals is an important part of human nature. If you let things that go against your morals slide, your moral code becomes blurred and eventually disappears. This is why Dr. King said the time would come to take a stand, no matter what anyone else thinks. You must follow your moral code, for things that are both big and small.

An example of following your moral code is that you found out that a company in your city is ignoring applications from minority groups and people of color. While you cannot force the company to change immediately, you could write them a letter explaining that this is immoral and should be stopped. If they do not stop, perhaps you could write a petition to the city council and raise awareness about this issue. While this is not stopping racism altogether, it did make a difference for the many people of color and minority groups in your community.

The right thing to do may not be what is popular or safe, but what is necessary and morally correct. Without people like Dr. King, the world would not be how it is today. Segregation would not have ended and many positive things that are linked to the end of segregation would not have happened as well. While we may not be able to change big things, we can speak out against the injustices in our community and advocate for morally right things. Since ours is not a perfect world, there always must be some who are willing to take a stand and dedicate their lives to a just cause like Dr. King just did.