

# ODYSSEY ORACLE

## LOVE AND DREAMS



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# I LOVE

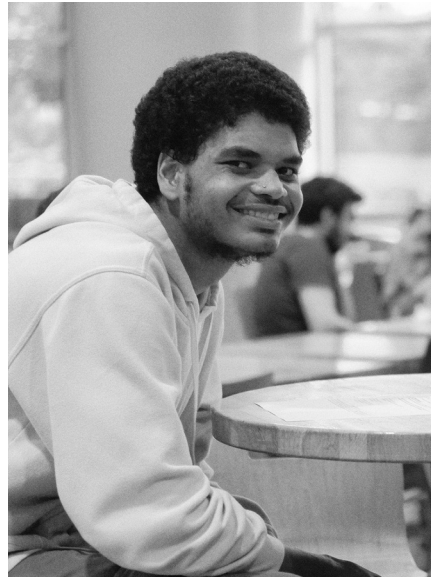
I love love. I love that a hug can lower your blood pressure. I believe love always wins in the end. If you love someone or something enough, love will fix everything and everyone. There's nothing like a big hug. Most of all, I love all the love I feel when I walk into this classroom. **(Tina Martinez)**

I love making others happy. I love the joy I feel when I can help or bless others. Whether it's a meal, clothes, shoes, holiday basket, card, helping hand, advice, or shelter I can help with, I do. Sometimes I'll be living my best—or not-so-best—life, and God will put it in my heart to go hug a person in need or pay for someone's lunch who can't afford it. Doing for others is what I do, and I love it! **(Jyneeva Hunt)**

I love a lot of things: to sing, to play games, to eat! But if I have to pick one, it would be to laugh. I love the overwhelming sense of happiness, joy, excitement, and even a little pleasuring pain from the muscles that contract from long, heavy moments of chuckling. It's as if my spirit is lifted high above the clouds, and all sense of worry, fear, or stress has left. Even if it is for a moment, a laugh can change—or rather shift—the atmosphere. **(Ron Burford)**



I love smiles! It is very hard to love yourself and think of others and their downfalls. We as humans face moment to moment things to shame us, hurt us, and, most of all, hinder us. Be a smile; uplift the saddest person with a smile. **(Rasaki Emmanuel)**



I love myself. I love myself for holding up for 22 years. I'm on a run. I love myself when I create instead of destroy in a time of hardship. Some days are hard, my attitude is trash, and I'm not gentle with myself, but some days, I

go 100% Hulk hands in the mall. Some days I hold myself up so high I can see above the black clouds. It feels like an eye for an eye, held accountable only by myself telepathically by my future self through time to make sure I become who I want to become. I love myself for sticking around and being with me every step of the way. **(Corey Dean)**

I love my football team, The Cowboys. I love them whether they win or lose. I love that they are from Texas. I love that their colors are blue and silver. I love that other Cowboy fans feel like family. I love that once you're a Cowboy fan, it doesn't end when football ends. I love that it becomes a way of life. I love my Cowboys. 😊❤️ **(Margarita Barajas)**





I love the way my son hugs me. He wraps his little arms around my neck tightly, putting his soft cheek against mine. His hugs provide a joy and warmth in my heart that literally takes my breath away. I never knew such a tiny being could make you feel so loved and safe. He legitimately gives me the best hugs I've ever experienced in life. I literally smile

thinking of his hugs. I don't know how I lived 17 months ago without them.

"It's all right, Mom!" is how I feel when my son hugs me. No matter how difficult my day has been, everything's all right once I feel his little arms wrap around my neck. **(Aerial Bailey)**



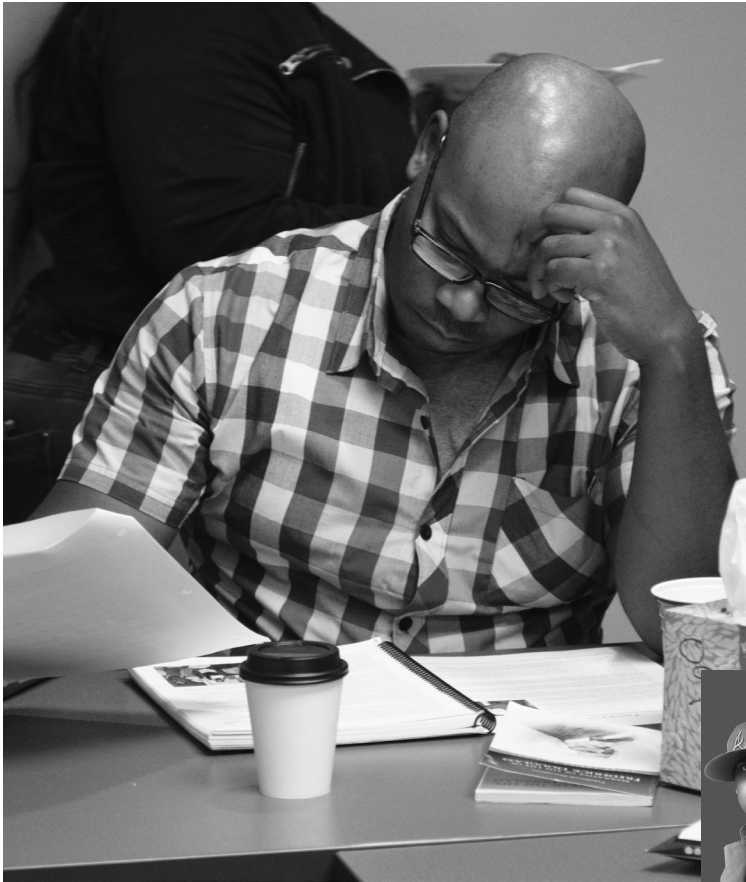
I love my life and I love myself, but most of all I love my three children. I love my children because they keep me going. They keep me pushing forward towards greatness. The days I want to throw the towel in, give up, walk away from life itself, and feel so sorry for myself, I look at my kids and get this heart-warming feeling. All I can do is smile, pick my head up, and know that my best accomplishments in life are them. Derek, Sha'Niyah, and Cherish, I love all of you. **(Tiffany Dixon)**

I love my children. I love them so much, I can't begin to describe the depths of my love for them. I just want the very best for them—so much more than I ever will have and have had in life. They are my everything.

I love life. No matter what I go through, I plan on growing through it. Let nothing or no one hold me back from the things I deserve and desire—not even me.

**(Laisha Cooke)**





I absolutely love all types of music. Each mood that I endure during a day can be backed up by a different genre of music. While at work, Mozart runs through my baby's blood and mine. On the drive to work, 2000s R&B is our go-to Pandora station. When leaving work, depending on the work day, it can vary from country to screamo rock music. The feeling that music gives me is breathtaking and helps me cope with almost everything. One of my biggest accomplishments is also sharing my love for music with my daughter. I mean, what five-year-old these days have you met that can recite word-for-word Luther Vandross, Jagged Edge, and the Isley Brothers?

**(Shiloh Simonsen)**

I love the time I spend here with everyone. You guys are always so happy and excited, but I love the way it feels being around you all. I love the slick jokes, one-liners, and silly moments, and I love how we share the moments.

I love how good it feels to be here with you all. I hope everyone likes being here as much as I do. I love that we are all in this together, and I haven't seen or experienced anyone being wrong, mean, or hurtful to one another. **(Ashton McDonald)**

I love to learn. Definitely, I can feel in my mind and in my heart the good feelings when I learn a single word. That single word sends me far out of my ignorance, and it feels wonderful to me. That feeling pushes me to work hard every day to accomplish my goal.

**(Carmen Tinajero)**







I love the precious little moments with my kids:

When it is bedtime and I am trying to wrestle my daughter into her jammies and tame her sudden burst of energy with energy I no longer have. She starts to talk to me about the random thoughts of a five year old, and I can't help but smile.

When my son finally comes downstairs for dinner, and we sit down at the table.

When I try to organize a family game night and everyone argues about the game we are going to play, and then we agree to one with different levels of hostility. But the hostility is forgotten five minutes into the game, and we are all laughing and having fun.

When I am sitting in the chair reading my book and my son comes down and so rudely interrupts me with some silly story I can't follow. Then he begins to laugh so hard while he is telling me the story that I can't help but give my full attention to that beautiful sound.

When I am sitting in the living room watching some show that I have been dying to see and my daughter asks if we can put on a movie that we both like. Then she decides that I get to pick the movie just so she knows I will sit there and snuggle with her.

I love being a mom. **(Krista Mellott)**



I love my life. I love my son. I love waking up to the sound of little giggles in the morning when he's ready to go to school. I love my job. I love going to work. I love the view of positive workers in the morning ready to achieve another day.

**(Natia Saffold)**

I love the bond that I share with my kids. The way we interact with one another is priceless. When we're around each other, it's nothing but laughter and good times. They can be a handful at times when they get to arguing and going back and forth

with each other over little things, but nonetheless, I wouldn't trade those moments for anything in the world. We have little spelling contests with each other, we go to fun places such as Dave and Buster's, the circus, playgrounds, etc. Spending time with them and just watching them grow into little smart, adventurous children brings me so much joy.

**(Timothy Mosley)**







I love thunderstorms in the summer. The roaring sound of thunder accompanied by the soothing sound of rain is a match made in heaven. I often crack my bedroom window in hopes a gust of wind will sneak through and bless me with a refreshing mist. I become mesmerized by how my curtains dance in the breeze. The deafening booms and violent cracks of light are ironically calming.  
**(Nina Salisbury)**

I love black people.

I love our hair, our versatility, our style, our trend-setting ways, our music, our skin colors, our perseverance, our culture, I just love . . . us.

We are beautiful, resilient, innovative, and so much more. **(Moriah Parker)**

I love being a homebody (someone who prefers staying/being at home).

When I was a teenager and in my early twenties, I used to love being out with friends and partying. It was as if my house had teeth and I was afraid it would bite me. That's why I was never home.

Now, all I want to do is be home. I love walking into my apartment and being greeted by whichever scented candles I lit the night before. I love being in my own space away from the hustle and bustle of the world. There's no better feeling than being in your underwear, candles lit, and dancing to some old school music with a glass of wine. To some, it may sound boring or even lonely, but it's the best thing ever to just zone out and unwind.  
**(Loché Mothoa)**



I love the feeling that getting paid gives me. When the direct deposit hits, it's like a sense of relief and no worries. People always say more money, more problems, but I think it could be worse without it.



Although I hate paying bills, once the payments have been made, it makes me feel like a man, not physically, but mentally. Knowing that all my responsibilities have been taken care of is pressure off my shoulders. I truly believe money makes the world go round, and when I have it, I feel amazing.  
**(Jaison Thomas)**





I do so love Jamaica for its rhythmic island beats: ska, reggae, and dancehall.

I do so love Jamaica for its cuisine, like the classic ackee and saltfish meal.

I do so love Jamaica for the people and their swag, the oh-so-natural flair of being so cool (kool), the brightly-coloured buildings from Kingston to Montego Bay, the beautiful blue beaches with white sand, the green of the land and the golden sunshine.

We are a diverse set of people, races, and culture ("Out of Many, One People" is our motto).

And last but not least, I do so love Jamaica for the beautiful language that we speak: PATOWA

"Mi deh ya, yu kno"- I am here, did you know

"Pickney"-child

"Whe yu deh pon"- what's up

**(O'Shane Wilmoth)**

"'I love': how do you say it in English?" I asked my childhood friend, Roman. When I was young, I had a friend whose dad worked in the U.S. Whenever we had the chance to play together, we would also talk about girls. I told him that I had a crush on a girl named Monica. I told him that I wanted to let her know how much I loved her, but how? I didn't have the words. So, one day, while we were up on a peach tree eating peaches, we started to discuss how I could tell Monica that I loved her.

"How do you say 'I love you,' in English? You must know because your dad is in the U.S., and you've told me that he's taught you some English over the phone," I told my friend.

"Ok, Ok, I'm going to tell you 'cause you are my friend," Roman joked.

"So tell me!" I insisted.

In my mind, I thought if I could catch her attention with English words, I would make her curious enough to ask me a question like "what does that mean?" And, with any luck, that question would lead into an interesting conversation about love. So, with these thoughts running through my mind, I again asked Roman, "Come on, help on this one! Tell me how do I say 'I love you' in English?"

Smiling, Roman told me "'One, two, three.' I love you in English is said 'One, two, three.'"

So 'One, two, three' was how I first learned to say "I love you" in English. **(Elíazar Martínez-Munguia)**



I love my family, I really love my kids, I love to see my kids happy.  
 I love to be with them all the time.  
 I love my car and I also love my bedroom.  
 Love, love is very good.  
 It's very good to be loved, and it's also good to love somebody.  
 Loving each other is the most important thing in the world.  
**(Kossiavavi Elohi)**



I love my creations.  
 They mean the world to me.  
 I love my creations.  
 They contribute to who  
 I want to be.  
 I love my creations.  
 They pump the air  
 Through me.  
 I love my creations.  
 They will be the reason  
 I complete. **(Arkeia Cameron)**

I love, love my huge two-year-old Kingston.  
 I love working as a medical assistant.  
 I love all kinds of food.  
 I love the smell of gasoline.  
 I love helping others.  
 Most importantly, I love me. **(Ashley Lee)**







I LOVE  
Listening  
Learning  
Understanding  
Reading  
Writing  
Teaching  
(Marcello Segovia)

I love my daughters, but that's a given,  
And of course I love my man, together we have seven children.  
I love my coffee at home freshly brewed  
because gas station coffee will have my whole day ruined.  
I love natural sunlight and the smell of fresh air,  
I love the way the wind blows in my hair.  
I love flowers, rollerblading, and crab ragoon,  
I also love Viva la Juicy by Juicy Couture perfume.  
I love my family more than anything,  
I love the Lord for forgiving my sins.  
I love the love I have in my heart,  
I love God, who has given me this love from the start.  
(Savannah Torres)

I love the sound of the sizzling pan  
The magic I create with my hands  
The feeling of giving people satisfaction  
When they see the food it's a quick reaction  
A smile emerges across their face  
As they look down at their plate  
The feeling I get when I cook  
Is like getting lost in a good book  
(Riley Sessions)



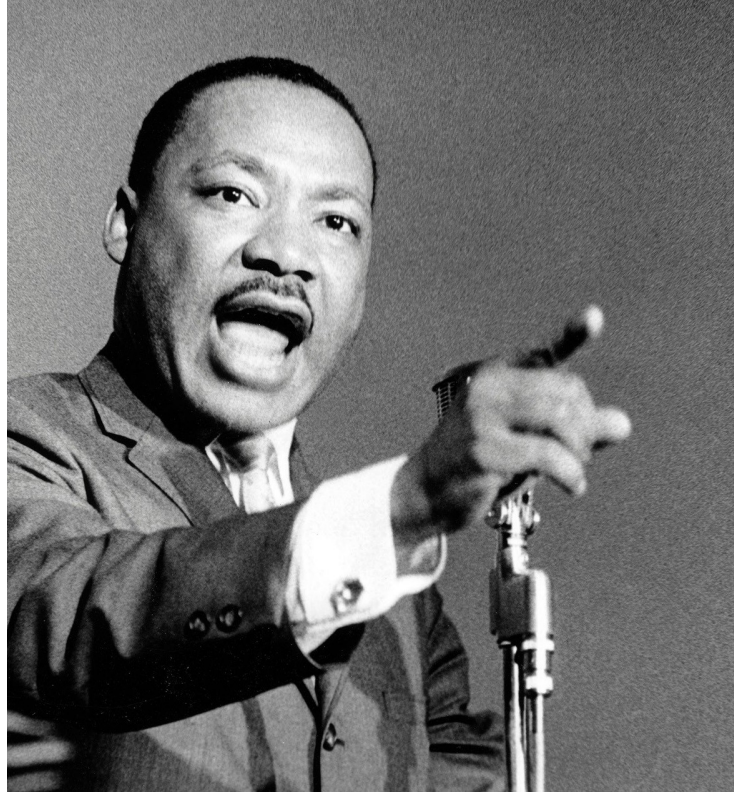
# I HAVE A DREAM

*Odyssey students were asked to start a paragraph or poem with the phrase "I have a dream."*

I have a dream that one day my child's father  
and I can work united as a team.  
I have a dream that one day my family will  
come back together, and I will meet all five  
of my brothers.  
I have a dream that I will be successful, be the  
best mom to my son, and raise him to be  
responsible and respectful.  
I have a dream that people who are not white  
will not get served an unfair sentence  
compared to people who are white.  
I have a dream that women will get equal  
pay and that all our missing women and  
children return home someday.

**(Aerial Bailey)**

I have a dream...  
To dream dreams again,  
That flow hard on streams,  
And take harbor on the wind,  
To believe again.  
Because life can throw many curveballs,  
Not everybody gets the "started from the bottom, now I'm here" story.  
The worry, the terror, and even the true reality  
Places the majority of society in a hurry to let go of their dreams and settle  
Because it was hard enough to get where they are  
So at least they are where they are and, thank God, they made it this far.  
It has become a relief to lose this belief that living the dream is possible to achieve.  
But I have a dream...  
To dream dreams again,  
That flow hard on streams,  
And take harbor on the wind,  
To believe again. **(Ron Burford)**



I have a dream that sickness will no longer be prevalent.  
I have a dream that violence and hate are put to death.  
I have a dream that a human life is as important as a dog's.  
I have a dream that love will be more powerful than hate. **(Arkeia Cameron)**



I have a dream  
 That one day there will not be hate in this world.  
 I have a dream that there will be no need for jails in this world.  
 I have a dream that there will be nothing left to see but beauty and goodness in this world.  
 I have a dream that peace takes over this world.  
 I have a dream that all are free in this world.  
 I have a dream that all religions are practical.  
 I have a dream that this world doesn't contain any evil.  
 I have so many dreams for this world, but my most important one is to feel LOVE in this world.

**(Laisha Cooke)**

I have a dream that police brutality will end. I have a dream that one day I can have children and they will not be judged by the color of their skin.  
 I have a dream that one day I can wake up and be at peace because my job and other public places I go on a daily basis will have people surrounding me who look like me.  
 I have a dream that one day it'll be the norm for African Americans to have degrees, own businesses, and have a two-parent household.  
 I have a dream that one day all evil will no longer exist and no evil will be done due to how you look or sound.  
 I have a dream that all God's children can forgive and love one another. **(Jyneeva Hunt)**

I have a dream that one day we shall all get together like a team, that this beautiful world we live in will be clean. They say it's something far from this world and unseen, but I have a dream that I will have lived the days and time to have seen such a beautiful scene. **(Ashton McDonald)**

I have a dream that the governments of the nations around the whole earth seek peace instead of war. I have a dream of no more police brutality. I have a dream of no more racial discrimination. I have a dream that families stay together. I have a dream to get rid of guns. **(Eliazar Martínez-Munguia)**

I have a dream that one day my children will live in a society where people value love, kindness, and compassion above everything.  
 I have a dream that people will have little desire for money, cars, diamonds, clothes, and rings.  
 I have a dream that our children and grandchildren will be alive when the materialistic era of consumerism comes to an end.  
 I have a dream that one day our efforts can be focused on reversing our cancerous occupancy on this planet and our precious mother's health will be on the mend.  
 I have a dream where everyone discovers the things about life that truly matter  
 And stop focusing on how to make their egos and wallets fatter. **(Krista Mellott)**

I have a dream that one day black men will rise above their stereotype,  
 They will be the backbone and sole provider of their families,  
 They will treat their people like the kings and queens they are,  
 They will educate themselves with the knowledge that is necessary to understand the ins and outs of life.  
 I have a dream that black men will one day be rid of all of the excuses as to why they're not successful,  
 Be rid of all of the hatred that they were programmed to have against their own black brothers.  
 I have a dream that black men will one day be the most respected and iconic human figures there are.  
**(Timothy Mosley)**

I have a dream that one day we can all live in harmony.  
 That we shouldn't fear for our lives simply because of the color of our skin.  
 That women can wear what they want and not be rape victims.  
 That we don't have to spend our lives drowning in student loans.  
 That we won't have to die because healthcare is too expensive.  
 I know life won't always be rainbows and unicorns, but a girl can dream. **(Loché Mothoa)**

I Have a Dream  
 That I can be able to walk into a room without being prejudged first based off of my color and hair texture  
 That my family will be able to overcome generational poverty  
 That my friends will understand that there's more to life than what is around them.  
 Oh, I Have a Dream...  
 That all children will receive the same level of education that all students receive  
 That grownups would grow empathy and compassion for one another  
 That people will start finding the good in everyone.  
 Oh, I Have a Dream...  
 That people will find peace within themselves to be free of hatred  
 That people will learn that learned behavior can also be changed behavior  
 That there will be respect for every human on Earth. **(Moriah Parker)**

I have a dream that I dream quite often  
 It feels like I'm free from all my problems  
 Floating away like a hollow log  
 Going deeper and deeper into the fog  
 But then all of a sudden I'm awake  
 And realize I'm in the same place **(Riley Sessions)**

I have a dream that one day racism will be nonexistent.  
 That everyone can live in peace without judgement.  
 I have a dream  
 That the next generation will outdo this generation and SUCCEED.  
 That healthcare and education will be affordable.  
 I have a dream  
 That all my girl's dreams will come true. **(Shiloh Simonsen)**



I have a dream that one day I'll have my own business, that one day I'll be able to do what I love doing,  
 that one day I'll be more than stable so that my children and I do not have worry.  
 I have a dream that I'll be so financially steady that anything my son wants or needs, I will always be able  
 to provide. I have a dream that my son will be inspired enough to start his own dream and do what he  
 loves to do in life.  
 I have a dream that my son will be able to watch me grow old, but most importantly, that I'll be able to  
 watch him grow old and become the man that I always knew he could be with the foundational steps  
 I'm setting up for him.  
 I have a dream that I will turn this dream into reality. **(Natia Saffold)**

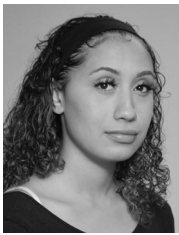
I have a dream that all humans are seen and treated with equality, respect, and dignity regardless of skin  
 color, race, or condition. I have a dream that we all have the right to education and progress. May we live  
 free, happy, and fully. **(Carmen Tinajero)**



# RESPONDING TO "LETTER FROM A BIRMINGHAM JAIL"

*Odyssey students wrote letters to Martin Luther King, Jr. after reading his powerful "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" from 1963.*

**Dear Dr. King:**



"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." That sentence spoke volumes to me. I strongly agree with that statement. If someone gets away with murder in one state, then why should it not be illegal in the next? Everyone

deserves equal justice no matter the color of their skin. It saddens my heart that still in 2020 we are experiencing injustice due to the color of one's skin.

"Racial injustice engulfs this community." A black person will get a heavier sentence for the same crime a white person commits. Obviously, the circumstances differ, but it's like they're charged for different crimes. Furthermore, it goes beyond sentencing and convictions: there are literally thousands of black women missing, and nothing's being done. People swear "All life matters," but the country's actions don't reflect such; therefore, we, too, are victims of broken promises. Some things are done, but certainly not enough.

It takes extreme courage to do what you have done and a high level of intelligence to execute your plans and write your letter the way you did. You established your power and equality by starting the letter with "My dear fellow clergy." The letter was written with much intellect and humbleness. I 100% agree with your concept that sometimes you have to dramatize an issue to get the results you want. I know I personally will do the most to get my point across. One can't grow or change if circumstances remain the same.

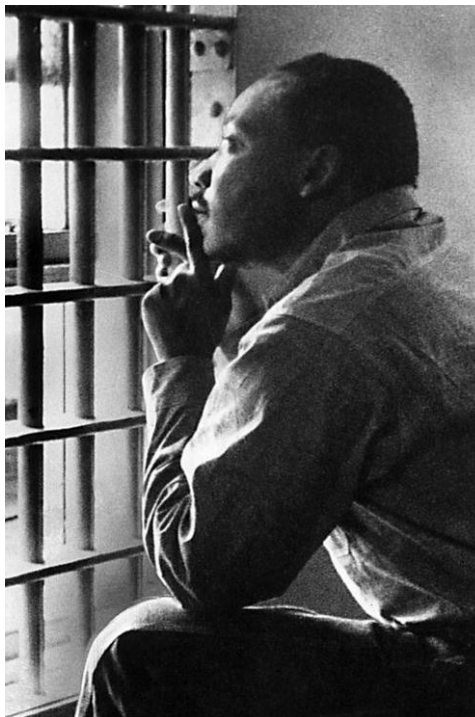
The "fellow clergy" expect Negroes to wait for equality and be patient for the right time. When do they expect the time to be, if not now? They didn't wait to take away the rights; people shouldn't have to wait to be treated as a human being! It might sound crazy, but they can't understand what they haven't experienced. That's why they're acting like what they're doing is no big deal. The pain and humility you all went/go through is unimaginable to me. They wouldn't last a day in the shoes of a Negro.

The time to do right is right now. Overall, many aspects of the letter spoke volumes to me. I am impressed by the way you articulated your words to essentially check the white clergy. You addressed every issue they had with you; it was done with excellence. Just like back then, we still now cannot trust police. Police officers kill

innocent blacks and get no punishment. They're supposed to serve and protect, but it's the minority communities they neglect. We have come a long way from 400 years ago but still have a long way to go.

Thank you for everything. We wouldn't have made the progress we've made without you.

**(Aerial Bailey)**





I have read your Letter from Birmingham Jail. I can tell that you're a good man with good intentions. In all honesty, there are some kinds of people who you and I, no matter what, cannot change in their way of thinking.

You speak a lot about racial segregation. What do you think about church integration regarding racial reconciliation? How do you feel about the weakening religious role of the church's influence in the year 2020 opposed to 1963? There is still a lot of racial discrimination nowadays. The new generation today doesn't understand a lot or any of the things that you, Dr. King, and other African Americans in the Civil Rights era went through. There have been very big changes in American history. There are also more equal opportunities for African Americans. Despite those opportunities, there is still a lot of negative prejudice, and white nationalists are involved in political elections throughout the United States.

There are still a lot of racial hostilities, and law enforcement nowadays still projects that

unfairness towards minorities. For instance, if there is a confrontation with an African American and it goes wrong, then the law enforcement will say, "It's not that bad. There is a reason why this law enforcement official took the action he/she took." Racial discrimination, police brutalities, and even murders are still being covered up. . . . Today, some white churches do welcome some black members from local communities, but some churches continue to not be welcoming to African Americans.

So, the last thing I want to say is about Adolf Hitler. Dr. King, you mentioned in your letter that, "We should never forget that everything Adolf Hitler did in Germany was legal." Everything that Hitler did (putting Jews in concentration camps and killing them) was morally unjust because it contradicted human rights. This is your example of how there are unjust, unethical laws that need to be broken.

I won't take up any more of your time. I'm closing this letter and hope it finds you in good faith. Have a blessed day, Dr. Martin Luther King. Yours for the cause of peace, **(Margarita Barajas)**







I would like to personally thank you for all that you do for the people. The tales of your odyssey are greatly inspiring and encouraging to those who heed the call of antipathy towards injustice. I am writing you today to reference the letter you

wrote from the Birmingham Jail answering the statement to the fellow clergymen. In your letter, Dr. King, you said, "I am here because I have ties here, but more basically, I am here because injustice is here." Before I even decided to continue reading, I noticed the saddening brilliance of how you referenced being incarcerated unjustly. Furthermore, I would like to share the three concepts I received from reading your letter.

The first concept, "It's okay to peacefully disobey," stems from your quote, "I am afraid of the word 'tension.' I have opposed violent tension, but there is a type of constructive, nonviolent tension which is necessary for growth." I wondered why said you were afraid of the word tension but realized this is also post-Civil War. I believe this to mean that tension unchecked and suppressed can cause violent outbreaks resulting in injury, loss of assets, and, at worst, premature death. And as I am one that also believes in the nonviolent approach, Dr. King, I must ask, how is one to react when they get some form of change masked with deception? Even to this day, in the year 2020, our people live in the worst neighborhoods, have the highest number of people incarcerated, and are still racially discriminated against on a daily basis. One might say it is by choice, but like you referenced, Dr. King, Socrates shares that if one will rise from the bondage of myths and half-truths, they can make themselves aware that it is by systematic design that our people are in these conditions. What, then, Dr. King, is the timely nonviolent approach? I digress. The biblical reference came to mind, "Love your enemies and pray for them." Did not Jesus do this for those who chose to crucify him?"

This moves me to the second concept I gained, "The ones or things you love can hurt you the most," which stems from the love you share of the church. You said, Dr. King, "As a minister of the

gospel and one that was nurtured in its bosom, I am disappointed with the church." You shared that if something didn't change, the church would be seen as nothing more than a social club. Wasn't this because the thing that helped raise and teach you wouldn't support you during your time of need? I must share, Dr. King, that this statement is extremely relevant today. Most people don't even attend church and will even become offended with the mention of church. In part, this is because of the historical, radical truth that people in power have used the church as a means for political gain and justified oppression. Moreover, it is these principles and commandments from the Bible that gave America its statutes, amendments, and laws, not to mention its hope for a better future for all its people. So why, Dr. King, should we remain hopeful in the church or even America when we have to live in this state of systematic injustice? This is a question I am asking not for myself but for those who question even your method of nonviolent civil disobedience.

I'm not surprised that I found this answer in your letter, Dr. King, when you said, "I have no despair about the future. They have carved a tunnel of hope through the dark mountain of disappointment." You went on to say, "We will reach out for freedom all over the nation, because the goal of America is freedom." These powerful words bring me to the last concept I gained from reading your letter from the Birmingham Jail, "Remaining hopeful despite disappointments." This encouraging letter did, however, cause me some guilt because these days I am not always willing to accept what the consequence may be for speaking out about injustice. The fear of what could happen or who I might hurt is to me a relevant factor. So I also want to apologize because I cannot honestly say that I am willing to go the miles that you have gone in your lifetime, or even take the steps that you have taken. But I can say that I have found inspiration in this letter that has been like a swift kick in the pants to continue to press forward despite any fears. Thank you, Dr. King, for being one to inspire true social and racial justice in the American society. Sincere regards. **(Ron Burford)**



What stood out to me the most in this letter is the talk of “morals.” Any human who treats any living thing with such vile actions has no such morals nor values nor love for others. . . . As part of society, I speak for the speechless, the voiceless,

for those who can’t compile the words for peers who take no understanding of bottom-line human rights. We have to begin a life explaining that love has no color, shape, or form when it comes to the love you share in your heart. Hate is taught as well as love. I instill love in my children and hope they carry it like a baby through life. Here it is 2020 and children are living in cages in a country where ancestors worked hard over blood, sweat, and tears to know their children and peers would never have to live through the hell they did. It doesn’t matter if those children are immigrants. The hate in America has always been depicted in many ways, past and present. **(Arkeia Cameron)**



Let’s start off first by saying that was a beautifully written letter with very strong yet loving points. Your writing is impeccable. This letter gave me a better understanding of you as a man, a black man, a father, a peacemaker, and a leader.

I know many understand and agree with your thoughts and observations but will never admit to it. They may never admit that you’re right. This letter may fall on blind eyes and, if read aloud, deaf ears. On both sides, some are not ready for peace. Some are not ready to see us free and non-segregated. Yes, even our own people become complacent with not being free. I also feel some white people would like to continue to feel that false sense of superiority. I believe you said, and I quote, “All segregation statutes are unjust because segregation distorts the soul and damages the personality. It gives the segregator a false sense of superiority and the segregated a false sense of inferiority.”

Now, I must admit, I only partly agree with that. Some things I’m okay with being segregated from

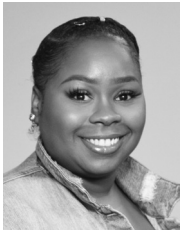


because I don’t want to be included in/or be a part of everything. I feel we do not have to be a part of or invited to everything other races have going on, or their organizations, and vice versa. Some things, people may want reserved specifically for them. As long as it’s not stopping us or them from getting ahead, giving a false sense of superiority, and is equal and just, is not violent, mean-spirited, or evil, I’m okay with not being invited to or made a part of some things. I believe we can still love one another; we can still have lots of things together as a whole human race. We need to move on to justice for us and to be treated with dignity and respect.

This is not only needed, but it is crucial that we find it quickly. We cannot continue to lose lives, especially over something that is our natural birthright, “freedom.” “Justice delayed is justice denied.” “Like a boil that can never be cured so long as it is covered up but must be opened with all its ugliness to the natural medicines of air and light, injustice must be exposed.” How else can we recognize and begin to fix this error if it is ignored or flat-out denied? We have to do better—as people, as human beings.

I will close this letter now, for I hope it reaches your hands. If I have written anything offensive, I apologize now and state that was never my intention. I wish you and all mankind nothing but peace, justice, love, respect, and brotherhood on this odyssey of freedom. Much love,  
**(Laisha Cooke)**





My heart ached as I read your letter from jail. It's really sad that you're locked up for basically being outside using your voice. You were simply trying to help our people stand up for their rights in a nonviolent way. I never understood why the

White men hated African Americans so much. They treated dogs and animals with more humanity than they did those of African descent.

However, just by reading your letter, I can see how intelligent you are. Your vocabulary is very advanced. I like how you quoted people like Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Jefferson, Amos, and Jesus. When they gave you the title of being an extremist, I liked how you turned it into something positive. For example, you stated (p. 114), "Was not Jesus an extremist for love: 'love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you'?"

Another quote that stood out to me was when you quoted Abraham Lincoln: "This nation cannot survive half slave and half free." You were trying to make America see that all races and ethnicities should be treated as equal, be free, and have the right to vote. It saddened me that after all colored people endured, there were whites against the freedom and rights of colored people. You shouldn't have to tell your five-year-old daughter she can't go to Funtown because of the color of her skin or sleep in the corner of your car during long travels because all the hotels turn you down

due to the skin you're in. It really breaks my heart.

I am so happy you called the Birmingham Police Department out on their bulls\*\*t as well because we all know the police do dirt and are praised for it. One of my favorite quotes that stood out to me was (p. 117), "I doubt that you would have so warmly commended the police force if you had seen its dogs sinking their teeth into unarmed, nonviolent Negroes. I doubt you would so quickly commend the policemen if you were to observe their ugly and inhumane treatment of Negroes."

I just want to thank you, Dr. King, for being our voice and standing up for our justice. You will never be forgotten. Also, I don't mind the long letters because they give me knowledge and hope. Besides, you have all the time in there, so keep writing and keep the faith with your head held high. P.S. I'm going to put money in your books for you to use at your leisure. Again, thank you, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Yours truly, **(Jyneevea Hunt)**





Your letter is a poignant look into the reality of racial inequality. Dr. Martin Luther King, your letter evokes in me strong feelings of empathy, indignation, and even pride. "Throughout Alabama all sorts of devious methods are used to

prevent Negroes from becoming registered voters, and there are some counties in which, even though Negroes constitute a majority of the population, not a single Negro is registered." This quote resonates with me as I consider that not only has a whole population of Americans been humiliated, deemed inferior, and denied basic human rights, but they have also in many cases been robbed of their means to participate in our political process. The right and duty to vote is sacrosanct in the American system. Time and time again the great democratic Nation of the World says that our message can be heard through our vote. Impeding our vote amounts to stealing one's voice. African Americans endured unimaginable hardships in this land and were powerless to effect change in the system with their vote.

"I have been arrested on a charge of parading without a permit." Now there is nothing wrong in having an ordinance which requires a permit for a parade. But such an ordinance becomes unjust when it is used to maintain segregation and deny citizens their first amendment privilege of peaceful assembly and protest. African American citizens are struggling for the equality America was founded on, and the police not only arrested the protesters but let their dogs bite the people.

As I read your letter, my feelings of empathy and indignation are strong indeed, yet they are surpassed by pride. Dr. King, when you said, "I want to try to answer your statements in what I hope will be patient and reasonable terms," this statement showed your commitment to treating others with respect, even as you found a glaring gap in their argument. "You deplore the demonstration taking place in Birmingham. But your statement, I am sorry to say, fails to express a similar concern for the conditions that brought about the demonstration." I personally find it inspiring that while the clergymen

attack you without any reasonable argument, you maintain yourself in a gracious posture. This is a great moral I can apply in my own life. An attack on our motives or ideas need not be answered in anger or hostility. Using reason and kindness is a far more effective approach.

Dr. Martin Luther King, you inspire me to demonstrate empathy to those enduring struggles, to be a catalyst for justice, and to recognize the good in our world. Thank you.

**(Eliazar Martinez-Munguia)**



How could you not be heard or broadcast if others won't listen or give you the time of day? We live in that day and age, with lack of respect to us and our families.

Sir, I believe you have a lot to say. You said we have waited 340 years for our constitutional and God-given rights. But one must remember that people are allowed to think and feel however they feel necessary. I think your teachings would be better off taught and shared with the youth of our nations. Change requires open-mindedness, and molding our youth for the future would bring us closer and make the world and our communities more unified. . . .

I truly enjoy the way you use your metaphors. It's like you scroll through history finding the right important moment to make your point but to also grab the reader's attention.

I also love how you keep bringing all your points and your metaphors back to Birmingham and how unjust it is. You were a guest and treated badly, but what they were fighting for is what brothers of color are fighting for across the globe. I really like how I can hear your sarcasm and mockery, but you said it in a way that only a truly just, kind-hearted person could. I feel there is no way that a person who speaks such as you do can't or won't be heard. So no matter how ignorant one is, they can't help at least to listen maybe and ponder on what it is you are offering or trying to ascertain for your fellow brown-skinned brothas and sistas. . . .

**(Ashton McDonald)**





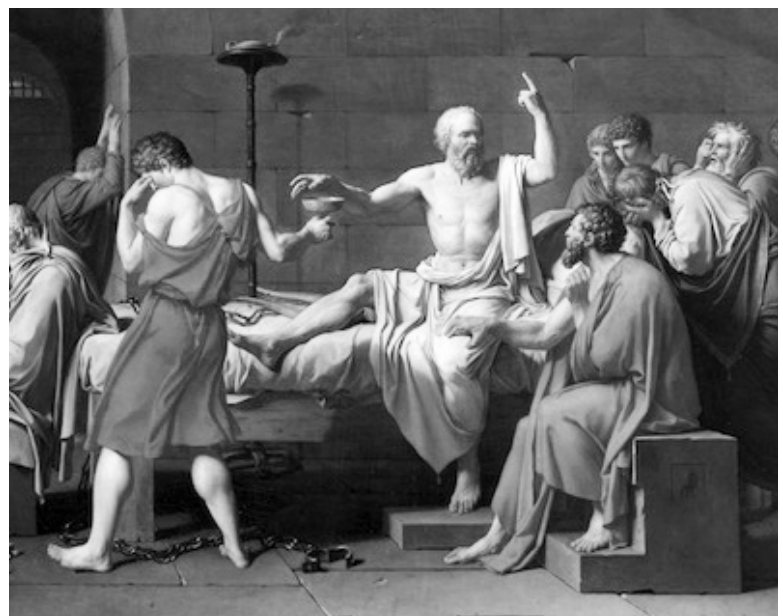
Upon reading your Letter from Birmingham Jail, I must express my admiration toward the concepts and ideas that you present in your defense to the clergymen. The method of expressing civil disobedience using Socrates' idea of

the gadfly with several strategic adjustments was brilliant. The concepts that you created in the non-violent campaign were done with such careful tact that they became an inspiring message that can be used for different issues for generations to come. The powerful explanation about just vs unjust laws is a very eye-opening discussion that brought to mind many of the current unjust laws that are still occurring years after your movement. In addition, the discussion about the church authority becoming "an arch defender of status quo" instead of the defender of moral law was very interesting, with aspects that I both agree and disagree with. Lastly, the statement "Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will" is incredibly motivating and really made me think about the world today and why we still have the "moderate" people unwilling to stand up for what is right. It lights a fire in me that drives me to want to be a person who understands how to express the injustice of the world in the manner that you have proven to be powerful and devoid of ulterior motives.

You began your non-violent campaign by first identifying whether injustices existed. According to your letter, there are several ways injustice can present itself. In general terms, injustice occurs when the law is not in line with moral laws. A few examples you presented were "any law that degrades human personality," a majority group that compels a minority group to abide by a law that the majority is not required to obey, and/or when a law is used to create the desired outcome for the oppressor instead of for its original purpose. There are several instances that I thought of that currently fall under your definitions of unjust, such as:

stop ID states, profiling, felons unable to vote, and the discrepancies in sentencing between minorities and whites. After concluding that injustice is present, you would attempt to set up negotiations to see if the majority is willing to amend the laws to bring about justice. If negotiations are unsuccessful at this point, you begin preparing for direct action by training yourselves with nonviolent workshops and determining the levels of dedication through what you call the self-purification process. You state, "One who breaks an unjust law must do so openly, lovingly, and with a willingness to accept the penalty . . . in order to arouse the conscience of the community of its injustice."

After one agrees to the terms of the self-purification process and commits to the campaign devoid of impure motives, they begin the action. Direct action is the process of drawing attention to the issue at hand by way of Socrates' gadfly concept with a few of your carefully designed recommendations. You express how this step is a delicate one because when there is injustice, there is tension. You speak of two types of opposing forces involved in the tension. One type describes the people who have just become accustomed to the injustice and merely deal with it, and the other force is angry and filled with hatred. Finding a way to protest that can unite these two groups was most effective with the way of



love and nonviolence. I found it interesting when you were discussing the timing of the protests and said “oppressed people cannot remain oppressed forever. . . . If his repressed emotions are not released in nonviolent ways, they will seek expression through violence; this is not a threat but a fact of history.” This “fact” gives me hope and concern for our nation, due to the continued injustice prevalent in our country. If we can follow the steps of the campaign for these current issues, will we be able to achieve the public support that is necessary for change?



In your letter, you discuss that you had some difficulties in Birmingham with achieving support from the public. There were two categories of people that challenged you, the church and the “moderates” (people who may agree with the injustice but are unwilling to help the cause). The church, historically, was a strong authority that defended the moral code of the people from the governing bodies. They were successful with assisting the public with overcoming many horrific evils; however, you have stated that you believe that the church’s authority has become weak. You predicted that “the church will lose its authenticity, forfeit the loyalty of millions, and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning.” This is a very strong statement which I do not entirely agree or disagree with. I do see how the church has become more of a “club” than an authority; however, I do not believe that it is without meaning. The church as well as many other organizations often choose to take no stance on issues for fear of backlash. This is also a common trait among the public resulting in “moderate” supporters. The moderate is “more devoted to order than to justice or negative peace (the absence of tension).” In our current society, I see people who will stand up for injustice, I see people who will stand up and fight to keep the oppressed persecuted, and I have seen people who will not stand up for injustice.

I believe that the moderate people of the current society fall into several categories as well. First,

we have people who are just uncomfortable picking a side and do not want to disrupt their lives for someone else’s situation. Then we have the people who are being distracted from the injustice that is occurring in the nation. The government or oppressing authorities have a means to delude us through false propaganda, media coverage, ads, marketing, consumerism, paid protestors, and withheld public information. These distractions often hide the injustice by creating doubt in the community or by simply not providing the information that the unjust events are occurring. For example, the border patrol and the immigration detention camps have little media coverage, and the government is failing to provide the public with accurate information as to the true conditions occurring in these facilities. The immigrants are being oppressed, forced into jails with little food or medical attention, and killed. We need your guidance to help us lead the non-violent campaign for these people. How do we become the Socrates Gadfly when the information being seen by the public is so censored? Even if we can get the attention of the public, will they care to step away from the comfort of their lives, phones, cars, and Instagrams long enough to engage in the action? Or are these current distractions so addicting that the majority will seek the “order” so they can continue with their lives as is?

If I ever fail in my attempt to restore justice, I beg that you can forgive me. If I ever fail to make attempts to restore justice, I beg God forgive me. Yours for the cause of Peace, **(Krista Mellott)**





I commend you for the bravery that you and so many others have shown in order to accomplish the goal of giving our people the freedom that we rightfully deserve. Doing so in a peaceful, nonviolent manner shows great leadership. We as humans

tend to live by the code “an eye for an eye,” which tends to get us in worse situations than we started off with. To show our people and continuously preach to them that doing things the nonviolent way will get you positive results is amazing.

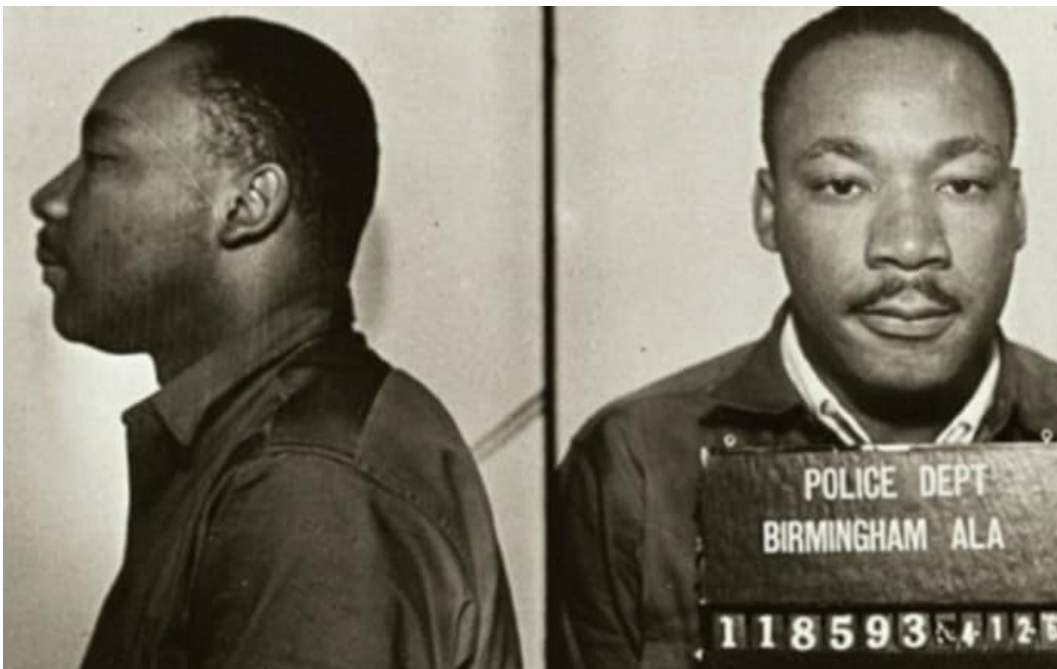
I do not know many people who would have taken so much abuse and still not resort to violence.

I love the fact that you didn’t “wait” for the oppressors to do things on their terms: you took the fight right to them without letting up. As you pointed out, “Justice too long delayed is justice denied.” That stands out so much to me because people tend to want things in life but are not willing to put in the hard work and determination that it takes in order to achieve their goals. Therefore, what has to be done is prolonged, and eventually what needs to be accomplished never happens. I found it very ironic and so did you that the oppressors labeled you as an extremist. Weren’t they the ones who commanded their dogs to attack innocent, nonviolent African Americans? Weren’t they the ones who sprayed innocent,

nonviolent African Americans with water hoses? Weren’t they the ones who struck innocent, nonviolent African Americans with billy clubs?

In my experience and in the experience of many other African Americans who have run-ins with the police, the police are always the ones who are the extremists, yet they have the nerve to point the finger. It’s so sad because these same exact unfair acts against African Americans are still going on to this very day. The crazy thing is that their horrible actions towards us still get covered up. We can be treated so unfairly and not have a say about it.

I have to admit, though, there are white people who stand behind us now, as they did for your cause. But there are still those who know for a fact that injustice is taking place and are still scared to speak up because of what others of their race would think or say about them. Your letter spoke to me personally as a black man living in a world that sees us as worthless and as minorities. But as you also pointed out in your letter, how could we be the minorities when we were here through it all and basically built this country? We know that the odds are stacked against us, but that doesn’t mean stop fighting to get what we deserve. In order to do so we have to do it the right way and not let others take us out of our character. We need to fight with our minds and not with our fists.



Thank you for showing us the true way to success, Dr. King. For your knowledge, bravery, and leadership, we will forever be grateful and indebted to you for encouraging us to do the right thing and keep up the good fight for our people and ourselves. A true believer of yours,  
(Timothy Mosley)



I have taken the time to read your very long, detailed letter. You've made valuable points, and your efforts will forever be appreciated. Though there have been changes, certain things still remain the same. We will remain hopeful that one

day, these past and current issues will no longer be a cause for concern.

Today, in some cases, people are still treated differently simply because of the color of their skin. I am sure many people of color still have to have the dreadful conversation with their kids when they come home from school and have experienced racism. No parent would want to—or should have to—explain in this day and age why you get treated differently based on the color of your skin.

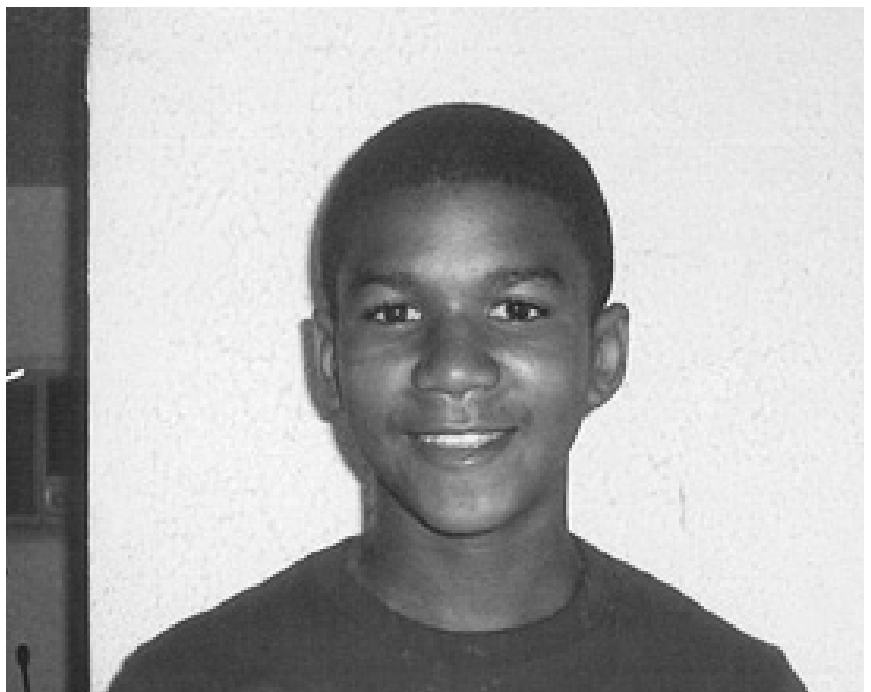
“Any law that degrades human personality is unjust.” That should be the theme for people of color at this point. The Birmingham police should not have been commended for keeping “order” and “preventing violence” by having their dogs sink their teeth into unarmed, nonviolent Negroes there in the city jail, or for how boys and men got slapped and kicked and Negro women got verbally abused and pushed.

I feel it's gotten worse these past few years. All you see are videos popping up on social media of how another black life was taken. A boy got shot for wearing a hoodie, walking through a probably-white neighborhood. You're grabbed out of your car, thrown on the ground, whether you're male or female, and of course get shot multiple times, very often for no reason. But let's justify the unjust by saying, “I thought he was armed.” They say this even if they're well aware the person was unarmed. Many kids had to see how the police who are supposed to protect and serve them will shoot

and kill their fathers right in front of them. Can you imagine what that does to a child? So, Dr. King, I fully agree with you when you said, “You express a great deal of anxiety over our willingness to break laws.” But let's face it. If anyone should have a great deal of anxiety over willingness to break laws, it should be people of color because we all know the justice system still remains unjust.

Dr. King, you also said, “Few members of the oppressor race can understand the deep groans and passionate yearnings of the oppressed race, and still fewer have the vision to see that injustice must be rooted out by strong, persistent, and determined action.” Even though it was a small group back then, their numbers have increased so much over the years since then. Yes, there are still a few—especially older generations—who tend to be racist, and even some of the younger generations. But no one is born a racist. So God help those who still teach their offspring to be racist. Eventually, they'll realize their mistakes.

“Let us all hope that the dark clouds of racial prejudice will soon pass away.” Believe me, Dr. King, that's the dream—that's the end game. Written and signed by someone in full agreement with you, Dr. King. **(Loché Mothoa)**







I can appreciate the way you can conform to an audience. You were able to inspire the Civil Rights activists and invoke empathy in the white moderate as well as develop compassion in the minds of clergymen in the letter. Dr. King,

you began the letter by stating, “My dear fellow clergymen” to establish yourself at the same level of competence and shared values as your audience.

In your letter, you explain examples of things that are wrong. Indignation is an emotion that I find surfacing within myself as I read, but nowhere is it more apparent than in your statement, “Throughout Alabama, all sorts of devious methods are used to prevent Negroes from becoming registered voters, and there are some counties in which, even though Negroes constitute a majority of the population, not a single Negro is registered.”

This quote resonates in me as I consider that not only has an entire population of Black Americans been humiliated, but we have been robbed of our means to participate in the political process.

Your letter forces me to realize that black citizens have struggled for the equality the United States was founded on, yet we are being arrested for improper parading. We as Black people have had peaceful protests, and even that was stilted. Where else can we turn, and how else can we effect change?

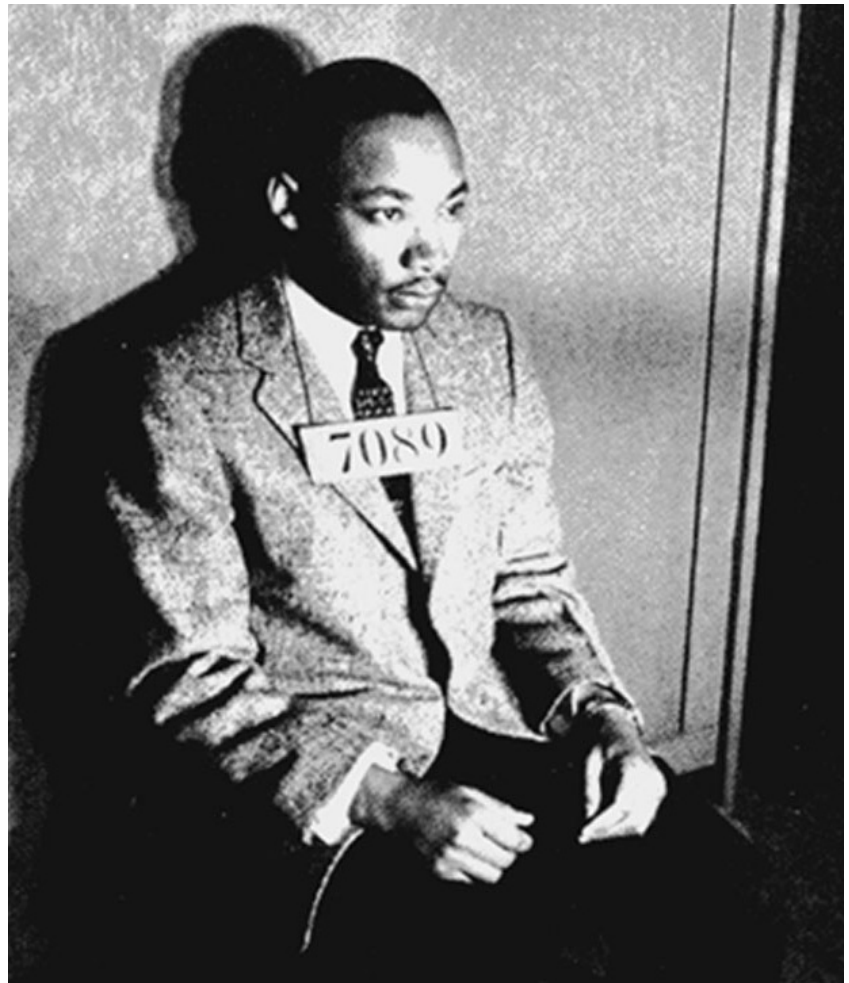
I find it inspiring that while you are refuting the attacks against you by the clergyman, you are gracious. This is a great moral I can apply in my own life. An attack on our motives or ideas need not be answered in anger. Dr. King, you prove that kindness is a more effective approach. **(Moriah Parker)**



I would like to start by thanking you for taking the time to write such a detailed letter and thoroughly explaining yourself. I believe that a lot of the problems that were encountered in your time are now replaying themselves in my

time. At one point in your letter, you stated that “Oppressed people cannot remain oppressed forever,” but I would like to question that. In order for history to be repeating itself and for racism to be so alive in 2020, the oppressed must have always been oppressed in order to teach their children their ways.

I really liked the part where you speak on just and unjust laws and explain why some laws are “ok” to break and some aren’t. When you say, “An unjust law is no law at all,” it shows that some laws are put into place strictly to see people fail and punish them for no reason at all. **(Shiloh Simonsen)**





Your letter spoke loud and clear to me. You wanted to protect your brothers and sisters, and you wanted better for them. Not enough people had courage.

They wanted to procrastinate, and they wanted to push injustice to the side and believe that it was going to get better on its own. Not you; you'd had enough. You tried negotiating and that didn't work. So now you want to try taking a stand, but in a nonviolent way, because you know if no one takes a stand, a lot of our brothers and sisters are going to take the wrong stand. So you want to save them before they do.

I like how you compare it to Socrates and biblical characters—how they led people for a reason and ended up saving them. This is still happening now: people are still racist, calling our brothers and sisters “niggers,” not wanting us in companies, declining our applications because of our skin color. But because of you, more people are taking a stand. Taking bulls\*\*t is not an option! Because of you, we have more white brothers and sisters who understand our situation. **(Natia Saffold)**



It is very sad that for wanting to defend your rights and those of your people, you are imprisoned. But I want to congratulate you for the admirable work you do. You are very brave, and society needs people like you to help stop the injustice.

As you say, injustice somewhere is a threat to justice everywhere. Well, somehow, I, who am of Hispanic origin, can feel and therefore understand the terrible injustice that you are experiencing, since Hispanics in this country are also treated in an unfair way.

In a part of your letter, you say that what affects one directly affects everyone indirectly. You say



that anyone who lives inside the United States can never be considered an outsider, but there are situations and people who make you feel like an outsider.

For example, just like you, the great majority of us do not have the right to vote. Or when my own children arrive from school and tell you that white children have questioned them about their status in this country just because of their skin color, this makes them feel so bad.

You have been waiting for them to remove humiliating racial signs from stores, but they remained. Promises were not fulfilled, so you have no alternative except to prepare for direct action. Who is able to accept blows without retaliating or enduring the ordeal of jail?

You write, “I know it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation or racism to say ‘wait’ because they have never been in our shoes or felt what it feels like to be “smothering in an airtight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society” and to see how “ominous clouds of inferiority” are beginning to form in “the little mental sky” of our children. **(Carmen Tinajero)**



# FORWARD MOTION:

## RESPONDING TO THE ODYSSEY DOCUMENTARY

*On January 22, Odyssey students watched the Forward Motion documentary about the Odyssey Project. This film aired on the Big Ten Network on December 1, 2012, just days after the death of Wanda Auerbach, mother of Odyssey Co-Director/Founder Emily Auerbach and one of the speakers in the video. The documentary shows students in class and at their graduation ceremony, interviews Odyssey faculty Craig Werner and Jean Feraca, traces the Auerbach family story of coming out of poverty through free access to college, and focuses on the transformational experiences of Anthony Ward (Class of 2004) and Billie Kelsey (Class of 2012). After watching the film, students in the Class of 2020 responded.*

I was extremely moved and motivated by the video. Seeing people overcome their trials and tribulations is confirmation to me that I can overcome the obstacles life presents me as well. I was always told "Education is key," and it truly is. The video vividly illustrated how hungry people are to do better and break their current cycle. The testimonials inspired me the most; I resonated with some of the doubts and insecurities that people have of being a college graduate. This world is mine, and this class and amazing opportunity is just me scratching the surface of my Odyssey.

**(Aerial Bailey)**

Gratitude in action! A hope to press forward! The gift that keeps giving! These are just a few quotes that come to mind after watching the film. I was both excited and a little envious while seeing people who I had known for years that had never once mentioned Odyssey to me. I saw how grateful the students were for the opportunity, how much hope this class had given them, and how this gift made them give back to others by sharing their talents with others. Thank you, Emily. I truly appreciate you sharing a part of your life with us through this film.

**(Ron Burford)**

The Auerbach family is a caring, loving, thoughtful, and courageous family. Thinking of others and not just self is a major part in my life and sometime hinders me. I want the motivation of this family to help me help others in a way where it will help everyone involved. Being poor and raising children who are not selfish sometimes is a challenge, for in this world, sometimes you have to be selfish to eat and survive. This family story [in the Odyssey film] gave me hope for those who can't see the brighter side in helping instead of being selfish for self-gain.

My goal is to complete the class and make myself, as well as my children, proud. During and before I've had some struggles, and moving forward can be hard. **(Arkeia Cameron)**





While viewing the film, I was emotionally touched. I see the way people were going through a depression but persist, have determination to achieve their goals. The Auerbach family story teaches me about love and determination also. They also teach me how life is hard, but you can succeed with Odyssey. Odyssey is a life changer. **(Kossiwav Eloh)**

I learned that this program was birthed from love. It made me tear up when I saw my Godgrandma Juanita Bernard Wilson (Odyssey '07) because she has passed. However, it was a reminder of how powerful this program is. She was a beautiful spirit, and life was better for her after Odyssey. Emily is truly powerful in so many ways

Watching this definitely made me want to cry. I know Emily misses her mom so much. She was such an amazing, intelligent, and beautiful woman. Emily looks just like her, too. I'm so inspired by what Bob and Wanda went through and what they overcame together. They truly stuck together, through thick and thin, rich or poor, and in sickness and in health; not even death has set them apart! I absolutely loved the film. I can't wait until we are on that stage at graduation with all of our family and friends there for us. **(Laisha Cooke)**

because this video shows how many others she believed in. She gave them hope and a voice. Emily, your mom would be proud, and I know she is smiling down on you. **(Jyneeva Hunt)**

I thought that the film was very moving. It's amazing what Odyssey does for "regular, low-income people." It's inspirational that Emily's parents were together for so long and were a great team. But the fact that these teachings and knowledge will literally last forever, through all of us, is great. Amazingly great. **(Corey Dean)**





The film opened my eyes to improve with everything in my life, to always try my hardest, and to never give up. My emotions got the best of me while watching the film because, growing up, I was not the best reader; I always tested low in my reading scores during middle school and high school. I let reading get the best of me because everyone else around me was more fluent in reading, so I would always refuse to read out loud. This video made me realize that just because people around me are moving at a different pace, it doesn't mean I have to stop.

I need to stop being afraid and to tackle any book and hard words that come my way. However, I am getting better at reading more fluently because I don't want Kingston to grow up and be embarrassed that he can't read like others around him. Reading and education are important to me. So I'm going to stand at my son's back because nobody ever stood at mine pertaining to education. **(Ashley Lee)**

I have learned that, in a way, history does repeat itself. In this case, Emily followed in her parents' footsteps, and the legacy lives on in a bigger way, so big that I am a part of it. I am so proud to be a part of it. What I learned about Wanda in particular is that if she would have never found a free college, her life would not have been the same. The free college is where Wanda met her husband and where this story all begins.



The moment that stood out the most to me in the film was seeing Billie and her son both in college together. Amazing! At the graduation ceremony when a Latina woman who wanted to be a translator said that Odyssey is a "miracle," I felt it to my core. I thought the whole video was wonderful, but when I reminded myself that I am a part of the blooming flower, I felt so lucky. I am so proud to be a part of this Odyssey. **(Tina Martinez)**



Well, I've experienced Emily's kind heart and compassion for wanting to help others. She reached out to me in a deep, dark time in my life and was there for me and my family.

It makes you feel good to be a part of something that is changing lives, challenging ourselves, and pushing us to do more and be better.

I got to see that everyone struggles, but you have to be strong and not give up. I also learned that I need to open up to my classmates because we all need one another. I'm glad I have this opportunity and hope that I make my fellow classmates and teachers proud. **(Ashton McDonald)**

The film left me with a new sense of confidence. I didn't realize how much I have allowed the feelings of inadequacy to seep back into my mind until the film re-inspired me and reminded me of my potential. It is crazy to feel instantaneously the difference: Odyssey affects my ambition and self-worth. This confidence is like electricity buzzing around the room being fueled by the incredible people who make this possible. Wanda's kind, caring, and compassionate nature is felt through her daughter Emily and the faculty chosen to create an environment where people can't help but start believing in themselves. **(Krista Mellott)**

Wanda Auerbach reminded me so much of my great-grandmother, who passed away in 2001. Wanda's love for reading and music and how she interacted with her husband, Bob Auerbach, was like seeing my own great-grandparents again. Oh, how I miss them. Also, how Wanda and her family started this Odyssey Project is so beautiful. Many people, once they make it in life, forget their humble beginnings or look down on others, but instead they used their humble beginnings and helped the less fortunate—something my great grandparents loved doing. Emily is fortunate to have them as parents because I would've loved to know Wanda Auerbach personally. **(Loché Mothoa)**

I learned that the Auerbach family is a very humble family with a very generous heart. In particular, Wanda Auerbach has profoundly impacted my life. And despite the fact that she had a difficult life, she did not let her social circumstances limit her. Instead, with a courageous spirit, committed ideals, and loving heart, she has created a legacy in each and every student who passes through the Odyssey doors. She has afforded all of us the opportunity to pursue our interest in education with other like-minded individuals, and through this platform -- through a platform she helped craft for us all -- we are able to continue our education in a welcoming and sincere environment.





One part of the video that struck me was the development of the Odyssey Project during its early years. Emily started this program. And a lot of people did not believe in this program. And in the video, it became apparent that getting over those barriers was not easy. When we live in a society that operates under a logic of “I help you, you help me,” programs that conform to such logic are easier to gain support from outside investors. But this program does not operate under such logic. Instead, this program is able to continue because of the belief of various individuals that agree on one simple fact: “we should support those who experience barriers of access without asking for much in return.” I just wanted to celebrate Emily for the courage she undoubtedly mustered to create this program for me and other non-traditional students. She did not hear the naysayers’ voices. She persisted. And in the video, seeing her persistence in the early stages of Odyssey, I am inspired to move with similar confidence in my own goals and desires. **(Elíazar Martínez-Mungia)**

The moments where people told us about their past show us that anyone can make it. Also, seeing Emily’s mom and dad and their past gave me hope: nobody had anything, and everybody had to step into a new journey. Emily and her parents paved the way. **(Natia Saffold)**

This film was very touching. I really enjoyed seeing different people’s journeys and how they have



become so successful solely on getting accepted into Odyssey. “Meeting” Wanda was very nice. We have heard and read so much about her but have never been able to actually feel her spirit and kind words. This film gave more insight on her background and her mission with Odyssey. **(Shiloh Simonsen)**

The film honestly made me feel grateful to be a student of the Odyssey program because I saw people who are less fortunate or have more things to worry about than I do, and they made a commitment to showing up every week, appreciating being a part of the class. It makes me grateful because my spot could’ve been taken by someone who is more “worthy” of being in this class. Seeing how important and special the alumni felt after graduating only makes me more eager to continue showing up and focusing on graduating. **(Jaison Thomas)**

It’s amazing to see and hear all the good that Wanda Auerbach did. **(Carmen Tinajero)**