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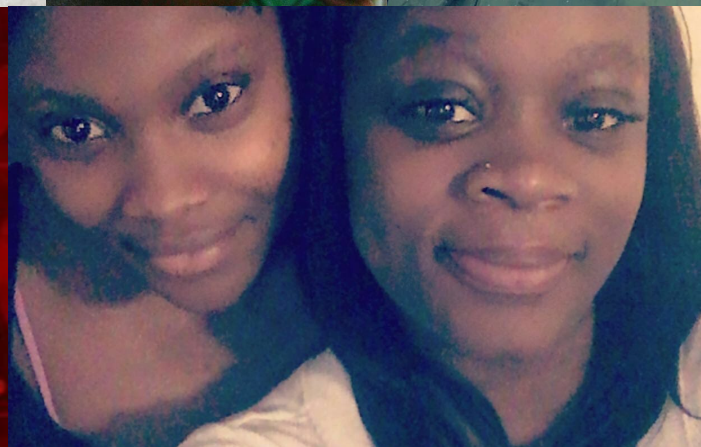
# ODYSSEY ORACLE

## ODYSSEY LOVE



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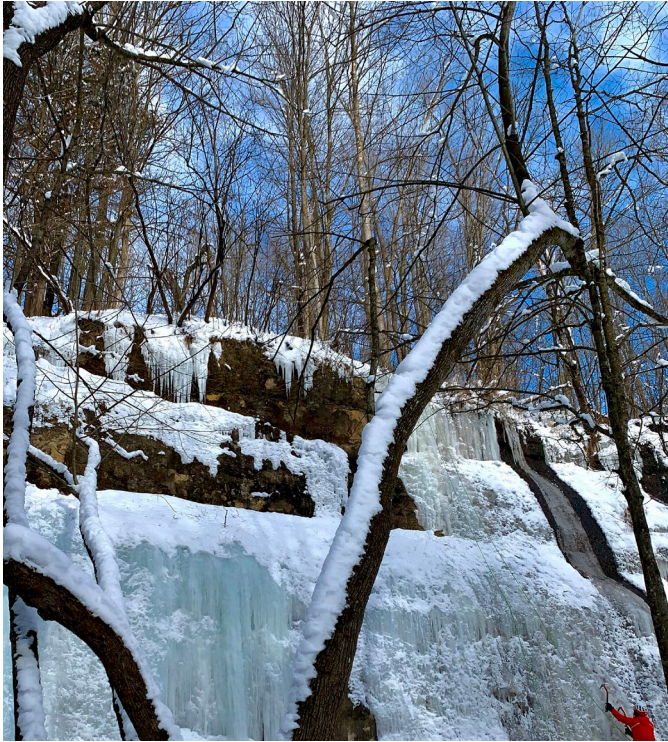
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# I LOVE

*In search of a broader definition of love for Valentine's Day, Odyssey students completed paragraphs or verses starting with the two words "I love."*



**I love being outside.** I have found that some of my happiest moments come from being in nature. The feeling when I walk in the woods on a cool spring morning while I disc golf, or hearing the crunch of the snow under my boot when I walk my dog on a winter afternoon, is a feeling of true peace. Last week I took an afternoon to be outside with friends and see frozen waterfalls. A sight of beauty indeed. I can close my eyes and transcend into that forest and smell the crisp air fill into my lungs as I hear the steady unfrozen creek flow next to my feet. I love being outside. **(Sarina Benford)**

**I love my son Aiden.** I love how he is affectionate with me. I love how he is a smart, loving, sweet handful of a three-year-old. I love how he is outgoing and adventurous. Aiden makes me smile and laugh every day. I really love when he calls me 'Mama.' And I love how Aiden is a Mommy's boy who truly loves his mother. **(Anjelica Brown)**



**I love cooking Creole meals.** My mother was born and raised in New Orleans. Every year, I visit my mother's hometown. One thing I look forward to is learning new meals to cook, taught by my aunt and uncle. I always come back home and practice to perfect the meal. I always have my friends test it for me. My friends love it so much that they offer to pay me to cook it. My next meal, I plan on learning Gumbo. **(Tisha Butler)**







### I love ME!!!

I love the woman that I have become! The Sarah that I am today is quite profound to the Sarah I was just yesterday...hell, 20 years ago. I am so grateful for self-love and the self-esteem that I have acquired over this journey of life. I am being kind to myself, giving myself permission, giving myself permission to make a mistake and not beat myself up for it. I laugh at myself and make the necessary adjustments. I'm open to others' constructive criticism without throwing up the defensive mode; I have compassion and understanding towards

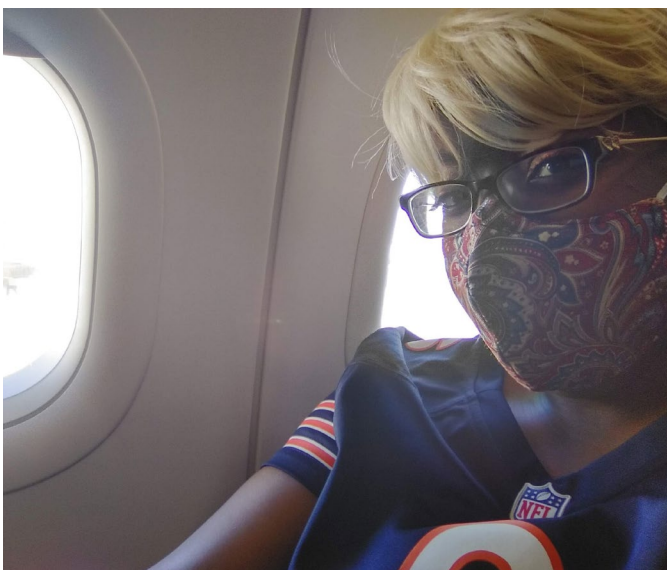
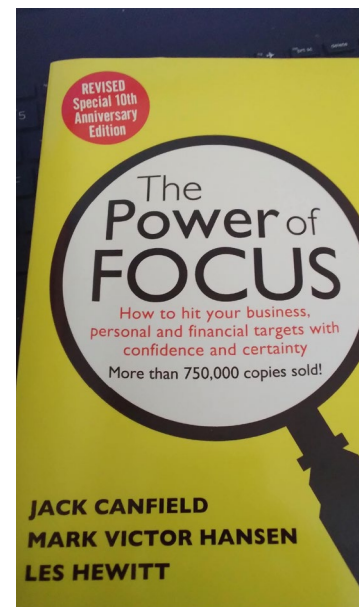
myself to not take their words personally or to heart ONLY because I love me and I know who I am and whose I am.

In the midst of finding me, I have also had loss—loss of friendships and time. I am thankful for ME and loving me unconditionally! Once I decided to love me unconditionally, the folks that were meant to be a part of my squad started showing up—and not just showing up but showing out! Yasssssssssss, my friends are dope, and we stay high off our own supply! LOL but FRFR.

The photos I chose show that I took a trip alone for a weekend, and the book I was reading at that time was to self-reflect and give myself LOVE and GRACE! Also, this meal was my healthy choice. We all have the FREEDOM to CHOOSE.

I have chosen to be very mindful of what/who I surround myself with, and also I am loving myself enough to be mindful of what I am feeding my MIND, BODY, and SOUL.

Life is beautiful...Enjoy it! **(Sarah Galinski)**







**I love the three miracles that I was given, my children.**

They are the loves of my life.

They are my joy when the world turns against me,  
my motivation when I grow weary,

and my inspiration when there seems to be nothing  
left but strife.

Each of them, special in their own way, a gift from  
God that I can never measure or repay.

This love has placed power into a pattern formed in  
the number three, This love, my children and me.  
(Melissa Herriges)

**I love my heart and lungs.** Without them working,  
I would not be able to wake up every morning, be  
with the people I love, and have an opportunity  
to do the things I love. I'm able to expand my  
thoughts on many different levels and help others  
if I can in such a way that we can make the world a  
better place! (Valeria Gordon)

**I love the truth.** I love the whole truth and nothing  
but the truth, the ugly truth. Yes, ugly and hurtful,  
the truth can pack a punch like iron Mike Tyson.  
The famous saying "the truth hurts" is indeed true.  
But it's a necessary pain that facilitates growth.  
(Calvin Balentine)



**I love my daughters.** They motivate me to be a  
better person, and they push when I feel like giving  
up. Looking into their eyes reminds me that even  
though I am not perfect, I did something that is . . .  
which is them. (Betsy Alfaro)







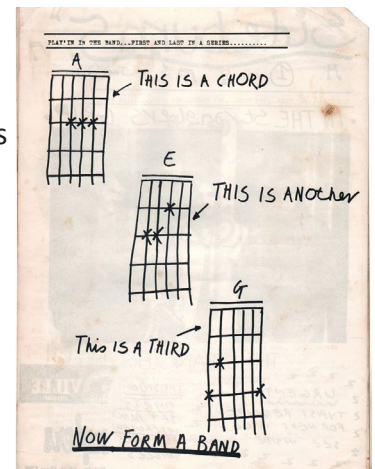
**I love punk.** Punk is a subculture characterized by anti-establishment views, DIY ethics, and a deliberately primitive strain of rock music.

When I was coming of age in the late 90s, Nirvana and Grunge was still the music of choice for the long-haired, smelly teenagers of Ireland. I idolized Kurt Cobain, but over time I grew weary of the despair, raw pain, and suicidal ideation that characterized much of the alternative genre. Metal music was even worse in that regard, as well as being considerably dopier.

I found my home in punk, which was more positive, productive, and politically engaged.

The African-American hardcore group Bad Brains promoted P.M.A. (Positive Mental Attitude), while the Straight Edge movement attempted to break free from the drugs, alcohol, and apathy that had infected youth culture. Punk also espoused a DIY approach to everything from designing your own records to booking your own gigs. A musician's energy and passion was prioritized over technical proficiency, and to someone still grappling with

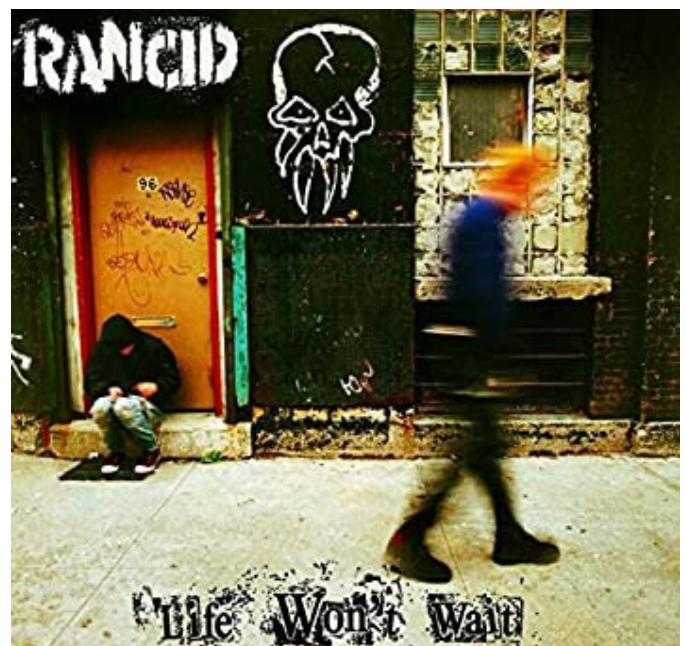
their instrument this was highly inspirational. This approach is best illustrated by this famous page from a punk fanzine.



Punk was also historically important to Northern Ireland. In the late 70s, at the height of the troubles, bands like The Undertones, Stiff Little Fingers, and Rudi were instrumental in developing local scenes that transcended the tired binaries that ruled the streets, at a time when Belfast was the most bombed city in Europe. As the writer Glenn Patterson said, "When it comes to punk, New York has the haircuts, London has the trousers, but Belfast has the reason."

For a time after my parents separated, my dad had to spend some time sleeping in my old bedroom. On the wall I'd painted the cover of one of my favorite records. The name of the record was "Life Won't Wait," and he later told me that seeing those words first thing in the morning got him through the early days.

That's why I love punk. **(Farren McDonald)**







**I love to be a father.** Some people had the great honor to have a father growing up, let alone two parents in the home. I wasn't a part of that lucky bunch. Fast forward 27 years later I get the honor of being called a father. I love being something I never had. I love the fact that when I wake up, I'm greeted by my daughter with loving arms and just great spirits. I was never taught what it was like from a male to be a male/father. So simply being taught wasn't an option I had a choice to make; that would have been to do what any real man would do—step up and be better for her and myself and just be an honest working man. I love the fact that I can watch her grow into a beautiful young woman and be a part of her life. I love the fact I can teach her life skills and ways to make it and be an honorable person. **(Burnett Reed)**

**I love chocolate.** This famous thing is not just a candy like any other candy; chocolate is able to calm us down and make us feel happy. Chocolate helps us get rid of depression, and it's a nice and special gift. I can even say it's an amazing-tasting antidepressant.

When I eat a piece of chocolate, I return to my memories of innocent childhood. I feel the pleasure of ecstasy spreading through me. Because chocolate often makes me feel like an innocent child, it helps me remember the best days of my life.

Whoever eats chocolate never gets old; he remains a child all his life. **(Souad Bidar)**





**I love my kids,** their laughs and hugs.

I love my kids. I love my twins—they were the first to make me a “Mom,” to make me laugh and cry.

I love my kids. My daughter is my rainbow baby, my baby girl, my “mini-me.” Her dance and laugh always make me want to join the fun.

I love my kids. My toddler, who is three, is as smart as he can be. He repeats everything you say and then says, “It’s not funny.” Then he laughs at me.

I love the difference between them. The headache I get after a long day will disappear the moment I see them. I love the strength they give me to guide them every day.

I love my kids and, most of all, I love being their mom, my heart to theirs, the beat that keeps me beating.

I love my kids. **(Yvonne Johnson)**



**I love how my black people are so strong.** I love how we are coming together, making dreams reality. I love how I see a lot of black-owned businesses open: City Dollar is one of the best in Madison, and there’s Roche’s Taste of Chicago, Acrylic Junkie Nails, Savannah’s Beauty Supply, and so much more. I love how we pick our crowns up, men and women of color, and keep going no matter what. I love how we have community leaders that look like us whose hearts are really in it. They really are the voice for the people, not for their pockets or fame. I love how we have Brandi Grayson, Jael Currie, Brian Bedford, and so many more running for alders. I love how strong my people are. We stand on everything, being the change that we want to see. **(Paris Foster)**







**I love water.** I love all forms of water. I love to drink a crispy cool glass or slam down some warm spring water. I love how it gives you energy, and when you are down and out, it hydrates you back up. This goes for drinking, showering, swimming, and simply being around water. I love boating on the lake and the calm ripples of the water. I love the beach with the ocean calm even when nature is angry and the waves are crashing. I love a sprinkler on a hot day and the cool rag your mama would put on you when sick. I love the life it gives to the whole planet earth and the beauty it creates. From humans to animals, flowers and herbs, all walks of life need water. It can nourish the body in so many ways. When I am sick physically or mentally, there's something about a shower, a bath, or a trip to the ocean that can soothe it all. I love the ocean, I love a bath, I love the sound of rain and the crashing of the waves. I love water. **(Feather Lloyd)**



**I love eating.** Eating things that I love makes me happy. I love eating with my family and friends. I love watching my peeps eating something I cooked and they enjoy it; it gives me great satisfaction. I love eating a variety of different foods like Italian, Chinese, and American. I would like to try 'African' food one day as well. Eating makes me want to dance when it's really good. I definitely enjoy it while in quarantine while I Netflix and chill. I love eating!!! **(Shiquita Woods)**



**I love food.** It's an unconditional love. There is nothing that gets used to get me out of bed faster than the smell of my mom cooking breakfast in the mornings. Just the same, nothing could drive me home like a warm plate waiting for me. We take a lot of things for granted or feel like we are entitled to the luxuries of life. There is so much to be grateful for, and food is one of them. Not everyone has a warm plate to come home to, or even a home to go to. This is why I take it upon myself to thank God with every meal; there is no telling when your last one will come. This is why I can say without a shadow of doubt that I love food and all the joy it brings to me and my soul. **(Kwan Hogan)**



### I love arts of all types.

I love the way I'm drawn into a painting that I just can't figure out. I love that because it's still making me think!

I love how the orchestra can make me feel warm and solid. Also, it's very nice to see the outfits and dresses the performers wear.

I love watching screen plays because they use real life acting, not like in movies where they cut and redo. Plus, Tyler Perry will wheel you into his plays with his humor and great life lessons.

Most of all, I love dance. I love to move to the beat of my favorite tune or just watch a cool routine. I'll try it! Ballet is so posed. I think of ballet when I'm doing something really difficult, like just to be patient and do it right. I love ice skating, too, even though it's a sport.

I love arts of all types. **(Dana Stokes)**



### I love my Gospel Music

You are the Melody to my mood  
 You are relaxation back to reality  
 You are the feeling away from frustration  
 You are my tired weary tears  
 You are everything to my ears  
 You are heard and taken to my heart  
 You are the notes that hit my nerves  
 You are my Guide with God  
 You are the light that leads  
 You are my Gospel that I need  
 You are Kirk Franklin  
 Revolution  
 You are Quandra Banks  
 Worthy  
 You are CiCi Winans  
 Jesus you are beautiful  
 These are the songs that make smile  
 You are my gospel music I listen to  
 Oh how I love you!

**(Cashae Davis)**

**I love candles.** I love the different aromas that become the air and the soothing and peaceful ambience they bring. I love the warmth they give, the dim light they shine, the concentration they promote, the gentle flicker, the variety of shapes, sizes, and colors. I love candles! **(Asia Pearson)**





### **I love my son.**

His smile brightens my day.  
His farts stink up the room lol.  
I love his little voice.  
I love his little belly.  
I love to teach him.  
I cry on his birthdays.  
I miss him when he's away.  
I prayed for him.  
Carried him for 39 weeks and I would do it all over again. **(Sunni Walker)**

### **I love to travel**, be it locally or internationally.

It's just my thing! I love everything about it: from the booking of tickets, the packing process, and dragging my suitcase across the airport, to boarding the plane and viewing the oceans and deserts from up high while on the plane, to reaching the final destination and hearing the pilot say, "Ladies and gentlemen, we have made it to your final destination. Welcome, everyone, and thanks for flying\_\_\_." I love to travel because it is always an exciting, unpredictable experience. It's a different type of vibe/thrill and a different learning experience. I see it as an opportunity to learn different things, cultures, traditions, lifestyles, visit different tourist spots, meet new people, have fun, and try new foods. So far, I have visited four different countries and six states in the U.S.A. Yet I still hope to keep traveling, both near and far, at least until I get to visit my dream place . . . Dubai. **(Stephaney Obi)**

**I love cycling** without a particular destination. The wind on my face brings me freedom and peace. It reminds me of the afternoons I used to spend on my Grandpa's little orchard under a mango tree near the ocean. **(Henry Irisson)**







**I love to cook for people I love.** Cooking is a way for me to show love for people I care about. When a friend or family member is sick, I pour my soul into making them homemade chicken noodle soup. On birthdays I will make my friends' and family's favorite meal. Homemade meals are the way to people's hearts, especially when they are made with LOVE. **(Michelle McKoy)**

**I love love.** It can be applied to anything at any time. Love has its way of randomly showing up. Whether it was invited or not, ironically it always arrives right on time. I love how love can be different levels of intensity. I have different types of love for different types of people as they have different types of love for me. I love love, and I know that love loves me! **(Faleshuh Walker)**

**I love being a father!** Nothing in this world has ever made me feel the way I do being a father! It makes my heart feel full of love. I personally never had a father. But I thank God that He has allowed me to feel this way. **(Fernando Galindo)**



**I love my boys dearly.** They keep my light bright whenever I'm feeling blue. My boys are the reason I keep pushing and refuse to give up. My oldest son, Antione, reminds me of me. He's very independent and a very good helpful hand. My second son, Antonio, is quiet and has a kind soul. He reminds me that there are still good people out here in the world. My third oldest son, A'Marion, is my cuddle buddy. He makes me feel warm and fuzzy inside. My baby boy, A'Khi, takes the cake. He's the easiest, happiest baby that I had, always smiling so I can't help but keep a smile. All four of my boys are so amazing that I don't like to share them with this cruel world we live in. I don't want them ruined. They are my world. They are my Mom Son Team. **(Delisha Smith)**







**I love being a woman.** 🎵 Man.... I feel like a woman. 🎵 I know some of you can relate. I have always wondered what was God thinking when she created woman? Tapping into my feminine purpose and energy, I found two of the most valuable things about being a woman: we are natural multipliers and unbelievable nurturers. If you think that is not a superpower, then you're dead wrong. Imagine your King brings home the cow. You reach back into what was given to you by your maternal ancestors to flavor and cook it to feed your family. You do arithmetic: adding vegetables and sides to the beef, subtracting the fat, not too much for flavoring, seasoning to taste. When done, you carefully do premeditated division so that everyone gets to eat. You feed your family; you're the family's savior, breaking bread with a multitude of people. The way you feed your family will determine the wellbeing of your family, leading them to develop generational bad health habits with a flick of risk, early death, or good health.

I love that I am a woman because I'm a passionate and intensive nurturer. The four gifts that are close to my

heart are my arms and bosom. God has given me multiple usage for my gifts. On one hand, I could cause chaos when I feel threatened and smother with the might of my strength for the intent to harm, or on the other hand I can use my gifts for love and comfort. I can open my arms to my 6'2" baby boy when he is hurting. He nestles next to me when he's fearful, laying his head on my bosom. I open my arms embracing him, only to absorb his fear and worry but releasing my tender genuine love and protection to make him feel whole again.

🎵 Man... I feel like a woman. 🎵 **(Thedora Smith)**

**I love my daughter's personality.** It often puts me in the mind of a three-year-old going on thirty. She's very observant and knows how to communicate well. She can be challenging at times, but often she reminds me that she just knows what she wants. Sometimes her brightness gets in the way of discipline for myself as a mother, but I wouldn't change it for anything. She's a funny/fun person who loves laughter and telling jokes. She is a kind, smart three-year-old with a whole lot of spunk. Her fluffy personality often keeps me laughing or smiling. I love how she tells me I'm lucky, and then when I ask her why I'm lucky, she says, "Because I love you, you made me some good food." Her personality just always brings joy to me.

**(Keyanna Wilson)**







### **I love my kids.**

I love Isis (Greek form of an ancient Egyptian word for “throne”): she’s intelligent and benevolent.

I love Uriah (Hebrew for God is my light; light of the Lord): he’s my light and diamond under pressure or graphite.

I love Neilly (Neil is a masculine given name of Irish origin. The Irish name may be derived from words meaning “cloud,” “passionate,” or “champion”); middle name Messiah: he’s my savior, yet has inappropriate behavior. **(Bresha Green)**

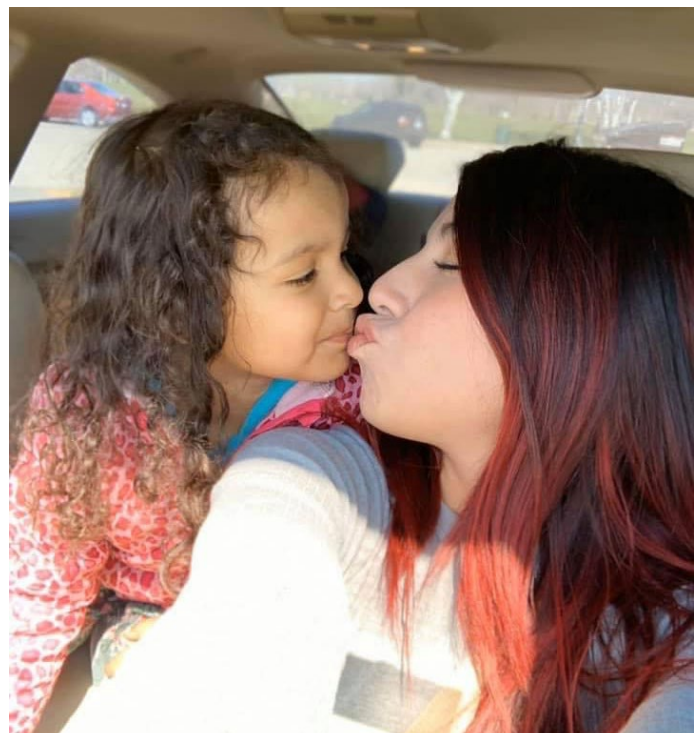
**I love peace of mind.** What I love about being at peace is learning to go with the flow because you know things will work out. Even during stressful situations, I can get myself back on track and remind myself to look at the bigger picture of situations. **(Krystal Smith)**

**I love my family and friends.** They give love and support no matter what--smiling faces, happy thoughts, and beautiful life-sharing moments. As I’m dealing with all of this, they try to be there and do what they can do. I’m getting calls from family members and friends from all over, and those that live nearby, giving their support however they can. I feel the love and the great meaning of life through the love and connection of my friends and family. With that, I will get through this. **(Diane Walton)**



### **I love my daughter**

The purest type of love  
The love that sometimes it’s sour but very rewarding  
A love that’s never ending  
And a love I’ll never get enough of  
A love that is sometimes sour but very rewarding  
**(Erika Gonzalez)**







**I love my dreads.** The texture of my hair makes my dreads feel more natural. I can do so little but look so great it's factual. I love that it's easy to manage. I feel proud for wearing and embracing what I believe. I have a sense of ownership, and I can't go back to weave. Weave is not for me; it doesn't love me like my real hair does. I love all the compliments and questions; it makes me feel like it's all love. I am me, just like my dreads, and now they are on my kids' heads. **(Brianna Johnson)**

**I love my sons** more than anything in this world. I love that I have all boys and that they love me back just as much. I have to say, they are pretty cool too, but not as cool as their mom. They also turned out so well, regardless of the circumstances that did occur in their lives. They are forgiving, loving, and wonderful in so many ways. I love looking in their faces and seeing the resemblance that is I. They are the main thing in my life that happened that was right. I'm very grateful to say that I have four amazing sons. **(Jessica Jacobs)**

**I love my daughter;** she has changed my life for the better! She has the prettiest eyes, the biggest smile, and the most infectious laugh. I may have birthed her, but she gave ME life! When I was growing up as a child, every Valentine's Day my mother would buy me and my sister gifts, so this is a tradition I am sure to pass along to my daughter starting this year. I want her to always feel loved and adored, and that starts at home, with me! I cannot wait to teach her self-love, positive affirmations, and everything else she'll need in order to love herself and not depend on the love of anyone else. **(Tawania Alston)**

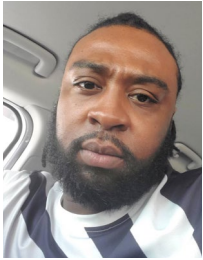




# RESPONDING TO “LETTER FROM A BIRMINGHAM JAIL”

*After reading Martin Luther King, Jr.’s powerful “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” from 1963, Odyssey students wrote letters to him as if he were still alive in 2021.*

*Dear Dr. King.*



To read your letter was a very emotional activity for me. First, it was awesome, as very few people can put words together as you do. Then, it provokes sadness that you and many others of our people had to suffer the experiences that you so vividly outlined in your letter.

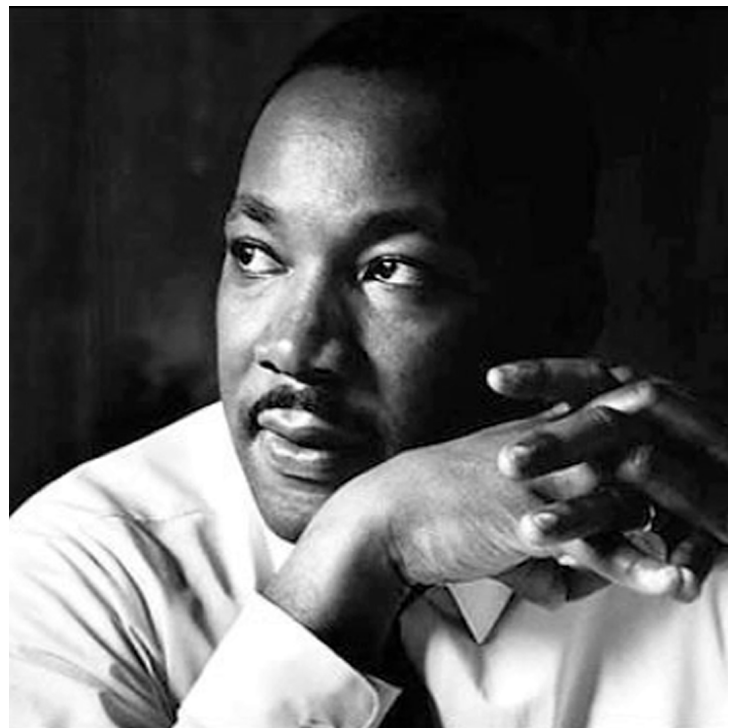
Third, I feel anger at the fact although you wrote this over 60 years ago, many of the specifics you detailed are still relevant in today’s society, which claims to have advanced past those times. And last, it raises many questions about methods you chose to get justice.

First, as I stated, I was in awe reading your letter. It grabbed me from the first word and did not let go until the very last letter. There are so many styles implemented to get your point across. Your many metaphors and personifications allow people to understand the depths of the injustices black people suffered. You so subtly yet bluntly called out people who are being hypocritical to their own faith and teaching. You pointed out religious beliefs or the effects of inaction. You made it very hard for anyone to read your letter and not be touched emotionally and pulled to action.

Secondly, reading your letter made me so sad. It took me back to your time period and placed me in the shoes of a young black man suffering the effects of a Jim Crow society. I felt the burden of not being respected as a man should, the pain of not being fully capable of providing and protecting in the way a man is taught he ought to. As I read your words, tears formed in my eyes and a darkness took over my heart. At points, the sadness resembled hate: hate for the society that applied this type of injustice and called it law; hate for the people

who can stand by and idly watch a person be so egregiously mistreated and call themselves human, yet alone good.

Thirdly, I felt anger. The same words that brought tears to my eyes filled my heart with anger as I read the many reasons that waiting was no longer an option. I did not have to time travel; I simply had to look at my world. I too have had to explain to my children the difference in white privilege and the treatment of black men and women. I have had to find the words to explain why people such as Sandra Bland, Breonna Taylor, and Trayvon Martin, to name a few, did not receive justice. I have had to explain why black people in a peaceful protest were tear gassed while white people who violently invaded our nation’s capitol for the most part have gone unpunished. I have seen white officers murder my brothers and sisters and violate our basic rights openly, yet the government not only stands behind them but even implements laws to protect them.





Lastly, Dr. King, I want to know how. How did you find the strength to march peacefully while being beaten and spat on, hosed down, and attacked by dogs? How did you not take a Malcolm X-like approach or even understand the emotional response that led to Malcolm X sympathizers? How did you get others to follow in your example? How did you address the many emotions I can only imagine were being felt and expressed? And how did you personally deal with the pain? I personally know it is one thing to prepare yourself for suffering but a total other to watch others suffer because of your decisions. How did you handle seeing women and young men treated less than humanely and not responding because of your vision? I would never accuse you of being the cause of the suffering. We all know who gets the blame for the that. But following your leadership exposed your supporters to a heightened level of mistreatment and a choice to not retaliate. How did you keep your faith intact when everything said nothing will change? How did you persevere? Where did you find your light in the dark? Where, Dr. King, did you find the strength?  
(Calvin Balentine)



I have read and reread your letter, and I would have liked to write to you and answer you with good news. This is unfortunately not the case. I believe in a proverb that says “every period is worse than the previous one.” I am not writing to you out of pessimism, but out of my own modest and simple life experience.

The words in your letter are a very beautiful fight against racial segregation, social injustices, and the country’s oppression towards black people. Is it true that “all men are created equal” as the Declaration of Independence of 1776 says? To this day, this has not always been respected; besides, your letter testifies to this particularly during your time.

It is obvious that if the laws are so present in our world, it is because they allow the state to maintain some control over

society. On the other hand, others argue that if we obey a law considered unjust, we commit injustice. This is said in your letter when you write about “the fact that there are two types of laws: just and unjust” and you confirm that an “unjust law is not a law” according to St. Augustine. There are people who are convinced that disobedience to the laws would lead to the loss of the state, which means anarchy. Others disagree and believe that laws should not always be obeyed, since they are not always fair. But who to believe?

In your letter you also talk about racial segregation. This is the point that touches me the most because according to my modest knowledge, segregation is the physical separation of people of different colors in the activities that they commonly perform, whether at work, in restaurants, using the toilet, going to school or the cinema, or to rent or buy a house

I would like to give you a little idea about segregation during my generation, in the working world, elsewhere and not here in the US. Did you know that in France employment remains an area where discrimination occurs frequently, whether it concerns access to employment or career development (remuneration, transfer, promotions, etc.)? I think being able to work in France is worse than anywhere in the world. Did you know, Dr. King, that a foreign national must be in possession of a residence permit authorizing the exercise of a professional activity or a work authorization even if this foreigner has completed his or her entire





university career within this country? This is despite having in his possession a piece of paper or writing saying “graduate of the French Republic”! What a bad joke!! I swear that is true.

Dr. King, I have the misfortune to inform you that there is still in France a large list of jobs closed due to nationality. Also, many foreign nationals face daily discrimination in access to employment and in their workplace because of their real or supposed origin but also because of their nationality or their physical appearance.

I will not dare to tell you about my native country, Morocco, where gender-based discrimination is present in all areas and the pedagogy will not change anything. It is objectively much more difficult for a woman to maintain her degree of involvement in her work throughout her career than for a man. Whose fault? Of course, society’s fault! The family model of our country is still very patriarchal. This affects women in salaries and promotions.

This was also said in your letter: “So I have tried to make it clear that it is wrong to use immoral means to attain moral ends. But now I must affirm that it is just as wrong, or even more so, to use moral means to preserve immoral ends.” Dr. King, in conclusion I would like to tell you that your struggle is still far from over. **(Souad Bidar)**



As I write to you in response to your letter, may I first off say that for as long as you say your letter is, there is no letter long enough when it comes to the God-given freedoms of a human being. Inequalities and unjust laws create sad and fearful times indeed. Writing to you in the year 2021 almost seems realistic as a response to what you dealt with so long ago because of what I still witness today. I would like to express and write to you, after reading what you have said about the struggle we fight for when in a democracy, the public eye of the white man turning away blindly when segregation laws are unjust, and facing moral religious wrongs through the clergy and church.



If we do not show change in the way we work as a country, I am fearful we have not progressed much since the fight you led for us. We as a nation continue to fight with civil disobedience just as you demonstrated and preached. Without progressive change in that sense, the point will never come across as it should. It saddened my soul to hear some of the parallelisms between what the south and all of the US in 1963 experienced and how the country is today. Not realizing the laws and brutality of race-based inequality is what was and IS still the contributing factor. When referencing Thomas Jefferson in saying all men are created equal, it is sad to think about the truth of the statement not being so. As a person of color in the future, I can say, however, we will not give up and we will work to create the undoing of systemic racism. Because of you and the marches you led, we are able to vote and have the democracy we all have the right to demand.

When laws are created, you would hope the public follows. Unfortunately, it was not the case when desegregation laws were put into place. To finally have the right to vote and have God-given freedoms is such a feeling of normalcy today, but having the south and the rest of the country create devious ways to prevent black people from voting was one of many things that kept segregation alive. Whites turned a blind eye to their black neighbors, brothers, and sisters. Everywhere else in the world was progressing, but we as the “free country” were so stunted. I had no idea that Asia, South America, and



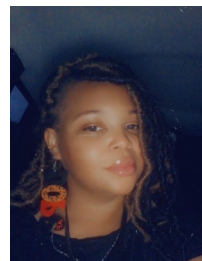


the Caribbean had taken a stance towards racial justice before the United States, but I suppose I am not surprised. America was founded on slavery, and the economy thrived because of it. So for hundreds of years, unfortunately, we have dealt with the white man turning a blind eye to what is morally right and wrong. I do say with confidence that is not the case in the world we live in now. We stand together more than ever as one, towards the ultimate wrongs. There are those who still stay blinded, but as Socrates explained through his allegory, we still have teachings, protests, and mass movements; they have to learn on their own and not be forced. Now is the time, Dr. King, that we fight for what you did, and we must continue to educate and show the ones who are open to seeing the moral rights and wrongs.

In your letter, you spoke of the church and you being a clergyman. Continue having faith in the movement you are leading. It does seem rather contradictory of the churches you have visited to preach the importance of living as one under God and yet stay divided. I can see your disappointment. You went to Birmingham hoping to have at least white religious allies in the community, only to have the hope and

expectations of church allies in a time of need be turned away. Faith and what religion stands for gets put entirely into question. To comply with desegregation but not stand by us in the fight for it doesn't make sense. It only makes sense as the easy way out—to not fight for what is right but stay in the background where it is safe. I was happy to see (since I am writing to you from the future and all) that religious brothers and sisters of all colors came to join in the civil rights movement. This letter had a great impact on the churches and hearing the moral injustices the clergy was doing.

I want you to know, Dr. King, that your work was the most important, groundbreaking civil rights movement in our nation. It was heard worldwide and continues to be a fight we will not give up on. Though I do see some similarities we face as a nation of 2021 that you had in 1963, I can say with certainty we are moving forward, never back. We face systemic racism, racial profiling, police brutality, and modern-day racism. We are far from over in this fight, but because of this letter you wrote in jail, Dr. King, and the fight you continued to lead, I am able to vote and change and progress, moving forward with equality. Thank you for everything, **(Sarina Benford)**



I understand what you are talking about. It is the 21st century, and our race is still fighting against injustices. We also have nonviolent protests. In June 2020, a black man named George Floyd was killed by the police, and our race took to the streets with nonviolent protesting. We were called thugs by the President of the United States. But in January 2021, Trump supporters had a riot at the State Capitol and they were said to be upset.

I remember your quote: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." Wisconsin is one of the most racist states in the USA. Even though I have accomplished a lot here, I know I should be farther than I am. One thing I learn from your letter is to keep going even when everything is against you. **(Tisha Butler)**





I am writing you to let you know about some concerning incidents that have happened in my city. A Black man was briefly detained by Monona police after he was reported as a potential burglar. He was racially profiled in a community where he was staying.

There were guns drawn, hands up, and a place where he belonged was no longer home. Comfort was crushed in an instant. A young Black man who had done nothing wrong feared for his life.

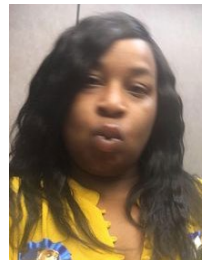
This situation was handled in a very unjustified way. Can you imagine the mystified mental manner this young man had to experience? This could have gone wrong; his life could have been taken. We are still waiting ... nothing has been done!

Monona officers tried to pull over a reckless driver. The chase eventually ended in a crash near Moorland and South Towne. Monona police say officers asked the driver to get out of the car, and he did. Officers saw him get back in and then heard a single gunshot. Now, this incident happened to yet another young black man in Monona months after the first incident. Harmed by the hands of humans that are supposed to protect, a life was taken too soon. It still remains a mystery. We are still waiting....Justice is yet to be served.

The Wisconsin Department of Justice has taken over an investigation into an officer-involved death over the weekend in Monona after a body was

found in a lagoon two days after the individual fled from police. Sounds kind of suspicious, doesn't it? Once again, Monona police are egregious, eliminating our young black men, almost all within a year. Nothing is being done yet once again! What's next? We have stood up, we have protested, we have filed lawsuits, we have sent letters, we have waited, we are still waiting, and yet justice still is waiting to be served.

Why wait? The time is always now for justice, and there's no good reason to wait for the right thing to be done by someone else. This is happening all over America yet today, and police are getting away with it. We are getting put in jail for petty crimes every day. People are still sitting in jail, when our protectors are killing us freely for fun. Cases are being closely looked into until the police are involved. Something needs to be done, and needs to be done now!!! **(Cashae Davis)**



The way everyone treated you and is still trying to treat us is not right; it's wrong. But you were always standing up, facing all fears, risking everything, advocating for our people in a positive way, not burning or robbing anyone. You have always shown courage, and you speak positive words in this letter.

Why do the police write what they want, making us look bad? What did we ever do? When you came across the recent statement calling your present activities "unwise and untimely," you addressed that situation in such a positive way. You said we don't have time to address the criticisms when we have bigger issues to address. They didn't like that and called you an outsider. You said, "I am here because I was invited here. I am here because I have organizational ties here." You wrote that letter while you were in jail. You took that and put it into something positive. "Oppressed people cannot remain oppressed forever." **(Paris Foster)**







While reading your letter from Birmingham Jail, I was intrigued by your comparison to Apostle Paul in regards to being an agitator and regarding injustice. Paul, leaving Tarsus and traveling through Israel all the way to Rome in chains, a Roman citizen by birth, was willing to be beaten, starved, mocked, plotted against, and eventually beheaded—all for no private gain, but to spread the good news of the blood of Christ and exposing the injustice of the Pharisee.

Your words came over me like a warm winter fire. Using your words, body, and reputation as a law-abiding citizen, you exposed the injustice that you and your people have endured for far too long. If you, by not being a native to Birmingham (an agitator) and by your own accord not obeying an unjust law, incite change, then by your determination and persistence you will cause the same worldwide effect as Paul did.

I know you know what that ultimately means. Love through sacrifice is the ultimate act of love. Through your words and actions, we will always be grateful to you. **(Fernando Galindo)**

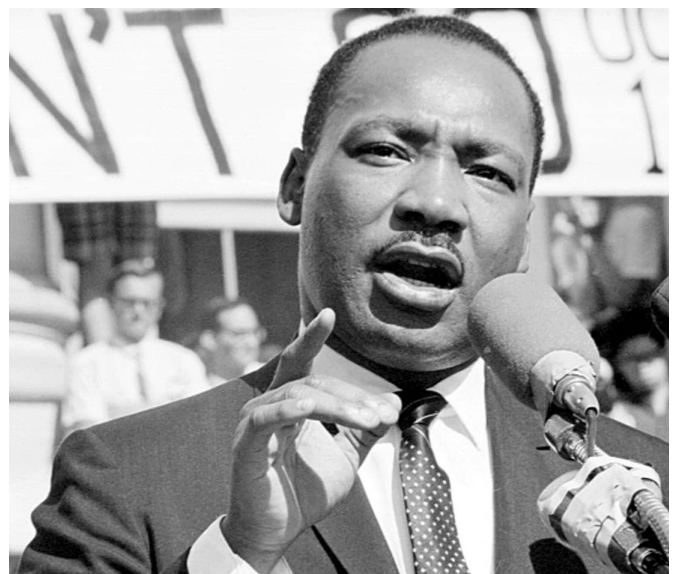


First of all, THANK YOU, YOUNG MAN! The selflessness you have shown for humans across the nation is unparalleled. Now about your letter. Sir, I am grateful for your very informative letter, to say the least, but in the same breath I am perplexed as to why you

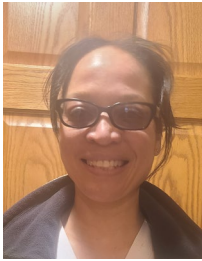
seek the approval or togetherness (UNITY) with other humans who LOVE to HATE you and those who look like you. With all due respect, Reverend, even in the Bible (Matthew 7:6) it states, “Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.” Having said that, you are WORTHY, I am WORTHY, my four young children are WORTHY! We are worthy of the infinite possibilities of FREEDOM—Freedom of choice, freedom to LOVE and be LOVED!

Also, Dr. King, may I ask this one very, very, VERY important question: why did you feel or deem it necessary to respond to this one letter [from the eight clergymen]? . . . The FACT of the matter is BLACKS thrived tremendously back in the good ol’ days that they created BLACK WALL STREET! . . . I am just so passionate about this topic of segregation. It seems to me that Black folks were better off segregated. And that is with all due respect and the highest of honor and reverence to you and those before you that have made the ultimate sacrifice with their LIFE and TIME to see that the world is a better and safer place for the future.

On a lighter and upbeat matter, Sir, you are the bomb dot com. I love the fact that you called the church out. Yes, they sit by idly while other “Christians” are blown up inside a church or are literally burning from a huge symbol of Christ... the cross. We are all one race, THE HUMAN RACE! Why are others hating on us and our greatness? . . . I won’t keep you long with this mini-rant of a letter. Thank you for your time and consideration in reading my audacious, lively-written letter. Hope you chuckled a few times. I hope you do your time gracefully and don’t let the time do you. Hold your head up. I put \$10,000 on ya books. Love you ALWAYS, Sarah Mandela Davis P.S. please write back. I know you will be famous one day, so I gotta save our conversation. You the Real MVP. **(Sarah Galinski)**







I like how you started your letter, by letting them know that you are not here to cause any commotion, and that you were invited there because of the injustice that was going on. because automatically the clergy men thought you were there to cause unnecessary

trouble cause of your color. I also like the that you brought in some of the quotes from the bible as far as Paul going around and sharing the good word of Jesus Christ, and how people should treat one another. And that's what you are trying to spread around to many different that you treat one another equally. And when people of color try to negotiate it never gets anywhere, so there for we come to the conclusion to come in big groups, so that many of us can be heard, and show that people of color, and anyone who wants to lead with us means business.

I can hear it in your voice that this has to come to an end, and we have waited long enough. You are telling them what's right and wrong. I believe they already know what's right and wrong, but because you're trying to get justice for black people that's when people become judgmental. You also stated that when Negroes do finally get together with themselves, they sort of put themselves in a different level of being a Negro. Some of them may state that they have an academic degree because they finally figure out how to do well under the circumstances. So they have more privilege than their fellow Negro brothers, which is very sad, because that means they have adapt to the white moderate laws and learn to live individually instead of together as one in this situation. And in the century that I'm living in, it looks like living individually has won when it comes to the black population. Only very few from the black community are trying to make that happen, but they don't get far.

I love the way you talk about having an antidote to combat the disease of segregation because it is still going on till this very day. And the way they are doing it is in a way that black people are starting to think, "Well, history repeats itself, so this is what



the next generation has to go through, 'cause we did."

I know our brothers and sisters would like to resolve this ridiculous problem, but as soon as we get a leader who wants to step in and try to resolve it, they get assassinated or put in jail. So black brothers and sisters continuously have to give up and become individual and fend only for themselves and their family. And that's how it seems these days in my age of living.

I thank you, Dr. Martin Luther King, for all you have taught us. Hopefully one day all the nations of the world would read this beautiful, well-written letter, and as you stated, "get nurtured in the bosom of the original plans for this nation." Peace and Love  
(Valeria Gordon)



It has come to my attention that you are currently being held in the Birmingham Jail. Having the opportunity to read your letter, my hope is that when this reaches you, it brings you encouragement and strength to keep fighting the good fight.

In times such as these, many will not agree with your strength of being a beacon of a hope for change. Criticisms are often cut the deepest when coming from someone/someplace or something



Walking on the soil of our wronged and persecuted forefathers who have become like the salt of the earth, we are crying out in agony for the same injustices to be righted that pulled on your spirit and unctoned you to accept this assignment.

Dr. King, just know that we need you. We need you to stand up for those who are too scared and too weak, we need you to be the resonating voice of hope, faith, promise, and strength for the destitute, and we need you to invoke those who are on the edge to join the fight with you. There are more behind you than you will ever truly know. You may never see them, but be assured they are there. In response to your allusion about Apostle Paul carrying the gospel of Jesus Christ, we need you to free us from our Pharaoh of today who is called "Institutional Racism."

we hold in high regard. We cannot help others to see what they do not or refuse to see. There are many among us in the movement who have succumbed to and become a befallen brainwashed victim to the modern-day slave mentality. Many wear the blindfold of lady justice with the pen name of justice for all. It is unfortunate that these men see you as an outside agitator instead of an action toward peace and inclusivity.

The irony is that these "Good Fellows" are speaking out against your presence in the city for a non-violent protest but not against the unfair and injustices against Black America. All people--men, women, and children alike—deserve equal treatment. Their money spends the same as their white counterparts. If Black Wall Street still existed during this time, it would be seen as an abomination to do the same in turn.

Nevertheless, they will understand our drudgery and somnolence disguised as strength and quiet anger. We have stood on broken promises from sharecropping to Jim Crow and now segregation. America continues to not only break the wings but also the mind and soul of those identified as black.

Issues concerning suppression and mistreatment have been handled indirectly for far too long. So yes, the sit-ins, marching, boycotting, and other direct non-violent actions must continue. The tension, as uncomfortable as it may be, is our present tool for change. There will never be a right time, for she has revealed this to us time and time again as she births a new strength that allows Black America to endure for yet one more day.

Contrary to popular belief, as we continue to evolve as a nation, we continue to request more time while becoming better at hiding the truth within a lie in plain sight. There has been nothing but time, more than 300 years. The truth is there has been more than enough time for us as a nation to move in the right direction. There will never be a time more right than this to stand our ground for treatment that is rightfully ours.

They will never know what it's like to be us. They will never have to worry about living to see another day, trying to make it home physically unscathed and emotionally unscarred. They will never know what it's like to be denied the simple and basic things in life. And yet they continue to ask us to comply with their unjust laws and unwritten



rules that do nothing but continue to break and divide us. Our white brothers and sisters are just as much victims as we are. Allowing the thought of superiority to exist when we all have been created equal is just as damaging as entrapping a slaved mind who has the ability to escape but chooses to stay.

The parallelism of legality of Hitler's actions and Hungary's freedom fighters rings true in our current standstill with the patriarchal capitalist socialism that continues to enslave a supposedly free people. Non-violent civil disobedience is a just and overly gracious action compared to the history of Black America. Dr. King, it is definitely an oxymoron for white moderate America to prefer the negative justice of peace over methods that would begin to right America's wrongs against our people. Where are these same views when the Ku Klux Klan marched the streets with their violent justice, damaging property, attacking and murdering the innocent? This was far beyond civil disobedience and yet still unpunishable by unsaid and unjust laws. Much good has come from the precipitation of violence. If it were not for earthquakes, would we not have volcanoes that made land? If not for the violence for fire would our lands be able to naturally free itself of debris in the forests? But, Dr. King, you can only lead a horse to the water.

There is never too much optimism for this situation, although you may have overlooked the needed additive of time. It has taken us 300 some odd years to get here, and we can keep in mind that the strongest dynasty lasted 600 years. There will come a time when the tides will change. It may not be today, it may not even be tomorrow or in our lifetime, but change will come. Each of us has something to do during our time here, and somehow it all fits together. So, never grow weary or discouraged because, as I said before, we need you, Dr. King. Until our paths cross, I will continue to be one in the movement **(Melissa A. Herriges)**

I first want to say that as an African American man I stand with you. Reading this letter, I can feel your passion and your will to bring segregation to an end. There are many reasons that I feel you will



attract a lot of young and powerful minds to your movement. For example, they will be attracted to your use of figurative language and the way you let your passion and dream for a free world guide you in your journey.

When I read this letter, so many emotions came over me. One feeling was the sympathy for those in such situations being oppressed by a corrupted community. You used metaphors and imagery taking the smallest detail and making it something tremendous. One example, which would probably be one of my favorites, is when you were listing reasons why waiting for action wasn't an option. In this paragraph you brought to light many challenges African Americans face every day, and you put it in a way that makes readers think about their own family, white or black. For example, you mentioned a child's mental sky being clouded by inferiority. This was a very descriptive way of saying "she didn't think she was good enough." Yet you made it into something that paints a picture in the reader's head.

Reading this letter, I noticed many forms of figurative language: metaphors, similes, personifications, and many more. These key forms of writing that you incorporated into your letter made it stand above all others and brought imagination to the reader. My first example is when you used the Biblical story of Nebuchadnezzar to show how not only were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego punished for not following unjust rules of the king, but also that African American brothers and sisters were getting the exact same treatment. Though you were using this to relate deeper with different religious leaders, it is a form of allusion, using an event or text to make your case/ relate to your audience. My favorite metaphor in the whole letter was when you were comparing the unjust white moderate to "dangerously structured dams that block the flow of social progress." These additions to your writing bring chills to your reader and demands their attention, which is exactly what I felt when reading this. **(Kwan Hogan)**



When reading your letter, it became apparent to me that I am not fully educated on the depth of the harm that was caused through segregation. I mean, I knew it was harmful in many ways, but how deep it went was shown to me through your letter. You explain it

in a way one can feel the pain in one's heart. The suffering it caused and the generational trauma that was brought about was horrific and unacceptable. Just like you said in your letter, "Any law that degrades human personality is unjust."

I want to speak on a particular sentence in your letter that really stuck out to me. You had asked the question, "Is not segregation an existential expression of man's tragic separation, his awful estrangement, his terrible sinfulness?" What this one sentence brings to mind for me is the biblical story of the separation of Adam and Eve from God. Sin separated them from God, and sin is what has created the laws of segregation. Yes, it is a terrible sinfulness. Just like the Declaration of Independence, these laws were built off the white man's dictation of the Bible. In doing this, white men created a system that only benefited them. People benefitting through the defilement and harm of others is the ultimate sin.

I also would like to add that when you stated in your letter, "I submit that an individual who breaks a 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," it made me feel just in the things I have been a part of recently and continue to pursue in the future. If nothing changes, then nothing changes. It's time for this white supremacist system to be torn down, and the ones that are a part of it should be punished for their sins. **(Jessica Jacobs)**



I want to personally thank you for your efforts and the fight for black Americans. A lot of things stood out to me in your letter that are still relevant today. Do you feel like the protests and marching did us any good or more harm? You're a smart man and, with that being said,

any intelligent or responsible person always has a backup plan if all else fails. My question for you: did you have a different plan for us if the marching and non-violent tactics failed?

I loved what you wrote about how we have to give what we seek. That makes sense for the approach of nonviolence because violence would have contradicted the whole goal of what we wanted, which was equality. You made a very valid point about how freedom will not be voluntarily given by the oppressor so the oppressed must demand it. Hey, just because my kids demand me to give them candy doesn't mean I'm going to give it to them. Demand doesn't mean receiving to me. I feel like marching was a waste of time and still is. Back then we got nowhere. I feel like they just wanted us to calm down to divert us from their real initial plan so "they gave in." People find ways around things. There are still private clubs and suburbs and actual





gated communities. By marching and making noise, you gave the oppressors time to plan out a way to still be 10 steps ahead of us. This only led to more death and despair, instead of us being and having the same.

Why not really educate the black people? Why not get black people to officially be in places of power? Or, hell, follow the Constitution and overthrow the government and create another. I feel like everything you did was the steppingstone to getting there. You even said we waited 340 years. What makes you think if we waited that long that they were just going to give us everything by marching and singing? We did that same peaceful singing through bondage. Look at history, Martin: we finally got free, and they still found a way to keep us down. Despite your efforts, which changed a lot, we are still oppressed, just with different tactics.

What really upset me was that the letter written to you was from actual pastors and reverends. What you said about how the young people felt about the church then, it is the same now. You see little to zero church leaders involved in the community, especially when it comes to politics. You said that church folk follow order rather than fight for justice; more cautious than courageous. When the Black Lives Matter movement started, no churches wanted to get involved. Anytime a black man or woman was unlawfully killed, no one approached with leadership and guidance. Sorry to say, they made an example of you, Malcolm X, Fred Hamilton, and others. They gave us a little to block us from a lot! We lost the church, our black leaders, our businesses, our real independence. You felt like we needed the same as what they had and stopped us from independently growing on our own. Not many black owned businesses and not much black money circulating in our community, just everyone else's.

The last thing that really stood out to me was that



you kept referring to segregation as a disease. It threw off the whole purpose for me. Disease to me means incurable--it can't be fixed. You really put a band aid on a broken bone. It just made me feel like this would never be fixed. I would rather you treat this like an infection. Segregation is an infection that can be cured with proper treatment.

**(Brianna Johnson)**



I applaud you in the courage you have taken in the circumstances which uphold you in order to fight for equal rights in this nation. I have to say that it is an honor to be writing to you. I do agree with your tactics with following the law and also holding the law

accountable as well, like with your example of "just" and "unjust" laws, and that "an unjust law is no law at all."

When you say "love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despite fully use you and persecute you," it reminds me of a time in my life in which I felt angry and fed up and frustrated. There was a time where my 10-year-old black son had a gun pointed at him by a police officer because he was wrongfully identified. And when I was 11 years old, I watched several white men beat my brother,

and he was only trying to protect his younger sister. There was no justice in that time, and at one point I thought that if I get hit I want to hit back because I know that the laws will not be followed. I know that every cop, teacher, neighbor, and friend are not all evil. How do you know who to trust?

When you were invited to Birmingham to fight for freedom for all nations and to take action while still following the law which is in place and said, "Let him march, let him make prayer pilgrimages to city hall," I didn't understand what you meant behind it. So I decided to educate myself about the meaning of pilgrimages, which is a journey often into an unknown or foreign place, where a person goes in search of new or expanded meaning about themselves, others, nature, or a higher good. And doing that can lead to personal transformation—to be heard, to be equal, and not add violence with violence but to show faith by community, religion, church, and organizations.

You said about coming together as one nation, "So the question is not whether we will be extremists, but what kind of extremists we will be? Will we be extremists for hate or for love? Will we be extremists for the preservation of injustice or for the extension of justice?" I will say I will be an extremist for love, not hate, and will continue our march because today we still need change; we need to make more differences in the way we take action. I want to be able to be with my nation and not have to "second guess" what side I'm on. We shouldn't have to face death every day to make a point—to make a point to not shed more blood, and to provide equal laws to all people and stand by them. **(Yvonne Johnson)**



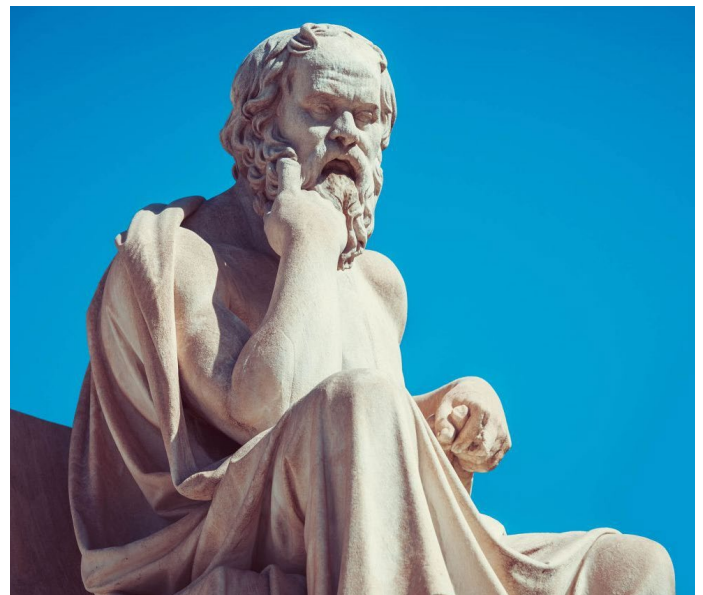
I would like to say how much I truly understand and appreciate your efforts and the eloquence with which you present it. Although this response was provoked by your fellow clergymen, I believe the ideals presented needed to be addressed. About 60 years from

the date of this letter, the issues presented are very much still current. Although it seems clearer now to me that these injustices are truly focused on the poor and disenfranchised, it is about power,

control. It truly was never about the color of the skin tone and more about the easiest manipulation for financial gain.

With current media we can see that this happens all over the globe at alarming rates. I am sorry to say that people are still being enslaved and still currently become prisoners of this never-ending war related to power and ego. The separation is no longer blunt with segregation but more tactically integrated into the American society and about every social system that is in use in the United States. This is true for government, careers, and education, and our legal system is beyond corrupted with prejudice. It is basically the new slavery. The masses truly believe that the separations are now justified and continue them complacently or ignorantly. As you had stated, the privileged party very rarely is willing to give up privilege. This 60 years later is so true, so we are at a total of about 400 years and still waiting. The complacent are more complacent than ever. Seems it's commonly accepted to be a person of low moral character, as the "white savior" complex is a main characteristic of the new "white moderate." You wrote, "Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection." I felt that because it is a source of personal frustration with the people I love. It is insulting to the intelligence.

I learned a lot from your allusions to relatable examples, such as the Apostle Paul and Socrates. They are known and respected for doing what is right, and this is what you were doing. You used





parallelism like “Injustice everywhere is a threat to justice everywhere” and “Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly”; this made them stand out. You also used a multitude of rhetorical questions to make the receiver think and consider how idiotic it would be to even answer the question. When explaining why some laws are unjust because they go against what is morally right, I understood that. We do need civil disobedience and to stand up against what goes against the higher code of natural law. Who else will kill the ego of the individual if not us? The alliteration used in multiple paragraphs made them visual and emotional for the reader. We could sympathize with the child wanting to play at the amusement park and got passionate for the statements like “let him march; let him make prayer pilgrimages to city hall, let him go on freedom rides.” We appreciate you calling out the white moderate, the church, and the comfortable negroes. Everything you speak of is basically relevant in 2021. We are in need of another such as you—a true leader who cared for what is right by natural law knowing that no being, despite any affliction, is lesser than another walk of life. All I have to say is thank you, Dr. Martin Luther King. (**Feather Lloyd**)



I’m writing to you as part of a college assignment. The year is 2021, and you’ve been dead now for close to 52 years. As part of our brief, we’re supposed to write to you as though you can still hear us, and reading over your letter from Birmingham Jail, I’m convinced that in some small way you still can. I’ll explain that thought in just a moment.

In the years since you passed, your shining example has ignited kindred passions across the globe. The Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa was inspired by your brass tacks Christianity, and closer to my own home, the fight for civil rights in Northern Ireland reveres you as a hero. Though I’m no expert, it seems to me that with the passage of time your legacy seems to have neither grown nor faded; it’s unaffected by fads and trends. I believe this to be a result of the essential purity of your ideals. The non-violent revolution you

espouse involves a discomfiting level of personal responsibility, self-examination, and painful sacrifice. Those who walk the path must suffer humiliation, provocation, violence, and imprisonment, and do so willingly. There’s no room for the catharsis of anger or the thrill of vengeance.

As I mentioned a moment before, I’ve been instructed to write to you as though you can still hear me. In your letter you spoke eloquently of the “interrelatedness of all communities and states.... an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”

So it is that in every living person affected by your words there endures a little portion of your spirit. This spirit extends, as spirits are supposed to, well beyond the 39 nine years you spent on Earth. So I can still hear you, and when I respond, I am responding to this spirit carried in the hearts of all the people still living and still struggling with the example you set.

Last year George Floyd, a black man living in Minneapolis, was murdered by a policeman. The policeman’s name was Derek Chauvin. He knelt on George Floyd’s neck for almost nine minutes.

As a display of asymmetrical power and the dehumanizing affairs of the American police state, it could not have been more emblematic. Chauvin appeared very comfortable with the arrangement, and the pleas of “I can’t breathe” that squeaked from under his heavy thigh fell on the deafest of ears.

Rightly and suitably outraged, my wife and I went downtown to the protest which was gathering at the top of State Street. We went there to contribute our bodies, to be counted, to feel one tiny iota above totally useless. On the surface, at least, it was a beautiful day; the first real sun of the season had people ambling up in t-shirts and shorts. We listened to some speeches which were hard to hear as they bounced and echoed off the tops of the buildings. I found my gaze drifting up to the State Capitol, the vast granite dome and the towering Corinthian

columns thick as ancient tree trunks, the same architecture that's been used to denote power since at least the time of the Romans.

At one point a rhythmic clap started, and it spread quickly through the crowd. I froze to the spot, my arms hanging limply at my sides. For some reason clapping on demand has always made me uncomfortable. I thought to myself is this where you are in life? Your belief that murder is wrong falls somewhere below your discomfort at clapping?

Of course, I wasn't battling injustice at all. If there was any fight going on it was only the meaningless internal squabble between me and my insincerity. I may bask in the "moral light" and relinquish my "unjust posture," but I've only traded it for a just posture which seems just as useless but is at least more difficult for the outside observer to criticize.

I didn't leave that day feeling hopeful, triumphant, or even morally sound. I felt compromised by my own lack of ideals and weakened by the nagging knowledge that beyond the pose there really may lie nothing. I don't have a religion to draw strength from, and I haven't found a secure place in life. I arrived as a stranger to that march, and I left as a stranger to myself.

So I must conclude sadly that we are the white moderates, alive and well. For sure we've learned not to dictate the pace of black liberation; that would be super uncool and nobody wants to be uncool. But ultimately we, the good people, aren't as good as we might like to believe. We know, or at least we sense, with the gnawing insistence of the void, that underneath our well-tended edifice we are rotting from the inside out. But the lawns of the State Capitol are shining in the sun, and it's the kind of negative peace we can tolerate.



By next week another black man will be murdered, the week after another five. Injustice piles on injustice until the names of the slain begin to scroll past like the credits in a never-ending horror movie. Eventually we avert our eyes and retreat because we know that our goodness is no match for their evil. For every cruelty and injustice perpetrated by the political class, we do nothing to redress the balance. I don't mean 'we' as the general population: I mean me, on a personal level, on an individual level. Our part of the tapestry, which as Caucasians, and even for me as an immigrant, is the main portion, is fraying desperately because our bonds are superficial. We are united only in our desire for peace and quiet. We condemn white supremacy but our words carry no weight as we do not act or think or live as the opposite of that. We offer good will freely, but our will isn't strong.

I wish I could say I had an answer, that in this moment I was transformed into a superhero, a crusader against inertia, an enemy of injustice. It's still troubling me. I felt the tension then, I still feel it now, and I know sooner or later I must act.  
(Farren McDonald)





“All men are created equal” are the words of Thomas Jefferson—words that do not hold much truth in 2021. The only men and women that are treated as equal, or I should say superior, are still white men and women. Sadly, a white

woman can call the police and say a black man is harming her because he asked her to put a leash on a dog. She knows that if the police show up, they will shoot him, and no one will ask any questions. A black man can be killed in broad daylight by police officers while being recorded, and we have yet to know the outcome of this injustice.

People of color are still told to wait and be patient for change while during a pandemic we are the ones dying because we are working on the frontlines every day. If we get sick, we must go without pay and have no money to pay rent or buy food. Most of us do not have good jobs with insurance, so if we catch COVID 19, the new deadly virus, we are left with huge medical bills we will never be able to pay. Most of are filled with sadness, anger, and no hope for a positive future for our children.

Dr. King, you started a fight that we are still fighting today. Strong leaders like yourself, Malcolm X, and John F Kennedy no longer exist. There is no one to give us the guidance and support we need. The leaders today are not looking out for people of

color. They are fighting amongst themselves, and if you do not agree with their method, they turn against you. There is no unity amongst people of color; we have created segregation amongst ourselves. I wish I could say the white men and women are our only enemy, but we are the biggest enemy to ourselves. Until we can all work together as one, we will never win equality.

There are still some churches in 2021 that do nothing to condemn the hate that is happening to people of color. Instead, they are using Bible verses to condone the evil and violence that is happening in our world today. Dr. King, in your letter, you asked leaders of churches to speak out against the injustices to people of color. There are some that do, but not enough. Men and women that claimed to be brothers and sisters of God are now fighting with each other. The love they once claimed towards each other is now hate.

“Oppressed people cannot remain oppressed forever” are words from your letter that give me hope. One day we can all work together to make our country a better place for everyone, no matter what their skin color is. I pray that hate, segregation, and violence will come to an end for people of color. Dr. King, you have built a strong foundation for America. I hope we continue to build from your foundation so that one day your “I have a dream speech” will be a dream come true.

Dr. King, your letter from Birmingham was read recently by our senate leaders last month. I hope your letter was a reminder to them of their job to make this country a better place for everyone. If they do not, then we must hold them accountable. We cannot continue to be patient and look the other way while people are treated unfairly. We must unite and work together to make positive changes for people of color. Your letter gave us the tools to make this happen. Now we must turn your letter into action. If we do not, only God can help us. **(Michelle McKoy)**





Your letter is filled with a passion and conviction that awakens a consciousness in me that pushes me to speak up and stand up to the injustices that linger and fester in this country today. Would you believe that injustices you wrote about still plague the Black race

in 2021? Yes, in 2021, Blacks are still in the same fight, just a different round. The days of Jim Crow where communities were riddled with “Colored” and “Whites Only” signs, black bodies lynched and left hanging from trees like strange fruit, and cross burnings have become the era of James Crow, Esquire.

James Crow is the new, improved, and approved form of racism that continues to oppress and suppress Blacks today. James Crow is the gentrification of black neighborhoods that we were forced to live in because we could not purchase homes in the suburbs. The neighborhoods we were forced to live in were deemed “ghetto” and abandoned by government officials, saturated with crime, poverty, dilapidated housing, and drugs. Yet, over the last few years, James Crow has decided to take back our land, once again, and displace us, yet again. They see the value in the neighborhoods in which we live, especially with the natural disasters going on, such as Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans in 2005. No longer are Blacks being lynched by the Ku Klux Klan, but we are being executed by the police officers who are sworn to protect and to serve. They are known as the Blue Klux Klan. Black men are being gunned for the officers’ perception of a threat, even when the Black man is unarmed and cooperating. These executions are captured on police body cameras, and the police are never convicted. There is no justice for the victim, the victim’s family, or the community. The feeling of “nobodiness” that the Black community experienced then is the same today. That “nobodiness” envelopes us every time one of us is the victim of hatred, bigotry, and injustice.

It appears that today’s elected officials are not in office to protect us or let justice reign; they are in power to maintain the status quo like



you mentioned of Mr. Boutwell. James Crow is so sophisticated that laws have been passed to protect Blacks from hair discrimination when applying for jobs and in the workplace. Yes, James Crow even tries to regulate the way we wear our God-given hair. James Crow is deeply emboldened white supremacy and the false sense of white superiority. Thankfully, Blacks are not suffering from a false sense of inferiority. We are standing tall and strong. Our stance is so powerful that some southern states, such as Georgia, are trying to pass laws that make it harder for Blacks to vote. Yes, they are accusing Blacks of voter fraud, when the reality of the matter is Blacks have had enough. We have watched America step back in time and erase all progress that has been made over the years. Despite electing our first Black president and putting a Hispanic woman on the Supreme Court bench, America still decided to revert to the old ways of racism.

It is very telling that the most segregated time in America is 11:00 am on a Sunday morning. You write of your fellow clergymen who say they serve the same God as you do but do not stand with you in the fight for justice and equality. This is still the case today. In December 2020, The Washington Post printed an article about how Black evangelicals are leaving the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) because their white fellow evangelicals do not want to acknowledge the ugly reality and impact of institutional racism. Their



white counterparts, just like yours, positioned themselves to be enemies of justice and truth and cowards for the cause. Such Christians are unlike Christ; they have the Word of God on their lips but not in their heart. Furthermore, the power of racism lives on because of the bigots who work in law and the bigots who work in the pulpit.

Who will fight for us? You quote the Bible passage where God calls for us to love our enemies. This is a heavy order from the Lord. It is difficult and tiring to forgive those who spitefully use us, mistreat us, and murder us. Nonetheless, we must let love reign in our hearts and minds or we are no better than they. Your nonviolent approach made some progress, but we are still fighting the same battles today. We cannot beg for equality, justice, and respect; we must demand it. We demand it by voting for leaders and policies that support, protect, and respect our best interests. This is the nonviolent and direct action that will bring about the results we need. Thank you for providing the blueprint for change. **(Stephaney Obi)**



I am truly inspired and amazed by your courage and strength. Even in the face of adversity you fought for your beliefs and others who may not have been able to fight for themselves. You stated, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." This statement holds

true to society as we are only as strong as our weakest link. Your analogy regarding Socrates and his beliefs on tension of the mind being necessary to rise above half-truths apply to all of us. We should take the time to unlearn our own prejudices even if they were taught to us.

"I'm sure that none of you would want to rest content with a superficial kind of social analysis that deals merely with effects and does not grapple with underlying causes." A powerful movement called Black Lives Matter has been

the center of controversy. Those who are not affected by every day inequities don't empathize with it. I chose this quote to compare because this movement was started due to the common injustice dealt by police that has become normal in today's society. As a result, protests are being held creating nonviolent tension as you spoke of.

I could not imagine sleeping in my car while on the road because motels would not accept me. I could not fathom telling my daughters they cannot have fun at a water park because we are not allowed in. Although times have changed drastically and there is no longer legal segregation, this country still has much hatred to overcome. I agree that oppressed people cannot remain oppressed forever because when freedom is not given it is eventually taken. I believe your role in the civil rights movement played a major role in my freedom today. I may not fight racism every day as you have, but there are still times that I question what it means to be "free." As I walked out of a grocery store alone one night and saw a man slowly approaching me in his car, I continued to put my things in the car. I then noticed this man had stopped and rolled down his window. As I looked up, he yelled to me the N word. My heart stopped. At that moment I thought to myself how far has this country really come? Did we overcome this hatred or are we getting better at hiding it? To know there was a time this behavior was accepted churned my stomach. This is an example of "Privileged groups seldom give up their privilege voluntarily." **(Asia Pearson)**





Things have been outrageous as I wander through these streets full of grief and sorrow. I see signs signaling I'm not wanted where I want to go. I see people that look like me walking on one side of the street, heads bowed, wondering if they'd be punished for walking

past a "whites only" restaurant. I'm seeing smiles but we aren't smiling. My tears rain from the deeper frustration that all man be created equal. No man is created equal in this time. My little black five-year-old can't play with John Clinton's daughter, who is six, because of the colors of our skin. What benefit does this hold? What significant message are we sending to our youth? Are we educating or just teaching segregation?

We are not outsiders, we are not murderers, thieves, or criminals, and we are not the other box you check on applications (ethnicity). When laws were created, they were meant to disable the Negro culture to the core. I want to be able to educate how change came about in the near future. Why shall they incarcerate a Negro brother for peaceful protests but leave a man with no pigment on his skin on the street who implements unjust laws on people whose looks aren't adequate enough to the white culture? My brother, we know you are a nonviolent, God-fearing man, and I stand behind you. We will march until we can't no more. We will sing until our voices can't be heard. We will let freedom ring on every piece of soil we walk on until our legs go out. Dr. King, our black is beautiful. We want to keep every march nonviolent and want to keep the cause alive. **(Burnett Reed)**



Your letter to your fellow clergyman was heartfelt and thought-provoking but yet questionable in the manner of commitment and loyalty. I can say that although well respected by me, I wasn't and still remain not a fan of the nonviolent movement.

What was impressed upon me was some of the metaphors that were given that were very reliable and still a reality to me in this current time. As a

millennial, our experience with injustice is not as overt as it was then. Our responses to the injustice are not the same or even come close to what you and Malcolm have contributed to equality. I do know that cops killing Africans without consequences is nothing new to the people, but what has changed drastically are the ways in which we fight back against injustice.

I thought a few years ago that maybe I should move "back home," a place where I know no one and have never been, just dreamed of being. Hoping to sit at the feet of the elders and learn the ways of the Africans before becoming tainted with an inferior God. A place where I assumed all people will be of African descent. No influence, not feeling the pressure of racism like we have in the United States. I was sad to learn Africans in their own home have been conquered and divided and have heavy remnants and influence of the Caucasian values and ways. Racism is global against all Africans. This gives me new meaning to "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

I noticed, however, the clergymen you have addressed within the letter, calling them your brethren. You have quoted their plagiarist scholars, you have successfully regurgitated their stolen spiritual spell work, and most importantly you attempted to run a guilt trip on people who are morally non-responsive even though you of the same faith they have premeditated genocide on your people.

When speaking about Elijah Muhammad and his approach to reach liberation and freedom, you mentioned how you stand in the middle of two opposing nationalist groups like a referee assuming to be the neutral party, not claiming to side with anyone. How is it that Malcolm was not your brother? Faith over race has sterilized every generation going forth and backwards amongst black folks but not for the white clergyman; they put aside their difference of beliefs regardless of Jew, Gentile, German, Greek, Roman, and Spanish to oppress, rape, pillage the African in unity. Come . . . on . . . Dr. King, we gotta do better.

**(Thedora Smith)**





I believe all humans should consider reading this letter. Reading this letter would put you in perspective with real life 2021. Everyone should know how hard the struggle was just for being an educated, brown-skinned MALE! By the way, that was in the 1960s, not

long ago at all.

We're still being oppressed, Martin; we're still being blamed, shamed, and damned for our strong human genes. People actually pay to look like you and me, Martin. It's sad, the world we're in today. Your dream is still a dream we dream.

Don't get me wrong: it's sistas & brothas lost in the sauce, I think. What's the cause? Martin, after you left it's like the culture had a relapse in the 1980s. Crack came around to ease a lot of our parents, grandparents, and family from this oppressed lifestyle. I feel it was an alternative way to kill the culture because it was only in certain neighborhoods. Only when it started going into different neighborhoods was it looked upon to erase. Crack cocaine ruined a lot of people's lives, worse than slavery.

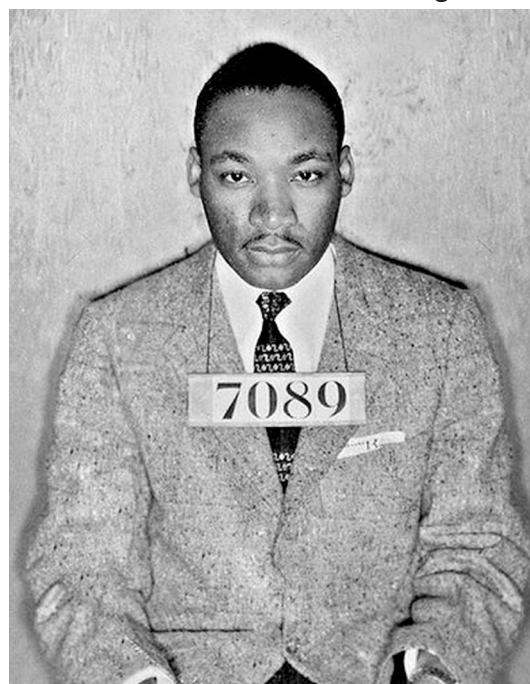
We march, we march. The heartfelt letter you wrote is still being read and reused, but no one seems to care, Martin. You said you were waiting, so we are still waiting for the police to stop killing and getting away with it. With you, Martin, knowing that you would be put under the jail if you had parking tickets, it's just the same, just different times. I agree we as a culture need to work together. It's a good thing we have cell phones with cameras now, Martin, so we can show live any time that anyone treats anyone unfairly. It's the world we live in today, Martin. Freedom, human rights, and nationality: we still ain't got it, Martin—just drugs and slugs. If you were here, you wouldn't let this be. **(Dana Stokes)**



The subtle intensity of this letter has grabbed a hold of my heart and squeezed. As I read the words of your letter, my spirit was electrified. Not only was it electrified, it was understood. My spirit immediately recognized yours. This fight is our fight, together. I've never met you,

although my heart holds dear space for you, as if we had known one another for years, like a family. Your compassion, your fearlessness, and your leadership give off a familiar vibration. You know and understand order. Dr. King, your knowledge of self sings through the timber of your tone as you speak. This makes them listen, whoever "them" may be. Your approach is respectable, even though it may not be recognized as such. Those opposing the route you have decided to take very rarely provide a reasonable alternative.

I cannot say that I am at a point in life where fear has totally escaped me. Because of that, I learned to just do it scared. I also learned to start small. Brick by brick may not be quick, but it will still get the job done! I will continue to place my bricks as I have witnessed you do yourself. You were not only called to Birmingham; you were called to humanity. Birmingham is so obviously just one of those bricks you are using to build up fairness and good faith. It is disheartening to witness such behavior of those



seemingly unaffected by the inhumane treatment of others. This behavior shows that their own blissful ignorance and comfortability must not be rattled in order to correct or re-calibrate the awful treatment of others. At what point will we focus on the cure instead of applying the treatment? The treatment that comes with all of the ugly side effects essentially stifles any chance of real accountability being taken. This is a question that we both still have. **(Faleshuh Walker)**



“The Negro has many pent-up resentments and latent frustrations, and he must release them. So let him march; let him make prayer pilgrimages to the city hall; let him go on freedom rides--and try to understand why he must do so. 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.”

Reading the letter of Birmingham Jail has taught me a lot more than what I thought I knew. I have chosen this quote because it has opened my eyes to a lot of the things that are going on today and how our rights were being fought for in the 1960s. Nothing has changed much. We are still fighting for our rights. When you say, “The negro has many pent-up resentments and latent frustration, and he must release them,” I noticed something about our black communities that are facing poverty, lack of access to good education, lack of good living and good working environment, which causes trauma in our neighborhood. Due to the lack of these things, we are seeing black on black crime, business destructions, and more and more violent activities throughout the communities.

The quote has helped me to realize that a lot of trauma is generational trauma, that has been swept under the rug for decades, or pointed at our own kind. We have faced criticism and been looked at as the stereotypes who’ve become a part of a broken system.

In contrast, your quote has showed us nonviolent civil disobedience can be used to release repressed emotions and pent-up frustrations, as our communities continue to fight for equal rights.  
(**Keyanna Wilson**)

I like your delivery in the Letter from Birmingham. I feel that you’re very expressive on your reasoning for being there in the first place. I also understand your logistics of why you took the risk of standing up for yourself as well as for your people for what you know. That is a very brave act. I thank you for that.

Injustice seems as if it will never come to an end. I believe everyone should be treated equally no matter the race, religion, or otherwise. I feel that some type of action was very much needed at that time and still remains to this day. The distinction between just and unjust is clear as day. I feel the white moderate wants to control and have power over us instead of just doing the right thing. “Negro living at tiptoe stance” is basically what’s going on in this segregated world and it’s sickening, a disgrace to all and beyond our control. I wish things were different, but I don’t feel it will ever change. All I can do is pray for better days! (**Shiquita Woods**)





# RESPONSE TO DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING'S LETTER FROM A BIRMINGHAM JAIL

*Incarcerated students in Kevn Mullen's Odyssey Beyond Bars class at Oakhill Correctional Institution also responded to King's Letter from a Birmingham Jail.*

"Oppressed people cannot remain oppressed forever. The yearning for freedom eventually manifests itself, and that is what has happened to the American Negro."

This quote is very important to the world today because, just as Dr. King spoke about the rights of African Americans, today we have people standing up and speaking up and speaking for the rights of all people. For example, women want equal pay as men, women want jobs that were said to be men's jobs, African Americans want to be president, gays want to marry, and children want equal opportunity education and co-ed sports. As the world continues to evolve, so will the people who populate it and with that, there will be many that will want to go beyond what the world is used to. Their actions are not meant to be disrespectful, but for them to be respected. **(Brandon)**

In his letter from Birmingham County Jail, Dr. Martin Luther King points out that, "...privileged groups seldom give up their privileges voluntarily," and that "freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed." (Writing In the World, 108)

I find these observations to be particularly significant in light of the numerous social justice issues faced by black and brown people today. Sadly, many of these issues are the same issues that Dr. King and his allies [fought for]—from police brutality to voter suppression to systemic poverty. King points out that waiting for those who enjoy the privileges resulting from these injustices to have some sort of awakening is foolish. If this was true then, I would argue that it's even more so now.



Today many of the gains made during King's time are being eroded at an ever-increasing pace. Just as then, if we and the generations coming after want to enjoy that to which we are entitled first by birth and secondly as American citizens, we are going to have to fight for it and do so until "...a community that has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue." (107)

However, if history has taught us anything, it's that this struggle is a war, not a battle; a marathon, not a sprint; and a few "victories" does not mean the fighting is done. Yesterday's victories can be quickly eroded (as is being done today) when those who weren't around to participate in the actual fighting become complacent. Eternal vigilance is required to secure gains made and to prevent injustice and the imbalance of privilege from reasserting itself.

There's an old saying that I like to sometimes quote, "fool me once shame on you, fool me twice shame on me," to which I like to add fool me three times and I'm just a damn fool. How will history judge us? **(Dominee)**

“Justice too much delayed is justice denied.”

To know a situation is unjust or to have direct knowledge that something is wrong and to not act on it accordingly, when you have the power to, is denying someone of their God-given rights. It is a direct violation of the very laws in place to prevent something of the sort from happening. Innocent people suffer because of an opinion that is not law. **(Dakotah)**

I especially liked the last sentence [of the fourth paragraph of page 106]. The sentiments of this particular paragraph reverberate to our current climate of views in this nation, and in others as well. Like a disease fever, fear and mistrust of the “others” spreads plague out.

Rather than encourage the citizens of our nation to see the people within our nation as one whole, fear mongering is stoked over and over again. Fears of others isn’t an innate characteristic, but one instilled. “We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny.” This is a credo or maxim that withstands time . . . For without the people seeing themselves as unified and together, is there truly a nation? **(Edward)**

King’s Letter:

“But more basically, I am in Birmingham because injustice is here.”

I felt that there’s a time and a place for all things, and that this phrase was great because it covered so many things that followed. If we had more of that mindset today, the world would be a better place. For instance, there was that man who just happened to be present when another man tried to take that little girl and he, a man with no connection, gave chase and helped in recovering the child. He was present for an act of injustice, and he had the courage to act. I was happy to see such selflessness.

I believe in this quote because I can understand the mindset of being in the right place at the right time. Wherever there’s wrong being done, someone should stand up. **(Gregory)**

“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. Human progress never rolls on the wheels of inevitability, it comes through the tireless efforts of men willing to be coworkers with God, and without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the lovers of social stagnation.”

The great Martin Luther King Jr. walked for miles and miles for the equality of the black men and women of the United States. His marches were known not just because of the people being present, it was the “word of mouth,” not being quiet! They say a closed mouth won’t get fed, and that’s how his marches were for the people that were good but feared for their lives. **(Jacob)**

“More and more I feel like the people of ill-will have used time much more effectively than have the people of good will.” **(Jose)**

“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.”

This quote reminds me to never be silent about something I believe in. In the end, if I remain silent, I’m just as guilty as the bad person’s hateful words and actions. **(Joseph)**





I was intrigued by the sentence “Injustice anywhere endangers justice everywhere.” Currently, we’re dealing with a president doing the same. **(Lanard)**

“If I have said anything in this letter that overstates the truth and indicates an unreasonable impatience, I beg you to forgive me. If I have said anything that understates the truth and indicates my having a patience that allows me to settle for anything less than brotherhood, I beg God to forgive me.”

I think he is willing to admit he could be wrong and face God if he compromises for anything less than what is right. **(Michael)**

I was influenced by his use of words that gave me an image. He was talking about the church of the past and said, “In those days, the church was not merely a thermometer that recorded the ideas and principles of popular opinion, it was a thermostat that transformed the mores of society.” I realized the intelligence of this man in that statement. I felt it was a really simple and clear use of imagery.

I also felt like I understood why this letter was so damn long, which he acknowledged after he mentions about the boredom of being locked up. I related to the exact state he spoke of due to having been there many times. I understood and was able to sympathize better at that point. **(Robert)**

“There are two types of laws: just and unjust . . . a just law is a man made code that squares with the moral law or the law of God . . . Any law that degrades human personality is unjust. All segregation statutes are unjust because segregation distorts the soul and damages the personality.”

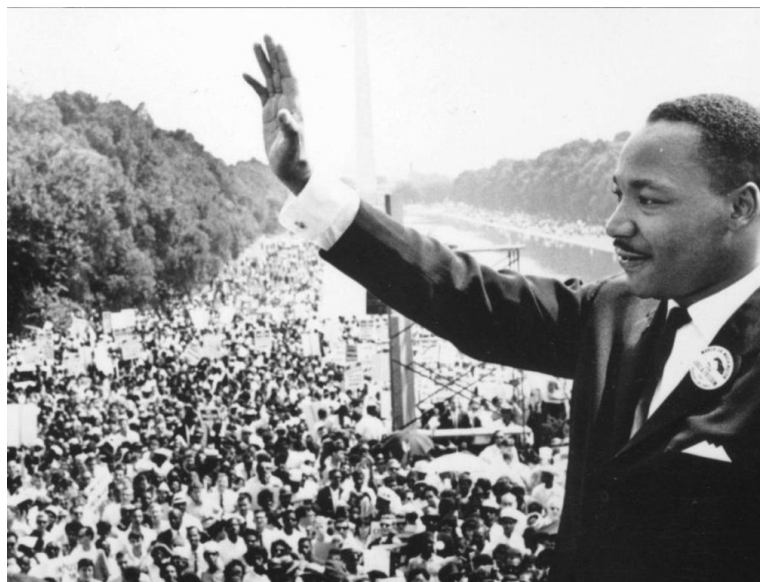
There’s so much said in his letter from a Birmingham jail that it’s hard for me to pick only one aspect out of the whole of his interconnected argument. But, I really like how he lays out how legalities are often used to justify, facilitate, or even normalize the degradation or, even worse, the de-humanization of one group over another. How easy is it to exploit and persuade

others who might be opposed to the practice, once establishing the lies of the inhuman, uncivilized, etc., then legislating the lie into profitable practice?

Extremely powerful also for me was his illustration of having to explain to his six-year-old daughter why she can’t go to Fun Town . . . Lies of inferiority will distort her personality, perhaps for not only for her lifetime but also affecting many others as an unconscious bitterness towards white people begins to form ominous clouds of inferiority in her little mental sky. How those clouds might develop into a fully conscious storm of extremism, in the way of love or the way of hate. Once realizing the full depth of the lie, necessarily refused and resisted and still so persistent. **(Ryan)**

“Over the past few years, I have consistently preached that nonviolence demands that the means we use must be as pure as the ends we seek. I have tried to make clear that it is wrong to use immoral means to attain moral ends.”

I wish protesters would listen to what Martin Luther King has said—not just [protests] for racial inequities or injustice, but unions, pro-lifers, and everyone with a cause. I am sad that this happened at all—not the protesting, but the lack of equality, the fact that we have to make an amendment. In a perfect world we would all be equal. Very few people look the same, so why should ethnicity be different? Hopefully someday it will be better. **(Mark)**



# MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. ON LOVE

**“Love is the most durable power in the world.”**

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

**“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”**

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