

Name: Satvik Kadappanavar

Grade: 11

School: South Windsor High School

1st Congressional District

Among many fascinating subjects in my psychology course this year was the concept of dreams. Dreams are timeless constructs that we are innately programmed to have. When we sleep, without fail, our body delivers us with dozens of dreams, most of which consist of absurd scenarios, such as being chased by a pack of dinosaurs or growing a pair of wings and flying. While this kind of dream is a natural occurrence for all of us, we tend to attribute less importance to another kind of dream, which, I would argue, we are just as innately programmed to have: aspirational dreams. This was the kind of dream that Dr. King Jr possessed for much of his life, stemming from his childhood.

Dr. King Jr was ostracized by the parents of his white friends, but instead of sulking on the pain that this brought, he used it as inspiration. It was this spark that gave Dr. King Jr clarity on discrimination in society as a whole, and allowed him to begin to carve a path towards equality. Among dozens of others devoted to bringing the concept of equality to fruition, Dr. King Jr helped surge the Civil Rights Movement forward, even the direst of circumstances being unable to slow him down. For example, shortly after his arrest in Birmingham, he still possessed the willpower to piece together what he called The Letter from Birmingham Jail. A quote that I believe perfectly defines this resilient attitude is where he states that “the yearning for freedom eventually manifests itself.” This one quotation, among dozens of others, represents wholly the drive that Dr. King Jr had towards the Civil Rights Movement. Moreover, reading this quote from a more general standpoint even allows me to resonate with the passion that he was putting forth.

The concept of striving for freedom can be generalized to the idea of pushing for success. As a high school junior aspiring to become a surgeon, I can relate to the idea that setting massive dreams can seem impossible. With acceptance rates of collegiate medical education plummeting, the path to my goals is shrouded in lots of uncertainty, but if Dr. King Jr’s example has shown me anything, it’s that we must coerce our dreams into becoming reality through hard work and persistence. This is why I believe his words are not just tailored for people fighting for social justice or combating inequality, they are rather words of advice for all individuals struggling to reach their goals. They have shown me that the path to success may be as dark and desolate as Birmingham Jail, but like Dr. King Jr, we must pick up our pens and continue to strive towards our future goals.