

# **‘They Will not be Judged by the Color of Their Skin’**

Today, the nation celebrates Martin Luther King, Jr. who made a tremendous contribution to history. Most young Americans have been familiarized with his work and vision through his “[I Have a Dream...](#)” speech from 1963 at the “March on Washington”.

Here’s the [text](#) of the full speech. Audio is below:

A speech does not change history without having the capacity to inspire. Here are a few standouts that explain its power:

“Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God’s children. It would be fatal for the nation to

overlook the urgency of the moment. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality – 1963 is not an end but a beginning.

...

In the process of gaining our rightful place we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred.

...

We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protests to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force. The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to distrust all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny.

...

We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and the Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote.

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

...

I say to you today, my friends, though, even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American

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

...

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

...

When we allow freedom to ring – when we let it ring from every city and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, 'Free at last, Free at last, Great God a-mighty, We are free at last.'"

This sentence has, perhaps, caught the most attention over the years.

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

It may be that when individuals think of equality, they naturally gravitate toward some meaning of judging people as individuals, by their character and actions.

Over 50 years later, it seems that much progress has been made when one reads Dr. King's full speech, especially his grievances. Yet, today America feels more divided on race than in recent memory. One wonders, will we or even can we ever get to a time when all Americans are judged simply by the "content

of their character"?