

Martin luther king – life of leadership

Sociology



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BUSTER**

During his brief lifetime, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. led an exemplary life of leadership. Prior to his assassination on April 4, 1968 (“About Dr. King”), Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was an important figure in the Civil Rights Movement. His work to end racial discrimination, however, was not the only thing King did to establish his legacy in American history as an important leader. His political activism, diplomatic virtue and efforts to improve conditions for all Americans are exactly the qualities that make a true leader. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is best known for his work to end racial discrimination and segregation during the Civil Rights Movement. Early on in the Civil Rights Movement, the ambitious Dr. King acted as a spokesperson and even president for several equal rights organizations, such as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (“About Dr. King”). King’s long list of political involvement and acts demonstrates the ambition, intelligence, dedication and resolve that any true leader will possess, which is why King was able to secure a massive group of followers and supporters.

King’s political involvement and his growing following of supporters gained attention from all over the country and led to many changes in local and even national policies regarding the treatment and right of African Americans. Upon a massive bus boycott that King initiated in Montgomery, Alabama in the early days of the Civil Rights Movement (1955), “the U. S. Supreme Court ruled that racial segregation in transportation was unconstitutional” after “381 days of nearly universal participation by citizens of the black community, many of whom had to walk miles to work each day as a result” of their participation in King’s boycott (“About Dr. King”). Another example of King’s political influence is his infamously-led March on

Washington. As The King Center notes, “ in 1964, partly due to the March on Washington, Congress passed the landmark Civil Rights Act, essentially eliminating legalized racial segregation in the United States. The legislation made it illegal to discriminate against blacks or other minorities in hiring, public accommodations, education or transportation” (“ About Dr. King”). King’s influences also helped African Americans gain the right to vote and informed other “ unprecedented civil rights legislation” (“ About Dr. King”). As his political biography reveals, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. “ led a coalition of numerous civil rights groups” in various political rallies and other nonviolent acts (such as those above) over the last decade of his life. These examples demonstrate King’s dedication to equal rights for African Americans cause and also illustrate how King’s leadership inspired people to fight for their rights without the use of violence in a constructive, healthy and effective way.

Not only did King get people to work cooperatively toward a common goal in a productive and effective way, but together, under King’s leadership, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his supporters were able to spark significant changes for equal rights in America. King’s ability to promote and achieve a greater good for all of his fellow countrymen, through the efforts of his fellow countrymen, makes him a significant leader. Dr. Martin Luther King’s diplomacy and pacifism also make him a great leader, because a crucial aspect of true leadership involves leading the masses toward a greater good in healthy and enlightened ways. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was equally a leader of peace as he was a leader of change. During Dr. King’s “ thirteen years of nonviolent leadership” (“ About Dr. King”), he not only advocated interracial brotherhood, cooperation and “ international peace” but also

spoke out against violence and publically opposed the Vietnam War (“ About Dr. King”). At age 35, in 1964, King became the youngest person to receive a Nobel Peace Prize (“ About Dr. King”). Perhaps the most virtuous quality of King’s leadership is the fact that he didn’t just work for African American’s rights, but basic rights and improved social conditions for all disadvantaged American people. During his leadership, King’s work also “ culminated in the ‘ Poor Peoples Campaign,’ which was a broad effort to assemble a multiracial coalition of impoverished Americans who would advocate for economic change” (“ About Dr. King”). This example illustrates King’s leadership quality of working toward the betterment of all people, not just a chosen few. A true leader is concerned with helping as many people as possible. In conclusion, the impact of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. ’s leadership is truly exemplary of what makes a good leader. A good leader is one who is able to bring people together and inspire them to work productively, cooperatively and positively toward the betterment of all.

King’s ambition, nonviolent methods, dedication, virtue and ultimate influence toward change are the top qualities of true leadership, in my opinion. As Dr. King’s life work illustrates, leaders who embody these characteristics are ones who are able to achieve a greater good for everyone. American equality might never have been achieved without the important leadership of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Works Cited

1. " About Dr. King. " The King Center. The Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change, n. d. Web. 21 Feb. 2012. <http://www.thekingcenter.org/about-dr-king>.