

We Have a Dream

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Abstract

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Article

Please note at writing, the planned dedication service for the Martin Luther King Jr Memorial has been postponed.

The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of 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. And they have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom.

*We cannot walk alone. And as
we walk,
we must make the pledge that
we shall always march ahead.*

We cannot turn back. - Martin Luther King Jr. August 28, 1963

The reason Martin Luther King Jr. will always be recorded as one of the greatest civil rights leader is his ability to speak to the truth, build a coalition and most importantly, inspire and lead a people through their struggle. His iconic speech, delivered 48 years ago was a masterful piece of rhetoric. From it's invoking of the United States Declaration of Independence, the Emancipation Proclamation, and the United States Constitution to the clearly Biblical references and his masterful use of Anaphora, the repetition of a phrase at the beginning of sentences, he draws attention to the wisdom of Lincoln while standing in his shadow.

Dr. King knew our human struggles were linked. The basis of many of our faith directs us to this fact. And for many without such a belief structure, there is the common desire amongst our brethren to care for the needs of each other.

The LGBT Communities are looking for similar leadership. Someone capable of speaking to the truth, build a coalition and most importantly, inspire and lead a people through their struggle. Our struggles are no where near the challenges the African American struggles were and still are in some cases.

The recent charge that gender identity protections harm women has been shown as the intellectual dishonesty that it is. Those offering that mindset a forum, discredited. This “separatist” movement with transphobia at its core is not new. In the mid to late 70s, Sandy Stone a sound engineer at Olivia Records was criticized, verbally attacked and even received death threats from a para-military arm of the feminist movement.

Sue Hyde of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and specifically its Creating Change Conference was a signatory to that letter. She has since condemned her own behavior and asked that the body of her work since then be evidence enough of her change she created.

“Our job is not to get those people who dislike us to love us. Nor was our aim in the civil rights movement to get prejudiced white people to love us. Our aim was to try to create the kind of America, legislatively, morally, and psychologically, such that even though some whites continued to hate us, they could not openly manifest that hate.” -Bayard Rustin, organizer of the 1963 March on Washington

Sue Hyde is in an enviable position. You have an opportunity to Create Real Change. As a respected leader in our community, you can use the lessons you’ve learned from the past and channel it toward healing, towards unity, towards progress.

Leadership and leadership opportunities only happen every so often. You have found yourself at such a juncture. Time will judge all of us on whether we capture such moments or we choose inaction. You have the wisdom gained from your experience, the respect garnered from your years of dedication since and a captive audience of supporters in the community willing to embrace your vision for moving forward and leaving such harmful transphobic notions in the waste bin of our movement, where they belong.

The greater LGBT communities do not seek to eradicate those who hate us. Nor is our goal to get them to stop hating us. Our goal, like Rustin stated is to Creating Real Change, where legislatively, morally, and psychologically those that hate us can not openly manifest that hate.

I think more of us understand now that you can’t engage hate with reason, even when hate presents itself in the guise of reason.-Allucquere Rosanne “Sandy” Stone

There is no need to reason with people like this:

When someone uses the word “freak” to describe a transgender people, they are seeking to tear away our humanity, to make us less human, which makes us easier to kill. This is what the uses of pejoratives against African Americans also do. No one who uses that word towards a transgender person should ever sit at a table designed to promote trans equality let alone be invited to the table a scant month after those statements.

“When evil men plot, good men must plan. When evil men burn and bomb, good men must build and bind. When evil men shout ugly words of hatred, good men must commit themselves to the glories of love.” - Martin Luther King

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