

World Telegram & Sun photo by Walter Albertin. Public domain.

**NOT
IN OUR
TOWN**

EMBRACING THE DREAM:

Lessons from the Not In Our Town Movement

A Film Study Guide for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday

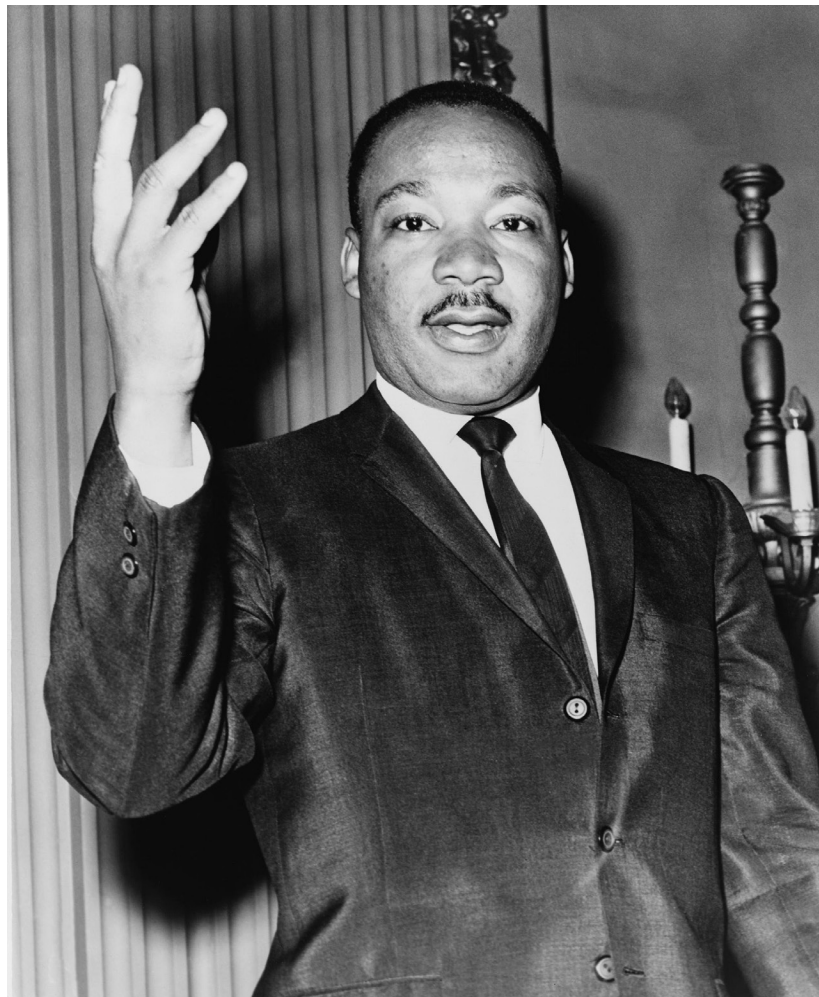
**“I have decided to stick with love.
Hate is too great a burden to bear.”**

-- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

-- Martin Luther King, Jr.

Today, we should all honor the life and legacy of Dr. King by recommitting ourselves to keeping alive the dream of justice for all.



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About Not In Our Town

Watch video here:

<http://www.niot.org/niot-video/about-not-our-town-excerpt-new-30-minute-special>



This short film reminds us that newspaper headlines and TV news reports focus attention on hate incidents and crimes. Conversely, Not In Our Town highlights positive community actions and people who are standing up and addressing the damage of hate.

Is highlighting the positive responses to hatred an effective way to promote inclusion and acceptance?

Here are two quotations from the speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr. How are these addressed in the film "About Not in Our Town"?

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

"There comes a time when silence is betrayal."

Embracing Differences

Watch the video here:

<http://www.niot.org/niot-video/embracing-differences-0>

In August of 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King stood on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial and delivered his famous “I Have A Dream” speech. In it he said:

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

Why were Dr. King’s words not accepted by Marcelo Lucero’s attackers? How did his tragedy rouse the people of Patchogue, and particularly, the educators of this town?

Do you think the educators’ approach helped the students better appreciate diversity? Why is art an effective tool for discussing difficult issues?



Do you think the response to this hate crime murder speaks to Dr. King’s optimistic view as described in this quote from him?

“I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality... I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word.”

After Cross Burning, a Town Marches Together

Watch the video here:

<http://www.niot.org/niot-video/after-cross-burning-town-marches-together>

In March of 1965, Dr. King led a series of three marches in Alabama to protest discriminatory practices which kept African-Americans from voting. After viewing TV coverage of the marches, President Lyndon Johnson presented a bill to a joint session of Congress. The bill would later pass and become the Voting Rights Act which outlawed discriminatory voting practices.



Why are public demonstrations and marches sometimes needed to effect change?

What was done by the Anderson police chief to make it easier for people to show their support for the victim?

What about the vice mayor, family and community?

Martin Luther King's "I Have A Dream" speech is considered one of the greatest speeches of the 20th century. Probably the most famous words were:

"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."

How do you think the mother in this film was able to embrace Dr. King's optimism and remain in her town after an eight-foot cross was burned on her front lawn?

Dr. King warned:

"Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."

How did Dr. King's concerns about silence take on meaning in this community?

If this happened in your town, how would you like your community to respond? How would you like to respond?

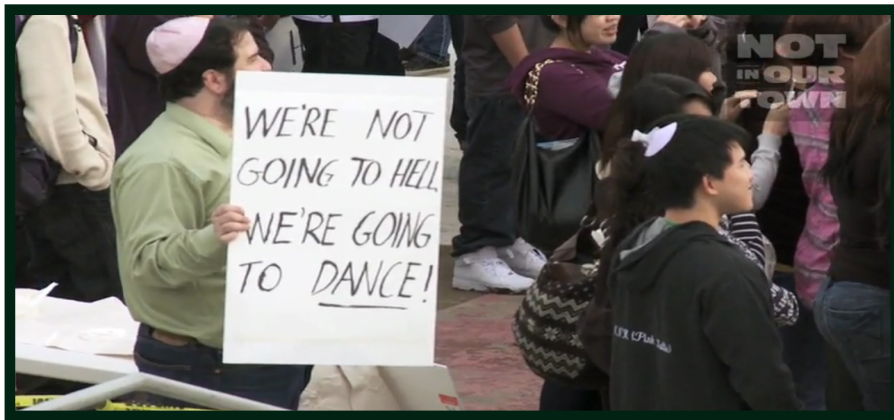
Lowell High School Students Dance Away Hate

Watch the video here:

<http://www.niot.org/niot-video/lowell-high-students-dance-away-hate-group>

Dr. King said:

*“In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies,
but the silence of our friends.”*



As we watch this short video of the reaction of students at a San Francisco high school, we see and hear little of the planned protest. Do you think the students' action turned the negativity of Westboro Baptist Church into what Dr. King called "positive energy"? How?

How were the Lowell High School students able to get their friends and community members to speak up in support of diversity?

Students Teach Students to Stand Up To Bullying

Watch the video here:

<http://www.niot.org/niot-video/students-teach-students-stand-bullying>

Shaw High School High School students shared with elementary school students their experiences as both perpetrators and victims of bullying.

We all know the word “bystander”---referring to someone who witnesses but is uninvolved in a situation. These students are using the word “upstander” to refer to someone who refuses to stand by when witnessing the injustice of bullying. They claim “upstanders” are heroes. Why?



Photo credit: Wisconsin Historical Society, Image ID: 2381. Photo origin: AP, Jackson Daily News, photographer Fred Blackwell. Used with special permission.

Take a close look at this picture of the Jackson, Mississippi Woolworth's sit-in (May 28, 1963).

What do you notice about the crowd behind the three people seated at the counter? How does this look similar to bullying incidents today? How is it different? What do Shaw High School students teach us about ways to change bystanders into “upstanders?”

“Never, never be afraid to do what’s right, especially if the well-being of a person or animal is at stake. Society’s punishments are small compared to the wounds we inflict on our soul when we look the other way.”

“There comes a time when silence is betrayal.”

Here are two statements of Dr. King. Would these quotes need to be revised to apply them to the situation of bullying? If so, how?

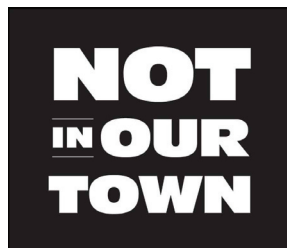
Conclusion

“History will have to record that the greatest tragedy of this period of social transition was not the strident clamor of the bad people, but the appalling silence of the good people.”

Each time we speak out against hatred we are helping to advance Dr. King’s dream.

Every day, in cities and towns across the country, people are standing together against intolerance, and working to make their communities safer for everyone. You can read their stories and watch videos of their positive actions on our website, **NIOT.org**.

Thank you for taking the time this Martin Luther King holiday to reflect on his words of encouragement to speak up to hatred.



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