

Community Comment Jan. 19th, 2015

By Jon Sapper

Character Traits of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Today the country celebrates the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. It is impossible to not notice that he was revered as one of the most visionary leaders of our time ...by some, and relegated with the cloak of a rabble-rouser by others. Of course, most great leaders throughout history were viewed through this dual lens and it is that very nature of their leadership that stirs the souls of some men to follow and rallies others to protest any thought of changing the status quo.

Dr. King's 1963, "I Have a Dream" speech is one of the most acclaimed in U.S. history. He had a dream that his children would not be judged by the color of their skin, but rather by the content of their character. Dr. King believed character was more important than other forms of social standing.

We should all be so passionate in what we believe and are willing to do, or more accurately, what we are willing to sacrifice to have our dreams and aspirations become reality. Dr. King was a game changer. Are you willing to pioneer change? What is your passion? What would you like to see different in our community? Are you willing to work for it? For example, does the fact that Humboldt County has the highest per capita rate of childhood trauma in California grab your gut? Does the fact that the thousand among us who suffer from the severest forms of addiction have little or no access to life saving medical care? Does the fact that the many creative, innovative and risk taking people in our community will never have their dreams get off the ground because of burdensome regulations? Is the unprecedented violence in our community acceptable when it is offset with millions of dollars circulating in our towns and stores? Is it acceptable that the law abiding citizen is feeling more and more restrained in their freedoms because of an overburdening state and federal government that wishes to control minutia in our lives?

Be courageous. Dr. King showed the vision of one can transform a community. Don't be afraid to travel uncharted waters. Illuminate others on your view of the world that should be. You can move the pile of dirt in your own backyard, but it will take your passion and inspiring others to move the mountain. Be

committed to this work. And, be patient. Change will not happen overnight. But we must know what horizon we are pursuing.

Yes, I am concerned about our community. But, I'm far more concerned about an attitude of apathy that has far more destructive potential than any of the challenges we face. Become engaged.

This has been Jon Sapper for Community Comment.