

## Decisions in conflict

"The Ultimate Measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy." -Dr. Martin Luther King Jr

A true test of who we are lies in our actions not in times of comfort, but in times when the veil of ease has been lifted. When we are faced with making the difficult decision of which path we will take, and which choice we will make, we must consider how it will have a lasting impact on ourselves and those around us. These decisions will determine what impact we will have on the situation around us in hard times. The actions we take in times of challenge and controversy will forever define who we are.

Most of us have yet to face true social unrest that leads to making decisions that will prove to be life altering, but there will come a time when we all do, a time that we may think we are prepared for, but realize much too late that we were foolish and ignorant in that belief. What do we stand for today? What will we stand for when it really counts? Who's to say what really counts? All of these are reasonable questions and ones we should at least try to answer for our future selves.

One way to begin chiseling away at the difference between who we *think* we are and who we have the potential to become is to read about what others have done before us and heed their examples. When we begin this literary exploration we start to see a pattern, the one similarity the great movements, rebellions and revolutions have in common, is that they were hard work. They took time, planning, and sacrifice, including the emotionally overwhelming cost of many lives. The lives of the brave men and women who have fought and continue to fight for justice for all.

In the comfort of my room with my bed, blankets, electronics, heat and access to clean water, with the ease of a lifestyle that supplements ready access to a fantastic education with

virtually unlimited extracurricular activities from music to travel, it is nearly impossible to imagine the hardship and sacrifice that those who came before me have faced. It's hard to put myself in their shoes and imagine darker less progressive times. Yet, I have the opportunity and motivation to study these events so that I too may be educated on such matters prior to walking into a situation where my life and the lives of others around me will be determined by my actions.

Learning from the mistakes of the past is key to creating a bright and just future. When faced with hard decisions, we have the chance to give up, or the chance to change the world. It all comes down to those decisions that affect the lives of not only yourself, but everyone around you. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. made many weighted decisions in difficult and frustrating times that influenced equal treatment of everybody in his time and in times yet to come. Will we be able to follow in his footsteps when our time comes? Will we be able to make the decision that will shape a better world for all? I for one have hope that we will rise to the occasion and prove to ourselves and the world that we too are willing to sacrifice for what is right. The reason I believe this is true is because of our exposure to role models such as Mr. King. I would like to thank him for his message of love, his guidance in dark times, and strength to persevere.