

Hadley Booker

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Kishwaukee College
21193 Malta Road
Malta, IL 60150

The world we live in now is a world divided, divided by differences real and imaginary. We seek to prevent the spread of hate all while it blossoms freely within all of us, subconsciously or otherwise. The truth is that the seed of this hate lies in misunderstanding. When one is unwilling to listen to another in the assertion that they must certainly be right, it is likely the other side will respond by not giving them a voice either. This is the standstill our country has found itself in, voices yelling loudly over each other and going unheard by all except those who agree. As it appears, persuasion seems hopeless. It may be, unless we listen to those who came and advised before us.

Nobody retains certain beliefs unfounded, there is always a reason, and if we are willing to listen to these reasons, then we can truly succeed in our goal. You may hate a person for supporting a certain political party even without knowing why they do so, and in asking further you may learn that the policies provided hold the possibility of supporting their family. Their reasons may also be less honorable, but that does not mean that they are free from persuasion. This is not reason to hate them. In learning from the past, we must look at the life of Mahatma Gandhi, a man who once said, "an eye for eye only ends up making the whole world blind." Hate is not the path to trump hate.

The solution is communication. We must be willing to listen to one another, regardless of whether or not we agree. If we truly want to free the world of hate, then we must understand *why* the hate is present, otherwise it will linger like a foul odor unshakeable from our backs. "We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools." These are the words that were spoken by Martin Luther King Jr. on March 22nd, 1964, four years before he would be assassinated. His words should weigh heavy in our minds, for the very hate he fought to overcome is what killed him in the end, and is still present today. In his honor, we must not let it continue.

The plan I propose is an assemblage of those with different views and backgrounds where everyone is free to express what they believe, but in an environment free from judgement. This will not be an argument, but a conversation between oppositions. People will explain why they hold the positions that they hold, and the rest will listen. There will be no speaking above others or challenging their views; the point is understanding. Whether or not the understanding brings about harmony is out of our control, but it is the first step to overcoming

fear, and more importantly, overcoming hate. King advises us here once more, “faith is taking the first step even when you don’t see the whole staircase.”