

MLK Playlist Monday: The Meditations

“You can kill the dreamer, but you can’t kill the dream.”

“A man can’t ride your back unless it’s bent.”

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

“When you are right you cannot be too radical; when you are wrong, you cannot be too conservative.”

“True peace is not merely the absence of tension: it is the presence of justice.”

“The quality, not the longevity, of one’s life is what is important.”

“Darkness is only driven out with light, not more darkness.”

“Power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental and anemic.”

“Let no man pull you so low as to hate him.”

“Even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream.”

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

“Courage is the power of the mind to overcome fear.”

“A productive and happy life is not something you find; it is something you make.”

“I want to be the white man’s brother, not his brother-in-law.”

“Every man must decide whether he will walk in the light of creative altruism or in the darkness of destructive selfishness.”

“The time is always right to do what is right.”

“Our scientific power has outrun our spiritual power. We have guided missiles and misguided men.”

“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.”

“If you can’t fly then run, if you can’t run then walk, if you can’t walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward.”

“Keep feeling the need for being first. But I want you to be the first in love. I want you to be the first in moral excellence. I want you to be the first in generosity.”

“The hottest place in Hell is reserved for those who remain neutral in times of great moral conflict.”

“Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred.”

“I am not interested in power for power’s sake, but I’m interested in power that is moral, that is right and that is good.”

“A right delayed is a right denied.”

“Human salvation lies in the hands of the creatively maladjusted.”

“The moral arc of the universe bends at the elbow of justice.”

“Whatever your life’s work is, do it well. A man should do his job so well that the living, the dead, and the unborn could do it no better.”

“We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now.”

“Nothing in all the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity.”

“Freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed.”

“If physical death is the price that I must pay to free my white brothers and sisters from a permanent death of the spirit, then nothing can be more redemptive.”

“Whatever career you may choose for yourself – doctor, lawyer, teacher – let me propose an avocation to be pursued along with it.”

“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.”

“Civilization and violence are antithetical concepts.”

“We spend 322 000\$ for each enemy we kill in Vietnam, while we spend in the so-called “war on poverty” in America only about 53\$ for each person classified as poor.”

“Cowardice asks the question, ‘Is it safe?’ Expediency asks the question, ‘Is it politic?’ Vanity asks the question, ‘Is it popular?’ But, conscience asks the question, ‘Is it right?’ And there comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular but one must take it because one’s conscience tells one that it is right.”

“There is no deficit in human resources; the deficit is in human will.”

“We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools.”

“I was not afraid of the words of the violent, but of the silence of the honest.”

“If I cannot do great things, I can do small things in a great way.”

“A genuine leader is not a searcher for consensus but a molder of consensus.”

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

“Perhaps the worst sin in life is knowing right and not doing it.”

“Free at last, free at last. Thank God almighty we are free at last.”

“Hate begets hate; violence begets violence; toughness begets a greater toughness. We must meet the forces of hate with the power of love.”

“I have a dream that one day little black boys and girls will be holding hands with little white boys and girls.”

“Take the first step in faith. You don’t have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step.”

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny.”

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

“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, ‘What are you doing for others?’”

“No person has the right to rain on your dreams. Find a voice in a whisper.”

“A lie cannot live.”

“Seeing is not always believing.”

“Oppressed people cannot remain oppressed forever.”

“Means we use must be as pure as the ends we seek.”

“Be the peace you wish to see in the world.”

“Without justice, there can be no peace.”

“We must shift the arms race into a ‘peace race’.”

“Lightning makes no sound until it strikes.”

“Music is the best consolation for a despaired man.”

“We must in strength and humility meet hate with love.”

“We may have all come on different ships, but we’re in the same boat now.”

“In a sense, songs are the soul of a movement.”

“The hope of a secure and livable world lies with disciplined nonconformists who are dedicated to justice, peace and brotherhood.”

“An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity.”

“Part 1. I look forward confidently to the day when all who work for a living will be one with no thought to their separateness as Negroes, Jews, Italians or any other distinctions.

Part 2. This will be the day when we bring into full realization the American dream – a dream yet unfulfilled.

Part 3. A dream of equality of opportunity, of privilege and property widely distributed; a dream of a land where men will not take necessities from the many to give luxuries to the few;

Part 4. A dream of a land where men will not argue that the color of a man’s skin determines the content of his character;

Part 5. A dream of a nation where all our gifts and resources are held not for ourselves alone, but as instruments of service for the rest of humanity; the dream of a country where every man will respect the dignity and worth of the human personality.”

“As my sufferings mounted I soon realized that there were two ways in which I could respond to my situation – either to react with bitterness or seek to transform the suffering into a creative force. I decided to follow the latter course.”

“I just want to do God’s will. And he’s allowed me to go to the mountain. And I’ve looked over, and I’ve seen the promised land! I may not get there with you, but I want you to know tonight that we as a people will get to the promised land.”

“One has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws.”

“Pity may represent little more than the impersonal concern which prompts the mailing of a check, but true sympathy is the personal concern which demands the giving of one’s soul.”

“Every man of humane convictions must decide on the protest that best suits his convictions, but we must all protest.”

“Part 1. I subject myself to self-purification and to endless self-analysis; I question and soul-search constantly into myself to be as certain as I can that I am fulfilling the true meaning of my work, that I am maintaining my sense of purpose, that I am holding fast to my ideals, that I am guiding my people in the right direction.

Part 2. But whatever my doubts, however heavy the burden, I feel that I must accept the task of helping to make this nation and this world a better place to live in – for all men, black and white alike.”

“The question is not whether we will be extremists, but what kind of extremists we will be... The nation and the world are in dire need of creative extremists.”

“Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable... Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.”

“All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence.”

“A man who won't die for something is not fit to live.”

“We are not makers of history. We are made by history.”

“The first question which the priest and the Levite asked was: ‘If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?’ But the good Samaritan reversed the question: ‘If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?’”

“Everything that we see is a shadow cast by that which we do not see.”

“We must rapidly begin the shift from a ‘thing-oriented’ society to a ‘person-oriented’ society. When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered.”

“The most dangerous criminal may be the man gifted with reason, but with no morals.”

“Unconditional love will have the final word in reality.”

“Part 1. As long as there is poverty in the world I can never be rich, even if I have a billion dollars.

Part 2. As long as diseases are rampant and millions of people in this world cannot expect to live more than twenty-eight or thirty years, I can never be totally healthy even if I just got a good checkup at Mayo Clinic.

Part 3. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. This is the way our world is made.

Part 4. No individual or nation can stand out boasting of being independent. We are interdependent.”

“We must come to see that the end we seek is a society at peace with itself, a society that can live with its conscience.”

“When I am angry I can write, pray, and preach well, for then my whole temperament is quickened, my understanding sharpened, and all mundane vexations and temptations depart.”

“There is nothing more tragic than to find an individual bogged down in the length of life, devoid of breadth.”

“Lukewarm acceptance is more bewildering than outright rejection.”

“Forgiveness is not an occasional act, it is a constant attitude.”

“We must use time creatively, in the knowledge that the time is always ripe to do right.”

“Men often hate each other because they fear each other; they fear each other because they don’t know each other; they don’t know each other because they can not communicate; they can not communicate because they are separated.”

“Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. This is the interrelated structure of reality.”

“The art of acceptance is the art of making someone who has just done you a small favor wish that he might have done you a greater one.”

“Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will.”

“Those who are not looking for happiness are the most likely to find it, because those who are searching forget that the surest way to be happy is to seek happiness for others.”

“The best way to solve any problem is to remove its cause.”

“Capitalism is always in danger of inspiring men to be more concerned about making a living than making a life. We are prone to judge success by the index of our salaries or the size of our automobiles, rather than by the quality of our service and relationship to humanity-thus capitalism can lead to a practical materialism that is as pernicious as the materialism taught by communism.”

“The difference between a dreamer and a visionary is that a dreamer has his eyes closed and a visionary has his eyes open.”

“One of the great tragedies of life is that men seldom bridge the gulf between practice and profession, between doing and saying.”

“A social movement that only moves people is merely a revolt. A movement that changes both people and institutions is a revolution.”

“The richer we have become materially, the poorer we become morally and spiritually. We have learned to fly in the air like birds and swim in the sea like fish, but we have not learned the simple art of living together as brothers.”

“You can have no influence over those for whom you have underlying contempt.”

“Almost always, the creative dedicated minority has made the world.”

“We must build dikes of courage to hold back the flood of fear.”

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

“Courageous men never lose the zest for living even though their life situation is zestless; cowardly men, overwhelmed by the uncertainties of life, lose the will to live.”

“I submit to you that if a man hasn't discovered something that he will die for, he isn't fit to live.”

“All progress is precarious, and the solution of one problem brings us face to face with another problem.”

“Freedom has always been an expensive thing. History is fit testimony to the fact that freedom is rarely gained without sacrifice and self-denial.”

“Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability, but comes through continuous struggle. And so we must straighten our backs and work for our freedom.”

“Occasionally in life there are those moments of unutterable fulfillment which cannot be completely explained by those symbols called words. Their meanings can only be articulated by the inaudible language of the heart.”

“May I stress the need for courageous, intelligent, and dedicated leadership... Leaders of sound integrity. Leaders not in love with publicity, but in love with justice. Leaders not in love with money, but in love with humanity. Leaders who can subject their particular egos to the greatness of the cause.”

“Courage faces fear and thereby masters it.”

“Our children need our presence, not our presents.”

“It’s not burn baby burn, but learn, baby, learn, so that you can earn, baby, earn.”

“The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education.”

“Rarely do we find men who willingly engage in hard, solid thinking. There is an almost universal quest for easy answers and half-baked solutions. Nothing pains some people more than having to think.”

“Education must enable one to sift and weigh evidence, to discern the true from the false, the real from the unreal, and the facts from the fiction.”

“We must remember that intelligence is not enough. [...] The complete education gives one not only power of concentration, but worthy objectives upon which to concentrate.”

“The group consisting of mother, father and child is the main educational agency of mankind.”

“Knowledge is a process of piling up facts; wisdom lies in their simplification.”

“The curse of poverty has no justification in our age.”

“Voting is the foundation stone for political action.”

“I have the audacity to believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality, and freedom for their spirits.”

“The time has come for us to civilize ourselves by the total, direct and immediate abolition of poverty.”

“A man dies when he refuses to stand up for that which is right. A man dies when he refuses to stand up for justice. A man dies when he refuses to take a stand for that which is true.”

“Law and order exist for the purpose of establishing justice and when they fail in this purpose they become the dangerously structured dams that block the flow of social progress.”

“Property is intended to serve life, and no matter how much we surround it with rights and respect, it has no personal being. It is part of the earth man walks on. It is not man.”

“Part 1. A true revolution of values will soon cause us to question the fairness and justice of many of our past and present policies.

Part 2. On the one hand, we are called to play the Good Samaritan on life's roadside, but that will be only an initial act.

Part 3. One day we must come to see that the whole Jericho Road must be transformed so that men and women will not be constantly beaten and robbed as they make their journey on life's highway.

Part 4. True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar. It comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring.”

“There are two types of laws: there are just laws and there are unjust laws... What is the difference between the two?...An unjust law is a man-made code that is out of harmony with the moral law.”

“It is hardly a moral act to encourage others patiently to accept injustice which he himself does not endure.”

“Now everyone knows that the labor movement did not diminish the strength of the nation but enlarged it. By raising the living standards of millions, labor miraculously created a market for industry and lifted the whole nation to undreamed of levels of production. Those who attack labor forget these simple truths, but history remembers them.”

“Philanthropy is commendable, but it must not cause the philanthropist to overlook the circumstances of economic injustice which make philanthropy necessary.”

“One who breaks an unjust law that conscience tells him is unjust, and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for law.”

“It may be true that the law cannot make a man love me, but it can keep him from lynching me, and I think that’s pretty important.”

“It is a tragic mix-up when the United States spends \$500,000 for every enemy soldier killed, and only \$53 annually on the victims of poverty.”

“The time has come for an all-out world war against poverty. The rich nations must use their vast resources of wealth to develop the underdeveloped, school the unschooled, and feed the unfed. Ultimately a great nation is a compassionate nation.”

“What good does it do to sit at the counter when you cannot afford a hamburger?”

“Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane.”

“We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope.”

“My obligation is to do the right thing. The rest is in God’s hands.”

“In a real sense faith is total surrender to God.”

“To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing.”

“Science investigates; religion interprets. Science gives man knowledge, which is power; religion gives man wisdom, which is control. Science deals mainly with facts; religion deals mainly with values. The two are not rivals.”

“Evil can be cast out, not by man alone nor by a dictatorial God who invades our lives, but when we open the door and invite God through Christ to enter.”

“Our only hope today lies in our ability to recapture the revolutionary spirit and go out into a sometimes hostile world declaring eternal hostility to poverty, racism, and militarism.”

“When our days become dreary with low hovering clouds of despair, and when our nights become darker than a thousand midnights, let us remember that there is a creative force in this universe, working to pull down the gigantic mountains of evil, a power that is able to make a way out of no way and transform dark yesterdays into bright tomorrows. Let us realize the arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice.”

“If we are to go forward, we must go back and rediscover those precious values – that all reality hinges on moral foundations and that all reality has spiritual control.”

“If you lose hope, somehow you lose the vitality that keeps life moving, you lose that courage to be, that quality that helps you go on in spite of it all. And so today I still have a dream.”

“When people get caught up with that which is right and they are willing to sacrifice for it, there is no stopping point short of victory.”

“So I’m happy tonight. I’m not worried about anything. I’m not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord!”

“Part 1. At times, life is hard, as hard as crucible steel. It has its bleak and painful moments. Like the ever flowing water of a river, life has its moments of drought and its moments of flood.

Part 2. Like the ever-changing cycle of the seasons, life has the soothing warmth of the summers and the piercing chill of its winters.

Part 3. But through it all, God walks with us. Never forget that God is able to lift you from the fatigue of despair to the buoyancy of hope, and

transform dark and desolate valleys into sunlit paths of inner peace.”

“This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism.”

“My faith in man is, at bottom, a faith in God.”