

Perishing as Fools  
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Martin Luther King expressed, "We must learn to live together as brothers and sisters or perish together as fools." He said this in March 1964. Today is December 2020. As of today, we are perishing as fools. Right now, 2020, the issue of race has been extremely prevalent. However, this problem has not just appeared this year. It is not like black and brown people have now just started being victims and targets to violent attacks and killings, for nothing at all except solely for the color of their skin. George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Tamir Rice, Michael Brown, Freddie Gray, Walter Scott, Ahmuad Arbery, Philando Castile, and countless other African American men and women have been killed by the people of our country. We say that it needs to stop and change needs to happen. But we have been saying that for too long. How can change happen if no one is able to listen? I am tired of living in a world where waiting for change is like waiting for paint to dry.

Dr. King said we need to *learn* how to live together. We need to learn this like it is some type of math problem. We have spent hundreds of years trying to coexist with each other and we still have not been able to achieve this goal. If that is not foolishness, then I do not know what is. Just like some of us have quickly learned to hate people because of their skin, it can be even quicker to learn that someone's skin color does not tell you who that person truly is. When parents teach their kids to stay away from "them" or don't talk to "them", we accept that this is what we are supposed to do forever. That is because parents are always right and they know everything. Once maturity levels rise and personal thoughts are created, there is the chance to unlearn what parents have once taught you. The chance to unlearn the racist and ignorant stereotypes that flooded your brain as a child. Once those stereotypes are unlearned, it is like a weight is lifted. This makes it much easier to learn to accept others as your brother, not your enemy.

On the other hand, we could choose not to stand together. We could stand on opposite lines and never once consider someone of a different race a brother. This is already an act of foolishness. More importantly, it is already an act of violence in itself. When we do not stand together, we are choosing to throw rocks at each other instead of choosing to listen. It is baffling because we all bleed the same. Yet, different levels of melanin make others more prone to being a victim of violence, microaggressions, or racism. Nevertheless, we can start trying. Day by day, we can stand together. Change can come and hit us like a tsunami if we are open to it. When our society can finally accept that skin tone does not mean "bad person", we will finally get somewhere. Nobody wants to hold the title of being a fool. A brother or a sister feels warmer. It feels like change.