



ellen krug  
writer, lawyer, human

Fifty Years  
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Fifty years.

I remember exactly where I was—sitting on the floor in front of the television in the living room of our house on Kendall Drive in Parlin, New Jersey. I had been watching “Batman” when a news bulletin announced that Dr. King had been shot and killed in Memphis.

Even then, as an eleven-year-old, I understood. I knew who Dr. King was and what he stood for. I had listened to his “I Have a Dream” speech and read about the Freedom Riders and Selma in *Life Magazine*. I had been born in Newark and knew what a “ghetto” was. I understood how blacks in America were treated differently than whites.

And now, upon hearing that Dr. King was gone, I had a good sense of the despair that would be felt by a large part of America.

Either that night or the next day, I heard from my other hero, Bobby Kennedy. He had gone to the poorest part of Indianapolis where he broke the news of Dr. King's death to an audience that was largely black. In what some term the greatest speech ever given, Bobby Kennedy said this:

*My favorite poet was Aeschylus. He wrote: "In our sleep, pain which cannot forget falls drop by drop upon the heart until, in our own despair, against our will, comes wisdom through the awful grace of God."*

*What we need in the United States is not division; what we need in the United States is not hatred; what we need in the United States is not violence or lawlessness; but love and wisdom, and compassion toward one another, and a feeling of justice toward those who still suffer within our country, whether they be white or they be black.*

*So I shall ask you tonight to return home, to say a prayer for the family of Martin Luther King, that's true, but more importantly to say a prayer for our own country, which all of us love--a prayer for understanding and that compassion of which I spoke.*

(Here is the link to Robert Kennedy's entire speech on the evening of April 4, 1968:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BCrx\\_u3825g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BCrx_u3825g) .)

It very well may have been that night, so long ago, that my future path in this world was cemented. I would do the best that I could to follow the examples and words of both Dr. King and RFK.

I would try my best, just as they did, to make this world a better place through compassion, action, inspiration and justice.

Dr. King, I am thinking of you today. Thank you for all that you did for America and for me.

*ellie*

[www.elliekrug.com](http://www.elliekrug.com)  
[elliekrug@gmail.com](mailto:elliekrug@gmail.com)