

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

MLK: 'Education without morals is like a ship without a compass'

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This week the news media flooded us with 15-second video bites of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I have a dream" speech. There was so much more to him than that, and the content of his character surfaced far earlier. In 1946, as a 17-year-old junior at Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia, King wrote this brief essay exploring the dual function of education.

Last week we attempted to discuss the purpose of religion. This week our attention moves toward education. I will attempt to answer the question, what is the purpose of education?

To my mind, education has a two-fold function in society. On the one hand it should discipline the mind for sustained and persistent speculation. On the other hand it should integrate human life around central, focusing ideals. It is a tragedy that the latter is often neglected in our educational system.

Education without morals is like a ship without a compass, merely wandering nowhere. It is not enough to have the power of concentration, but we must have worthy objectives upon which to concentrate. It is not enough to know truth, but we must love truth and sacrifice for it.

Source: [MLK Online](#), public domain materials about Dr. King

Image: Martin Luther King, Jr. photographed by Marion S. Trikosko, 1964. LC-DIG-ppmsc-01269 from the [Library of Congress](#)

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