

**The Life of Martin Luther King Jr.:  
Moving the Nation Forward.  
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Social Responsibilities Round Table  
Task Force On the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday**

After a call for assistance by the American Library Association's Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT) Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Task Force, I prepared the following annotated bibliography for a website which would serve as a tool kit for schools and libraries. The question posed in this research was: which materials present the most positive response to the life of Dr. King? Since King taught the importance of nonviolence, love and understanding, it is my opinion that the most positive response to his life is to learn about these important moral principles. These concepts of peace are just as relevant today as they were during King's lifetime. This bibliography is by no means an exhaustive source. It is a list of suggestions for some materials which may be of assistance as a person attempts to learn about Dr. King's life and his significance as a leader of the civil rights movement. Because of the historical nature of the topic the best sources of in-depth information were books and audiobooks.

**Books:**

**Gentry, A. A., & Peele, C. C. (1994). *Learning to survive: Black youth look for education and hope*. Westport, CT: Greenwood.**

This book provides an in-depth examination of the conditions of Black urban youth with the goal of searching for hope in adverse conditions. Stories of gang members and former gang members along with positive solutions are used. In a book review published in *Choice* magazine, N.L. Arnez, emeritus professor at Howard University, wrote that the authors "survey the devastating conditions in which our children try to survive." She further stated that "They explain 'The Hope Factor' concept and define self-esteem and self-worth" (Arnez, 1995). Topics covered include the low financial base of inner city schools and having inner city youth build their own self esteem as they help handicapped peers. Arnez recommends the book for teachers who educate students about multicultural issues.

**Miller, C. C. (2005). *No easy answers: Baynard Rustin and the civil rights movement*. Greensboro, NC: Mortan Reynolds, Pub.**

In a book review in *School Library Journal*, Carol Jones Collins of the Columbia High School in Maplewood New Jersey writes about Baynard Rustin as a man who has not been often spoken about in recent years. However, he was very important to Martin Luther King as an advisor. He also taught King much about Ghandian nonviolent methods. Rustin was homosexual and that issue among others is discussed in this book. It is recommended for teaching in ninth grade and up (Collins, 2005).

**Vivian, O. B. (2006).** *The story of Coretta Scott King.* Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

As stated by Maya Angelou, well known African American poet and activist in the civil rights movement, "This work will help us know more about her resilience and her courage, and each of us can grow stronger from the knowledge." As also stated by former President Bill Clinton, "Octavia Vivian's book recounts Coretta's remarkable story from the perspective of a close friend revealing the strength and heroism of a real person too often obscured by myth and frozen memories" (Augsburg Fortress, nd).

**Audiobooks:** For this project, a special interest was taken in the medium of audiobooks. This interest was taken because audiobooks provide accessible information for people with reading disabilities. According to Shonda Brisco, Assistant Professor and Curriculum Materials Librarian at Oklahoma State University, people can listen to materials three years beyond their reading level. According to Brisco, et al., this "assists students with print disabilities by allowing them access to information that they understand but cannot read" (Briscoe, Wolfe and Stephens, 2008, p. 7). Audiobooks also provide the listener with a connection to the reader through the expressions of the voice. According to Grover and Hannegan (2005), "listening to audiobooks fosters comprehension, fluency, language acquisition, vocabulary development and improved academic achievement" in students K-12 (p. 16). William Suffert, a librarian at the New York Public Library for over ten years commented that "that is not to say that people are not reading books anymore. They are, but many prefer listening to them" (Shama, 2007, p.2). Some patrons comment that they remember more if they listen to something instead of reading it. Others say that audiobooks are great for people who like to multitask. One commuter commented that the audiobooks gave him a chance to understand how the author wanted the story to sound (Shama, 2007).

In the sources below, the listener can hear the voices of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as well as his son, Dexter Scott King and his wife, Coretta Scott King. The print books are listed along with the audiobooks. Reviews of the print books are provided when reviews of the audiobooks could not be found.

Book:

**Carson, C. & Shephard, K. (Editors). (2001). *A call to conscience: The landmark speeches of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.* New York.: Intellectual Properties Management in association with Warner Books.**

Audiobook:

**Carson, C., & Shephard, K. (Editors). (2002). *A call to conscience: The landmark speeches of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.* [CD]. New York: Time Warner Audiobooks.**

This audiobook has some very stirring speeches including Dr. King's famous "I Have A Dream Speech" as others which are both compelling and challenging. The "Eulogy for the Young Victims of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church Bombing" is particularly remarkable because King takes a tragic situation, addresses it with compassion and yet turns the crowd toward positive thinking. Some of the speeches, though quite similar in content, occur at significant points in history. The introductions, given by people active within the civil rights movement such as Andrew Young and Rosa Parks, help the listener put each speech into historical context. Most of the audio quality of the speeches is good. The exception to that rule would be the first speech on the set of CDs. It would be helpful to have more historical notes to accompany the speeches than provided. The listener is not given the information of what year each speech was given.

The author of the review of the *Publisher's Weekly* article on this audiobook calls this a "noteworthy production" and appreciates the raw quality of the recordings. The writer feels they make the atmosphere more authentic. This reviewer also notes that the sounds of people cheering are so loud that the listener may need to turn down the volume.

Book

**King, D.S. & Wiley, R. (2003). *Growing up King: An intimate memoir.* New York.: IPM.**

Audiobook

**King, D. S., & Wiley, R. (Speaker & Contributor). (2003). *Growing up King: An intimate memoir* (R. Wiley Contributor) [Cassette]. New York: Time Warner Audiobooks.**

Many of us know the historical facts surrounding Martin Luther King's life. However, some of us may not have an understanding of his life as a human being. To us, he seems like someone to be admired and looked up to. This book, written by his son Dexter, gives us a glimpse of the human side of the family and of his father's role as a husband and father. One reviewer from *Publisher's Weekly* stated that Dexter King's tone expressed

both hope and bitterness and expresses an opinion that his voice is somewhat monotone. Leo Johnston, author of a *Large Print Review* article states his opinion that, "This is a passionate, eloquent, and rousing story, one which will help you gain insights into Dr. King's legacy, and how this legacy has touched his family. This book also presents Dr. King from a unique perspective - that of his son, rather than via the romanticized or stalwart historical accounts presented by those who studied - but who never knew - Dr. King" (Johnston, 2003).

Book

**King, C. S. (Author and Speaker). (1993). *My life with Martin Luther King, Jr.* Revised Edition. New York: H. Holt.**

Audiobook

**King, C. S. (Author and Speaker). (1972, 1990). *My life with Martin Luther King, Jr.* [Cassette]. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, Inc.**

This audiobook read by the author, Dr. Martin Luther King's wife Coretta Scott King, relates the story of their life together. It is a personal narrative about their courtship, marriage and family life. It also describes their involvement with the civil rights movement. As a couple, they strived to live in the spirit of nonviolence and love despite the hatred with which they were often greeted. Mrs. King is very eloquent in describing Dr. King's philosophy of nonviolence in the imitation of Gandhi and Jesus. This audiobook is recommended for anyone who is interested in learning about the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Coretta Scott King's perspective is very helpful in giving an understanding of the events of Dr. King's life.

Review of the Book: Lyn Miller-Lachman of Siena College Library in Loudonville, New York recommends this book for grades 7-12 stating that "The book is a compelling testimony to the dedication and sacrifice of those who struggled to end racial discrimination and oppression. King's voice comes through clearly as does her personality (Miller-Lachman, 1993).

**King, M. L., (1998). *A knock at midnight : Inspiration from the great sermons of Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.* (C. Carson & P. Holloran Eds.) New York: (IPM) Intellectual Properties Management in Association With Warner Books.**

Audiobook

**King, M. L., Jr., Carson, C., & Holloran, P. (1998). *A knock at midnight : Inspiration from the great sermons of Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.* [CD] New York: Intellectual Properties Management in Association With Warner Books**

This audiobook is a collection of some of the sermons preached by Dr. Martin Luther

King at throughout his life as a minister at many different churches throughout the country. The belief and passion for the cause of brotherly love is clear in each sermon. Another feature of this audiobook is that the sermons are introduced by people who knew King personally. These introducers give unique perspectives on the life of Dr. King as both a man and a minister. The quality of the recording is not always perfect, but that might be expected of these historical recordings. For those who wish, the book can be used as a companion to the audiobook. Some print and audio excerpts of this publication can be found at Stanford University's website: <http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/publications/sermons> Click on "contents" below the picture of the book cover and then choose a sermon title which can be read online.

Angela Evans discussed this audiobook in *Large Print Reviews*. Her assessment of these sermons is that "their power lies in hearing them as they were intended - from start to finish...Listening to the complete sermon, you not only gain a greater understanding of King's message, but also of the impact that religion had in his advocacy for social justice, and his efforts on behalf of the Civil Rights Movement" (Evans, 2006, np).

**Websites:** Most of the websites I searched were disappointing. Often, the information covered by journals and newspapers that discuss the assassination of Dr. King are a combination of a reaction of shock, sensationalism, or a focus on the conspiracy theories of the assassination. Many do not seem to point to the positive principles taught by Dr. King. Some useful websites are listed here. Others may be found through the ala Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Task Force links, [http://libr.org/mlk/additional\\_links.htm](http://libr.org/mlk/additional_links.htm)

**Martin Luther King Jr. Archive.** This is a searchable website of archival information on Martin Luther King Jr. When "assassination reactions" is input as a search term, several articles from many different newspapers which appeared at the time of the assassination may be retrieved. Many of these articles call for people to reject violence as a way of life. This website gives you the articles in searchable full text. The only drawback to this website is that the articles with "premium content" must be paid for.

**Stanford University:** The Martin Luther King Jr. Research and Education Research Institute (Stanford.edu). This website has a searchable database on various different resources on Martin Luther King that are available at Stanford University. There are full text articles. The articles are not indexed in such a way that provides ease of research. I think a researcher would have to plan to spend a lot of time reading articles on this website to determine if they contain the information needed.

**Youtube.com** This website provided about 80 different videos on the subject of Martin Luther King's assassination. Upon examination, not all of these are relevant, but enough of them are to make this valuable. Also, when one inputs "Robert Kennedy" and "Martin Luther King" as keywords, the speech made by Robert Kennedy upon Martin Luther King's assassination becomes available. Robert Kennedy's speech points toward an attitude of hope.

**White, J. E. (1997 April 7) Family forgiveness - Martin Luther King's son meets his father's convicted killer, giving new life to wild theories. *Time* 149 (14) retrieved October 8, 2008 from Masterfile Premier.**

Some people may not realize that King's convicted killer, James Earl Ray, never really had a trial. This article describes how the King family forgave him

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