

## **“Is Optimism the Key to Achieving the Dreams you iMagine?”**

Is optimism the key to achieving the dreams you imagine? Absolutely. When Martin Luther King Jr. said, “I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves, and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood” this dream was not simply a fairytale or a reality far out of reach, but it was a hope for the future. It was the desire for a better tomorrow - the very essence of optimism. Nearly every action in King’s adult life was yielded to the principles of optimism. From the Montgomery Bus Boycotts to watching friends and loved ones be beaten on “Bloody Sunday ” in Selma, Alabama, King did not waver in this dream. In history books, we often perceive Dr. King as though he had the glamorous life of a famous politician. Yet, this is far from the truth. The path King chose was one full of adversity. Because of the ideals he fought for, his family was constantly threatened and put in harm's way, as was he. So much so, that he was eventually killed in Memphis for these ideas. No person would continue in an endeavor with such high stakes if there was not immense value and reward. The selflessness and work ethic of King was propelled by optimism. He lived to see one of the cruelest periods in history. A time when the evils of slavery still lingered and an entire subset of humanity were forced to live no longer as property, but still not as people. It is only optimism that could lead one to dream of a reality where the children of the oppressed and the oppressor walked hand in hand.

Optimism has been the foundation upon which every great success was built. Without optimism, there is no change. There is no confidence in a better tomorrow. When our founding fathers in 1775 dreamed that the British Colonies would once emerge as a sovereign nation, these hopes too were propelled by optimism. Optimism was the spark which ignited the American

Revolution. This fire of hope burned intensely and subsequently they defeated world superpower Great Britain. The 13 independent states then governed under the weak Articles of Confederation until the most philosophical and ideological pure form of government was established; even still today - a representative democracy. It turned a small nation into an undeniable force of good within the world. Thomas Jefferson captured the very momentum of optimism in America when he said, "Nothing can stop the man with the right mental attitude from achieving his goal; nothing on earth can help the man with the wrong mental attitude."

This anthem of optimism has gone on to embody arguably the most reputable promise of America - the American Dream. These great successes of America were not made possible simply by diplomatic deals or militaristic strength, but only when in tandem with the intellect and work ethic of everyday citizens. Steve Jobs, the now multimillion dollar founder of Apple, was given away for adoption by his parents. It was in a foster home that Jobs was introduced to the complexities of electronics. But his life did not instantly improve from here. Again, Jobs endured hardship. He was forced to drop out of college, as his foster family was unable to meet the costs. He struggled financially so much that he returned pop cans and sought free meals from charities to survive. He eventually fell into using drugs, and a life without optimism would have stayed stagnate. Yet, optimism and hard work led him to invent some of the world's most amazing technology that has changed lives. It has united families across the globe, acted as the catalyst for the success of many businesses, and it has been a testament to what a life of hope and desire can become.

Every great success and every triumph started from what seemed to be nothing - what seemed to be impossible or unlikely. But more than anything, the strength and optimism that propelled the acts of ordinary individuals like Steve Jobs, the American Revolution, and the Civil

Rights Movement attest to the beauty that comes to fruition when we wade into the impossible and the unlikely. When Dr. King spoke the words “I have a dream”, he hoped they would carry weight and power for generations to come. He hoped these words, the very definition of optimism, would bring change. And on January 20, 2017, this dream was consecrated when Barack Obama was elected as the 44th President of the United States. No matter whom you are - liberal or conservative, black or white - it is undeniable that America is richer because of this dream.