



His Own Eulogy, by Martin Luther King Jr.

Every now and then I guess we all think realistically about that day when we will be victimized with what is life's final common denominator--that something we call death.

We all think about it and every now and then I think about my own death and I think about my own funeral. And I don't think about it in a morbid sense. And every now and then I ask myself what it is that I would want said and I leave the word to you this morning.

If any of you are around when I have to meet my day, I don't want a long funeral. And if you get somebody to deliver the eulogy tell him not to talk too long. Every now and then I wonder what I want him to say.

Tell him not to mention that I have a Nobel Peace Prize--that isn't important. Tell not to mention that I have 300 or 400 other awards--that's not important. Tell him not to mention where I went to school.

I'd like somebody to mention that day that Martin Luther King Jr. tried to give his life serving others. I'd like for somebody to say that day that Martin Luther King Jr. tried to love somebody.

I want you to say that day that I tried to be right on the war question. I want you to be able to say that day that I did try to feed the hungry. I want you to be able to say that day that I did try in my life to clothe the naked. I want you to say on that day that I did try in my life to visit those who were in prison. And I want you to say that I tried to love and serve humanity.

Yes, if you want to, say that I was a drum major. Say that I was a drum major for justice. Say that I was a drum major for peace. I was a drum major for righteousness.

And all of the other shallow things will not matter.

I won't have any money to leave behind. But I just want to leave a committed life behind. And that is all I want to say. If I can help somebody as I pass along, if I can cheer somebody with a well song, if I can show somebody he's traveling wrong, then my living will not be in vain.

-- Martin Luther King, Jr. (at the request of his widow, these recorded words of Dr. King's last sermon were played at his funeral)

