Stepping Stones: Beginning a Pathway

It is with great fervor that Napoleon Hill, an American Author from the 1800s, uttered the words, “If you cannot do great things, do small things in a great way”; but, it is with greater importance that Martin Luther King Jr. rephrased those words in order to send a brilliant message to Americans in the midst of arguably the most pivotal time period in American history. This quote marked a transition American culture and attitude. No longer did one have to be the head of a civil rights movement, an important politician or a business owner to make a difference; rather, an everyday person could make a titanic difference by making small, yet beneficial decisions.

At the time, a small decision that would be advantageous would be participation in a sit-in or protest, advocation for the rights of minorities, or even the decision to not adhere to the social expectations in place at the time. Nowadays, these small actions can still be done to make a great difference, but there are more options now. More ways to make a large difference in small ways. Starting a petition, joining a nonprofit organization, going on mission trips, etc. These are all ways that small actions can help change the world.

This quote fills me with passion…inspiration. It makes me feel as though I can accomplish great things. With a small bit of effort, I, a young woman in modern society, can actually do something to benefit the common good. Having a feeling of optimism, this quote incites a deep urge within to join a club, spread a positive message, do something to make a positive impact. Martin Luther King Jr. was not just speaking of civil rights when he quoted Hill. He was not just using an exhortative phrase, but rather he was attempting to make us, his audience (even decades later), yearn to become responsible citizens with a positive impact. This quote, to me, does not only mean additional responsibilities and tasks, it means playing a crucial role in the progression of society. It means becoming a stepping stone.

In order to honor Martin Luther King Jr., I will use his words to become a responsible citizen. I will no longer be complacent and idle throughout life; preferably I will begin to make small decisions and become one of the ripples that cause a great wave. In unity, I believe that small differences add up in order to do something fantastic with this world. Akin to skipping stones, the domino effect that is becoming an upstanding citizen morphs into a slippery-slope of positivity that will forever change the face of this world. With that, Luther’s legacy will live on.