What Would King Do? (WWKD?)

January 13, 2013 By Lora René Tucker

We have survived another year; for me and others, a year of rough transitions, for some, a year of miracles, and for most, just another year. No matter what got you here, if you're reading this blog, Congratulations, you made it.

Through the year of dreadful acts done to adults and children in schools, shopping malls, and movie theaters; through a very mean spirited presidential election, through the revolutions, wars, and a fiscal cliff (that is waiting for lemmings,) I find myself deeply shaken by how people are treating each other, it is as if people are forgetting how to be an open community, closing ranks via a "check list" titled: "Like or Not Like Me," and not effectively engaging and communicating with each other. Isn't that crazy? In an era where gossip can move so fast from ones mouth (or fingers) it can scorch the air; where there are more devices for keeping in touch, no one is really touching each other, let alone looking up.

In my "shaken state," I started to wonder what King would do. What would Martin Luther King Jr. do if he was around in the 21st century, in the age of AIDS, The Tea Party, and so called "post-racism?" What would he do with a country suffering from historical amnesia? What would he say about an African American in the white house and African Americans becoming infected with hiv? How would he handle the new horrors of terrorism in neighborhoods from Newark to Newtown. Could King be one of America's senior national leaders, no longer "in the trenches," but able to talk with hope about the future, and meld it with what he had experienced, what he knew? I believe he would be constantly reminding us to "wake up... don't fall asleep..." and "...don't forget."

I was fortunate enough to catch a writer's workshop that the New York Writers Coalition had. (Love their workshops!) They had an exercise that made me want to work on it after the experience was over. A simple quote that made me write in the moment, then made me want to be in the writing. Now I want to share a part of the poem with you in commemoration of M.L King's 84th birthday. (Remember, I do not capitalize hiv/aids. Also GMHC is the Gay Men's Health Crisis...I do not assume

everyone knows.)

“Write What Should Not Be Forgotten”

Do not forget that no one can get “full blown aids,”
That aids is full blown hiv
That people with hiv are more vulnerable to others’ “cooties.”
Do not forget that a kiss is just a kiss,
That status is not attached to an acronym;
that an acronym does not mean damaged goods,
And that a disease does not identify an individual.
Do not forget the love does not mean sex
but safe sex means loving oneself,
and people deserve to love without judgment.
Do not forget that the chemical warfare
saving many lives is not a cure,
That silence equals death, stigma kills,
and hiv does not discriminate.
Do not forget that ACT UP
acted up for all of us,
That GMHC helps everyone in crisis,
That it isn’t enough to be straight but not narrow,
But it is important to be straight up.
Do not forget
That aids is not just an acronym
That life is not just a four letter word.

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