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A LETTER FROM THE PAST WITH LESSONS FOR THE PRESENT  
*Martin Luther King Jr. on Freedom, Equality, and Morality*

As we move into a new year, there's always plenty of talk about the future — about how far we've come and where we are going as a country. But more and more often, I find myself looking back on the past and asking "Have we gone far enough?" At no time are these thoughts more at the forefront of my mind than during Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Many might view Dr. King's "I have a dream" speech as part of our country's distant past with the black and white film footage and the grainy audio. However, America's civil rights movement did not end with Dr. King. I was born the year Dr. King was assassinated and many schools in our nation remained segregated. So, as we honor the memory of this great American, we'd do well to remember the injustices he fought against are a part of our recent past and still seep into our present.

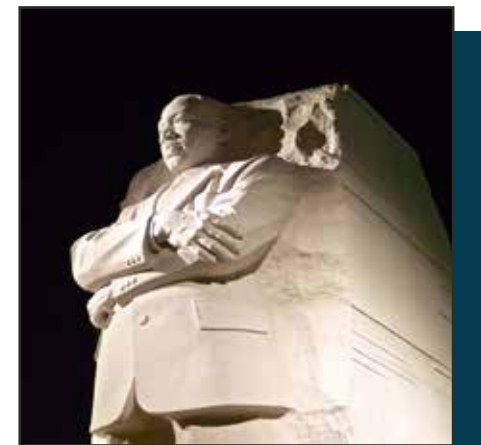
Perhaps it's due to this proximity that Dr. King's words still feel applicable today. His letter from Birmingham Jail certainly holds many timeless observations on the nature of freedom, equality, and morality. Statements like "Freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed," and "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere," are maxims that should apply to any democracy at any time. But it's the letter's more specific message that I believe speaks to our time.

In the letter, Dr. King explores the separation of what is "legal" and what is "moral." He reminds us that "We can never forget that everything Hitler did in Germany was 'legal' and everything the Hungarian freedom fighters did in Hungary was 'illegal.'" It's this reminder to take a good, hard look at our laws that I find so relevant to our world today.

I am not African American, and I cannot attempt to speak with any authority on the scars of segregation or the ongoing racial injustices experienced in today's society; however, what I can attempt to speak to is economic injustice, something Dr. King was deeply passionate about in his advocacy. Indeed, we often forget that he was assassinated while supporting Memphis, Tennessee public sanitation workers demanding fair treatment. There are many Americans who could use such a courageous advocate today, as illustrated by the injustice happening in Coffeyville, Kansas.

Debtor prisons are supposed to be illegal in this country, but a judge in Coffeyville has found a loophole. Judge David Casement, with the encouragement of private debt collectors, has been issuing warrants for the arrest of anyone who fails to attend court hearings on their medical debt. Lawyers representing hospitals and doctors in the area have been abusing this, requiring debtors to come into court as often as once a month. A pregnant woman, a father whose son has leukemia, and many others facing severe medical challenges have been jailed for the crime of not being able to afford health care. You can read about it in detail in ProPublica's excellent report "When Medical Debt Collectors Decide Who Gets Arrested."

Remember, what Judge Casement is essentially doing is operating a debtors' prison within the bounds of the law in his jurisdiction. While jail isn't often used for civil contempt of court, his supporters argue that the punishment is within his purview to make. But is it moral to bleed working families dry because they couldn't pay for life-saving medical procedures? As someone who has



seen the impact of disease and disability on low income households, my answer is a firm "NO."

Coffeyville is not an isolated incident. We live in an era of growing wealth inequality and disappearing rights for the working American. At a time when Congress is working to protect insurance companies instead of their insured, big business instead of working people, and medical companies instead of the sick, Dr. King's message rings clear.

We have to remember: "Society must protect the robbed and punish the robber," and "We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly." What was true in the era of the civil rights movement is true today: Injustice affects us all. May we find the courage to stand up to injustice wherever we may find it.

*John Colvin*

Ctrl, Alt, Delete Your Clutter  
*Tips for National Clean Up Your Computer Month*

Everyone relies on technology. Computers, laptops, tablets, and phones are staples of modern life. However, it's easy for these devices to become cluttered with old photos, files, and general disorganization. Luckily, January is National Clean Up Your Computer Month and an excellent time to get your technology in order.

**START BY DUSTING**

Over time, computer towers can become clogged with dust, which creates additional, unwanted heat within your computer. Regular cleanings will increase the lifespan of your computer and

protect its essential components. Compressed air is great for removing most of the dust and other particulates. If the fans or filters are too dirty, you can remove them from the tower to clean them better. If you use water or liquid cleaning products on them, be sure they are completely dry before placing them back into your computer.

**ORGANIZE YOUR FILES**

Naming and arranging the files on your computer in such a way that they're easy for you to find can end up saving you a lot of time. Declutter your workspace by creating one file for pictures, one for

Word documents, one for spreadsheets, and one for programs to eliminate the hassle of frantically searching for the files you need.

**BACK UP YOUR COMPUTER**

Be sure to back up your computer before you start deleting things. This acts as a safety net in case you delete something you didn't mean to. Additionally, consider installing a second hard drive. The extra space can help with storing important files without having to worry about how much room is left.

**CLEAN UP SPACE**

Any files you'll never use again should be deleted. Likewise, any programs you haven't used in a while should be uninstalled. Check your hard drive for files that might be taking up unintended space on your computer. And remember to empty the recycling bin — it's easy to forget just how much goes in there.



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## Help Your Kids Achieve More This Year With Simple and Actionable Goals

With every new year comes an opportunity to reinvent ourselves or start down a new path toward self-improvement. Making resolutions is a big part of many families' New Year's traditions, and parents often have a desire for their kids to take part in that tradition when they're old enough. Following through on resolutions is tough, especially for young children, but with your help, they can achieve their goals.

### PRACTICE WHAT YOU PREACH.

You are your children's role model for almost everything, including following through on New Year's resolutions. So, ask yourself if you follow through on your own resolutions. When you proclaim that you will read more books or finally get a gym membership, do you actually try to do it? Your kids will assign as much importance to New Year's resolutions as you do, so by sticking to your own commitments, you can help them stay on track too.

### KEEP THINGS SIMPLE AND ACHIEVABLE.

When your kids are forming their resolutions, their first attempts will probably be very broad. Statements like "I want to be more kind" or "I will try to help more around the house" incorporate good values but don't include any actionable steps. Help your kids think of tangible ways to act on those goals. For example, if they want to be tidier, a good resolution might be for them to clean their room once a week or take responsibility for one household chore every day.



### DON'T DO ALL THE WORK FOR THEM.

While it's important for you to help your kids formulate their goals, be sure that you aren't taking over. If they're ultimately responsible for their resolutions, they'll feel more compelled to keep them. Instead, suggest different goal areas they could improve, such as home, school, or sports, and let them elaborate.

When it comes to creating habits, nobody is perfect, so even if your kids falter on their goals in the middle of February, don't worry. The important thing is that you continue to encourage them every step of the way.

## Rodent Meteorologists The Origins of Groundhog Day

For nearly 150 years, U.S. citizens have put their faith in a fast and mild winter on the meteorological capabilities of a plucky groundhog. Just how this tradition came to be dates back centuries and has taken on many different forms.

### A VERY MERRY CANDLEMAS

Feb. 2 has long been considered a significant day, landing midway between the winter solstice and the spring equinox. The Celts celebrated this day, dubbed Imbolc, to mark the beginning of spring. Later, Christianity transformed the celebration into Candlemas. It was believed that a sunny Candlemas meant there would be another 40 days of snowy weather. German citizens relied on badgers and other small animals seeing their shadows during Candlemas to signify the continuation of winter, and those who immigrated to Pennsylvania brought this tradition with them. Soon, the badger was replaced by the groundhog.

### THE 'PUNXSUTAWNEY GROUNDHOG CLUB'

The U.S. Groundhog Day festivities began on Feb. 2, 1887, as part of a play between newspaper editor Clymer Freas and local businessmen and hunters in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania. On that inaugural holiday, the men traveled to Gobbler's Knob and watched as a groundhog saw his shadow and predicted

more weeks of snow and cold. Since then, thousands of spectators trek to Punxsutawney each year to watch Punxsutawney Phil for a signal on the remaining weeks of winter. The organizers and caretakers of this event are part of the Inner Circle, who conduct the proceedings in Pennsylvania Dutch and claim to speak Groundhogese.

### PHIL AND FRIENDS

Despite his popularity, Punxsutawney Phil is not a reliable forecaster. His predictions only boast a 40% success rate. Meanwhile, his cousin to the north, Staten Island Chuck, has a 70% success rate for predicting the weather. Chuck and Phil also face stiff competition in Vermillion, Ohio, where residents have put their faith in the forecasting abilities of woolly bear caterpillars every autumn. The theory is that the more orange the caterpillars have, the milder winter will be. More than 100,000 people turn out to Vermillion's Woollybear Festival, but scientists caution against this method of forecasting as well. The coloring of the caterpillars actually tells us more about the winter *before*.



# Court Cases Reveal the Truth:

## Big Pharma Puts Profits Over Health and Safety

Two 2019 court cases, one a suit against Purdue Pharmaceutical and the other against Johnson & Johnson, have shed new light on the roots and scope of America's opioid crisis.

The companies have been under fire for their mass marketing and sales of addictive opioids. While plaintiffs contend they have purposely failed to identify suspicious orders to increase profits, the drug companies blame pill mills, addicts, and over-prescribing physicians for the situation. Just recently, a three-installment investigative series in The Washington Post spotlighted new data unsealed during the trials that put the pharmaceutical companies' massive impact into perspective.

The data revealed that between 2006 and 2012, the pharmaceutical industry pumped more than 76 billion pain pills into America's pharmacies. It also unveiled sworn depositions of executives, internal corporate emails, and expert reports revealing that the corporate drug giants ignored employee concerns about the huge volume of pain pills streaming across the nation. In one exhibit, a Purdue Pharma email shows an

executive signing off on a distributor ordering 115,200 Oxycodone pills — nearly twice its average order over the previous three months — that was approved within minutes.

Of the country's 100 top-prescribing opioid pharmacies, the majority are located in Appalachia and the Tennessee Valley. In total, there are nearly 83,000 pharmacies on the frontlines of the opioid crisis in America, and between 2006 and 2012, many of them dispensed millions of pills. Some rural pharmacies prescribed as many as 6 million pills during that six-year period, creating an unbelievable pill count per resident in their counties. Meanwhile, as big pharma profited, opioid death rates soared in the pill-flooded communities, sometimes to more than three times the national average.

On Aug. 23, 2019 a judge in Oklahoma ordered Johnson & Johnson to pay \$572 million in compensation to the state. It was the first decision to hold a drug maker responsible for the fallout created by liberal opioid dispensing, which has led to the overdose deaths of more than 400,000 Americans

since 1999. Many argue that Johnson & Johnson's marketing scheme — which included influencing doctors and potentially spreading misinformation — was motivated by money and carried out even though executives knew increasing the supply of opioids would lead to abuse, addiction, crime, and death.

Perhaps worst of all, the opioid crisis disproportionately impacts the most vulnerable Americans — those who are injured, disabled, or unable to afford adequate health care. Whether our courts will continue to hold big pharma responsible for its role in ruining their lives remains to be seen.



## Simple Pancakes From Scratch

Inspired by The New York Times

### Ingredients

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1 tbsp sugar, optional
- 2 eggs
- 1 3/4 cups milk
- Unsalted butter or canola oil, to grease skillet

### Directions

1. Heat a griddle or skillet to medium-low.
2. In a mixing bowl, combine dry ingredients (including sugar if you like a sweeter pancake). In a separate bowl, beat eggs into milk. Gently stir the liquid ingredients into the dry ones. Mix only until flour is moistened. Clumps are fine.
3. Add some butter or oil to the skillet. If the butter foams or oil shimmers, the temperature is correct. Pour in a pancake of any size, cooking until bubbles form, about 2–4 minutes.
4. Flip and cook other side for 2–4 minutes. Serve warm.

## SUDOKU

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