

One Meditation #14, Feb. 2026 (Feb. 26, 2026, 591 w.)

One Meditation #14, Feb. 2026: “Martin Luther King Jr.: Meditation as Resistance”

Welcome to this monthly meditation email and thanks for being here! Please consider sharing it with others. Subjects range from modern to ancient, Western to Eastern, and scientific to spiritual. I began meditating in 1962 and have a couple of graduate degrees in religions. Number of subscribers: about 500. To unsubscribe, email me. – Richard

NOTE: Because of circumstances in Minnesota, where I and many others on this email list live, I have decided to wait another month to send the previously announced subject, “What are the Eastern ‘Gifts’ of Meditating?”

MARTIN LUTHER KING: “MEDITATION AS RESISTANCE”

A day after Homeland Security killed Alex Pretti in Minneapolis, I stepped out for my daily walk. But I realized I was headed to the street where they took him down. A thought came into my head I’d never entertained before: *Is this a good day to die?* Cautiously, I stopped near the edge of where he was killed. A hundred protesters, mostly young, swarmed peacefully, bracketed by six city police cars. I knew a thousand more were gathering in other metro spots, too.

Pretti, a nurse for veterans, was full of loving kindness, says everyone who knew him. From my street corner, I watched the protesters and felt a stabbing wound bring tears to my eyes. I concentrated on love in my chest. Looked again. Another welling of tears. I returned to love. Back and forth. Others are awash in fear and anger.

How can meditation create change? And how much should we be called upon to sacrifice for the sake of our neighbors who are immigrants and people of color? Barbara Holmes says in *Crisis Contemplation: Healing the Wounded Village*, “The crisis begins without warning, shatters our assumptions about the way the world works, and changes our story and the stories of our neighbors.... Embodied contemplative practices allow us to meet the challenges that crises bring to our lives.”

Martin Luther King’s Meditative Resistance

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King’s brilliant “Letter from Birmingham Jail” ([The Atlantic Monthly](#)) contains much wisdom about manifesting love in the midst of conflict and dissension. “IN ANY nonviolent campaign,” he says, “there are four basic steps”:

1. **“Collection of the facts”**: “Determine whether injustices are alive,” King argues. He compares this to Socrates’ examination for truth.
2. **“Negotiation”**: King’s Christian grounding for this is Judaism’s command to “love your neighbor as yourself” (Lev. 19:18) and Christianity’s “do to others what you would have them do to you” (Matt. 7.12). This didn’t work in Birmingham: “we were confronted with blasted hopes, and the dark shadow of a deep disappointment settled upon us.”
3. **“Self-purification”**: King explains how his group began having “workshops” to prepare “to accept blows without retaliating” and “endure the ordeals of jail.”
4. **“Direct action”**: During such action, says King, we must become a “nonviolent witness.” He urges us to create a “tension in society” just as “Socrates felt [it] necessary

to create a tension in the mind so that individuals could rise from the bondage of myths and half-truths.”

Nonviolent Witnessing

How should we practice King’s nonviolent witnessing? We are a million eyes and voices who can stand on sidewalks, film what we see, yell, blow whistles, honk horns. We can train others, shop for immigrants and ferry their children to school, speak out on social media, write letters, phone businesses. In all we do, we can observe negativity without reacting badly or thoughtlessly, but rather with loving kindness or, at least, a neutral witness awareness that keeps us focused and strong.

Sebene Selassie says in the Buddhist publication *Tricycle*, “Practice offers the possibility of staying with an unpleasant experience, bringing curiosity and kindness” (“[Belonging in the Body](#)”). This is a way to follow the advice of recently deceased U.S. Congressman and former 1960s Civil Rights leader John Lewis. “Speak up, speak out, get in the way,” he advocated. “Get in good trouble, necessary trouble, and help redeem the soul of America.”

Each day now, I prepare myself. Then when I act, I continue to meditate, pray, sing, dance, honk, whistle, shout, and let tears of pain remind me to love.

Next Month: “What are the Eastern ‘Gifts’ of Meditating?”

Peace, Strength, Joy

Richard Jewell

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“Meditation has two major definitions: (1) science says it is a conscious calming of the body and mind, and (2) experienced practitioners often define it as aware attention for the purpose of inner growth. Using these two meanings, the word covers most major spiritual practices. Mindfulness, too, say the Mayo Clinic and other scientists, is a type of meditating. All of these outer forms and more are linked by having, in common, very similar purposes and scientific results.” – “One Meditation #1,” Jan. 2025

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Previous issues: <https://www.richardjewell.org/Meditation/default.htm>.

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