

LEAVING A LEGACY



Marian Wright Edelman, attorney and founding president of the Children's Defense Fund, often speaks of how Martin Luther King Jr. had a profound impact on her life.

All Americans have been affected by Dr. King's life in some way and few have not heard the line from his famous speech, "I have a dream." But it was not his public persona that affected Edelman; it was his willingness to admit his fears.

She writes, "I remember him as someone able to admit how often he was afraid and unsure about his next step ... It was his human vulnerability and his ability to rise above it that I most remember."

She should know about rising above fear and uncertainty because her life was not an easy one, and one wonders just how often she drew strength from the self-honesty and candor of Dr. King.

Edelman grew up during the days of segregation, one of five children and the daughter of a Baptist minister. She graduated from Spelman College and Yale University Law School, and was the first black woman to pass the bar in the State of Mississippi. She is a prolific and gifted writer, and has devoted her life to serving as an activist for disadvantaged Americans, especially children.

Hers is an incredible testimony to the belief in helping others to help themselves. She never doubted that she could make a difference. "I have always believed that I could help change the world because I have been lucky to have adults around me who did – in small and large ways."

You and I have the same opportunity – especially in the health-care careers in which we are engaged. Through the talents God has given us, administered in a spirit of love and compassion, we can change the worlds of those we serve, as well as those we encounter.

Good will come to those who are generous and lend freely, who conduct their affairs with justice (Psalm 112:5 NIV).

– Beecher Hunter