

This I Believe Essay Transcript

“Light in a Time of Darkness” by Spencer Gorelick

Total Word Count: **500**

Sobering is perhaps the only word that I could find. No other word could quite capture the feeling of being diagnosed with a mental illness and all of its ensuing panic, worrying, and realizations. Anorexia, they told me, didn't come from self-love as I had mistakenly imagined, but from self-hate and the negativity that surrounds and consumes a person until they're but a mere shell of the people they once were. I had become that shell. From the moment of my diagnosis at the age of 12, I knew that I would be fighting an uphill battle: both against the stigma of being a male with an eating disorder predominantly found in females, and against the very thoughts that forced me into such a situation to begin with. Now speaking from the perspective of a fully recovered anorexic, I can confidently say that my journey has taught me the power of recognizing that a new day will always come. Whenever the thought of relapsing crossed my mind, I would imagine the day where I would be free of my own self-hatred. Although my recovery was long and often painstakingly difficult, the one constant that I found in this journey was the promise of better times ahead. The “light in a time of darkness.”

Human beings are psychologically and evolutionarily adapted for this type of resilience and positivity. Our cavemen ancestors would've certainly found this useful, as survival necessitates both a positive emotional outlook and endurance against the many threats they likely would've faced. But as we apply this evolutionary mindset to modern times, we see just how useful it can be and how ingrained within our collective human mindset it is. In the midst of one of the worst social and racial crises in our nation's history, the 1960s segregationist and Civil Rights movements, we found amongst us a collective recognition of the injustices of the time, and a drive to seek after the light in a time of horrid and blinding darkness. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., in his letter from Birmingham Jail, explained “Let us all hope that the dark clouds of racial prejudice will soon pass away ... and in some not too distant tomorrow the radiant stars of love and brotherhood will shine over our great nation ...” Dr. King's leadership embodied the power of positivity in seeking justice, even if it was hard fought and the setbacks he experienced challenged his very being. In times of negativity, injustice, and personal turmoil, humans will always look for the lighter path and the brighter future.

I believe in the power of seeking light in times of darkness, seeking justice in times of injustice, and seeking positivity in times of negativity: Not just because of how it helped me, or how it helped Dr. King, but because of how it's managed to thrust human society into an age of activism. Through the light at the end of the tunnel, we've found more than just resilience: we've found hope.

Works Cited

King, Martin Luther Jr. "Letter from the Birmingham jail." In *Why We Can't Wait*, ed. Martin Luther King, Jr., 77-100, 1963