

## WE ARE THE FUTURE

皆さん（みんなさん）、こんばんは。私はブライス・デボーンでございます。今夜（こんや）、スピーチをさせていただいて、ありがとうございます。

Romanji translation:

Minna-san, konnichiwa. Watashi wa Buraisu Debon degozaimasu. Konya, supiiichi wo saseteitadaite, arigatou gozaimasu

Yes, that wasn't English (Joking tone). Good evening everybody! My name is Bryce DeVaughn. Thank you for coming to listen to my speech. I started with my Japanese translation to give you all a glimpse of the many opportunities I have been blessed with while studying here at Austin College. The first thing I want to thank Martin Luther King Jr for is the fact I get to be among people of multiple cultures and getting a great education. But I have to also thank my family, coaches and friends, and most importantly God for that.

I spent quite a bit of time thinking about this speech because of course it needed to be about how Martin Luther King Jr. had affected my life, but I quickly figured out it was much deeper than that. This speech is the time for me to reflect on many social issues for not what I just faced, but for African Americans everywhere. Many of these social issues were seen in the wake of many wrongful shootings and through the Black Lives Matter Movement in 2016. Very recently I had to put my dog down that I had since my 2<sup>nd</sup> grade year! The thing I came to understand from my dog's death is something that Martin Luther King Jr. had built himself upon, and a part of what we are very much missing in our current society in America. And that is compassion. Compassion is very powerful thing! Showing love to someone without asking for anything in return has opened many doors for me. The ultimate lesson in the Bible, Luke 6:31 - Do to others as you would have them do to you.

Now allow me to tell you a little bit more about me. I was born in Houston, but after many moves I eventually came to stay in the city of Frisco, just 40 minutes south of here. I am proud to say that I am a football player and a student here at Austin College. Additionally, the plan is to double major in Computer Science and Japanese. At 5 years old my parents divorced, but I have been privileged to have both of them to still in my life. My mom is a doctor and my dad is a retired NFL Player from the Eagles and now runs an organization called Athletes for Change. A rehabilitation center in Dallas, the first of its kind for kids under the age of 18. Over the course of my life so far I have lived in: Oak Cliff, Desoto, Carrolton, Plano, Dallas, and Frisco. From 1<sup>st</sup> grade to 5<sup>th</sup> grade my brothers and I had been put into a private school called American Heritage Academy in Carrolton to make sure we stayed close to the Lord. For those 5 years of my life I had no experience with racism or things of the like. Well when 6<sup>th</sup> grade came around my mom had finally gotten on her feet enough to build a house in Frisco and we moved there. That meant that we had to start going to public school. While Frisco is a great place there just aren't many minority people there. And even less when it came to African Americans. For my mom and dad this was a little off putting, but for me it was nothing I experienced enough to care. Sadly, I was constantly bullied. Only verbally. And words are powerful weapons. Because I was well spoken, kind, and dressed with no sagging I very quickly came to be known as an Oreo or coconut, black on the outside and white on the inside. I told myself many times "It's only because I am new" and eventually I had an identity crisis. Too many times people would ask me "Are you black?" And ultimately I fell very badly into depression. Rock bottom. Many times I had suicidal thoughts. My grades tanked heavily. Soon after that I managed to zone out what others were saying about me and when people called me white or an oreo, I would reply "I am

just an educated black man". I told myself: why should being educated, speaking properly, and being kind to others be a white thing. I shared that horrible experience with you to hopefully give you all an example of how I overcame discrimination and bullying with nothing other than compassion just like Martin Luther King Jr wanted to show us. There are many African Americans here at Austin College that are like me. We are the future. I know everyone will do great things. We can't do anything about the world we've been born into, but we can do something about the world our children will be born into. And as you all leave here to today, create a way you, yourself, can paint your own, unique color on this canvas we call life and that one day we can, like Martin Luther King Jr dreamed, see our children "...live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character..." see "little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers"... and not be afraid to, and or criticized by others for doing so. For this to happen, we must come together again and take action ourselves. We are the future!