



A Tribute To The Honorable John Lewis An Essay In His Own Words and His Famous Quotes

The New York Times

OPINION

JOHN LEWIS

Together, You Can Redeem the Soul of Our Nation

“Though I am gone, I urge you to answer
The highest calling of your heart and
Stand up for what you truly believe.”

By John Lewis

Mr. Lewis, the civil rights leader who died on July 17, wrote this essay shortly before his death, to be published upon the day of his funeral.

July 30, 2020

While my time here has now come to an end, I want you to know that in the last days and hours of my life you inspired me. You filled me with hope about the next chapter of the great American story when you used your power to make a difference in our society. Millions of people motivated simply by human compassion laid down the burdens of division. Around the country and the world you set aside race, class, age, language and nationality to demand respect for human dignity.

That is why I had to visit Black Lives Matter Plaza in Washington, though I was admitted to the hospital the following day. I just had to see and feel it for myself that, after many years of silent witness, the truth is still marching on.

Emmett Till was my George Floyd. He was my Rayshard Brooks, Sandra Bland and Breonna Taylor. He was 14 when he was killed, and I was only 15 years old at the time. I will never ever forget the moment when it became so clear that he could easily have been me. In those days, fear constrained us like an imaginary prison, and troubling thoughts of potential brutality committed for no understandable reason were the bars.

Though I was surrounded by two loving parents, plenty of brothers, sisters and cousins, their love could not protect me from the unholy oppression waiting just outside that family circle. Unchecked, unrestrained violence and government-sanctioned terror had the power to turn a simple stroll to the store for some Skittles or an innocent morning jog down a lonesome country road into a nightmare. If we are to survive as one unified nation, we must discover what so readily takes root in our hearts that could rob Mother Emanuel Church in South Carolina of her brightest and best, shoot unwitting concertgoers in Las Vegas and choke to death the hopes and dreams of a gifted violinist like Elijah McClain.

Like so many young people today, I was searching for a way out, or some might say a way in, and then I heard the voice of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on an old radio. He was talking about the philosophy and discipline of nonviolence. He said we are all complicit when we tolerate injustice. He said it is not enough to say it will get better by and by. He said each of us has a moral obligation to stand up, speak up and speak out. When you see something that is not right, you must say something. You must do something. Democracy is not a state. It is an act, and each generation must do its part to help build what we called the Beloved Community, a nation and world society at peace with itself.

Ordinary people with extraordinary vision can redeem the soul of America by getting in what I call good trouble, necessary trouble. Voting and participating in the democratic process are key. The vote is the most powerful nonviolent change agent you have in a democratic society. You must use it because it is not guaranteed. You can lose it.

You must also study and learn the lessons of history because humanity has been involved in this soul-wrenching, existential struggle for a very long time. People on every continent have stood in your shoes, through decades and centuries before you. The truth does not change, and that is why the answers worked out long ago can help you find solutions to the challenges of our time. Continue to build union between movements stretching across the globe because we must put away our willingness to profit from the exploitation of others.

Though I may not be here with you, I urge you to answer the highest calling of your heart and stand up for what you truly believe. In my life I have done all I can to demonstrate that the way of peace, the way of love and nonviolence is the more excellent way. Now it is your turn to let freedom ring.

When historians pick up their pens to write the story of the 21st century, let them say that it was your generation who laid down the heavy burdens of hate at last

and that peace finally triumphed over violence, aggression and war. So I say to you, walk with the wind, brothers and sisters, and let the spirit of peace and the power of everlasting love be your guide.

John Lewis, the civil rights leader and congressman who died on July 17, wrote this essay shortly before his death.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/30/opinion/john-lewis-civil-rights-america.html>

Famous Quotes by The Honorable John Lewis

“Freedom is not a state; it is an act. It is not some enchanted garden perched high on a distant plateau where we can finally sit down and rest. Freedom is the continuous action we all must take, and each generation must do its part to create an even more fair, more just society.”

—Congressman John Lewis



The civil rights movement was based on faith. Many of us who were participants in this movement saw our involvement as an extension of our faith. We saw ourselves doing the work of the Almighty. Segregation and racial discrimination were not in keeping with our faith, so we had to do something.

— John Lewis —

AZ QUOTES

“ Sometimes you have to get in the way. You have to make some noise by speaking up and speaking out against injustice & inaction.

Rep. John Lewis

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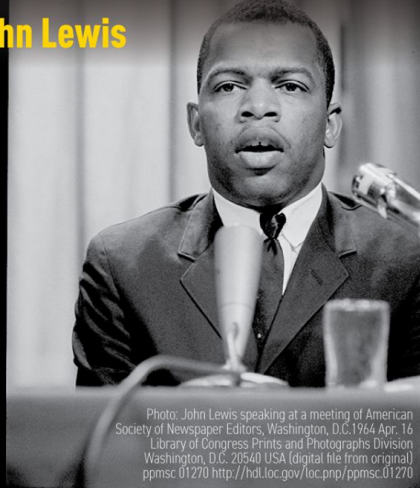
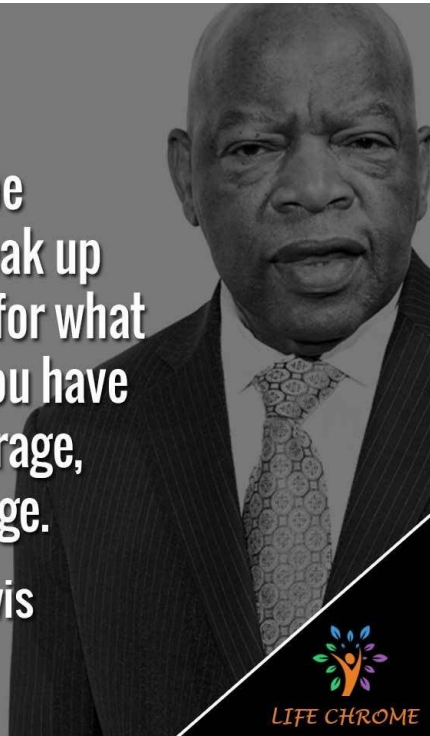


Photo: John Lewis speaking at a meeting of American Society of Newspaper Editors, Washington, D.C. 1964 Apr. 16
Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division
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**You
cannot be
afraid to speak up
and speak out for what
you believe. You have
to have courage,
raw courage.**

- John Lewis



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"If you're not hopeful
and optimistic, then you
just give up. You have to
take the long hard look
and just believe that if
you are consistent, you
will succeed."

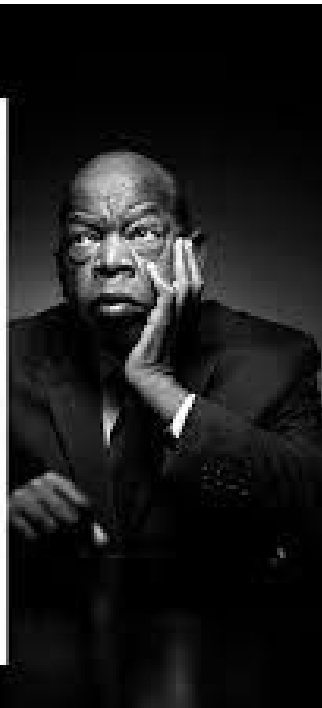
~ John Lewis

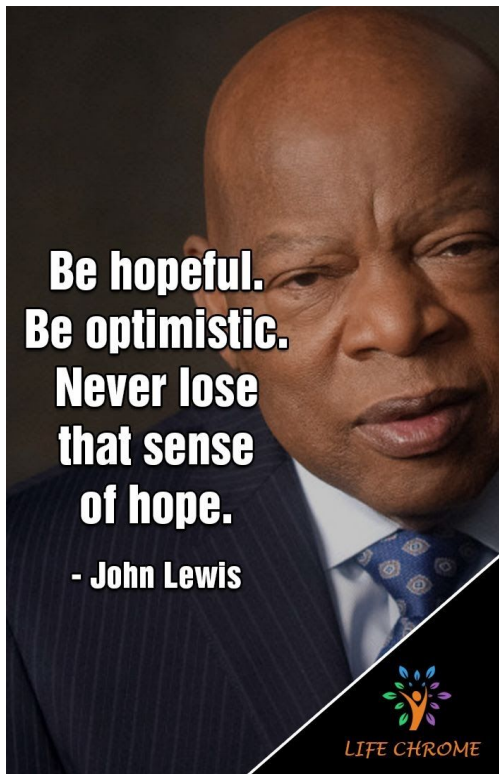
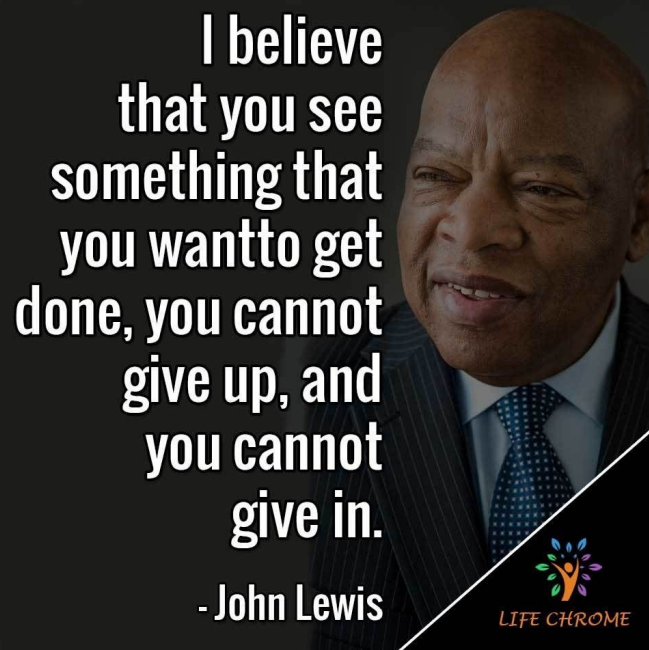


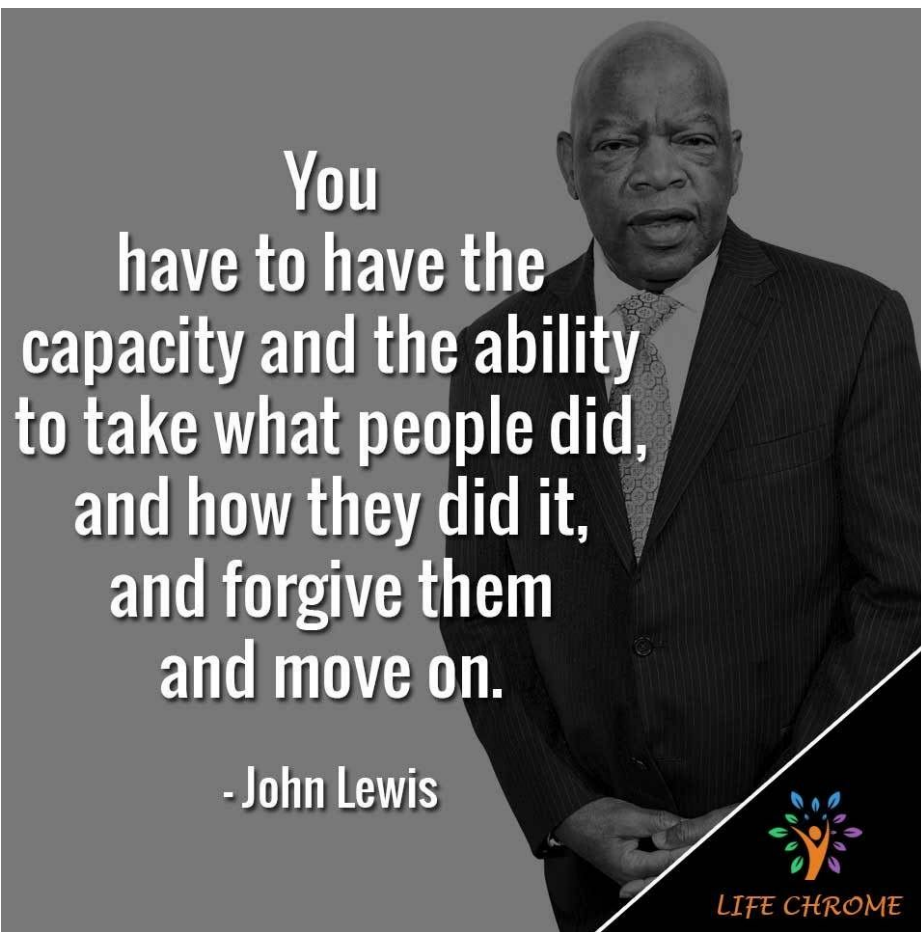
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**You must be
bold, brave, &
courageous &
find a way...
...to get in the
way.**

JOHN LEWIS







“Never give up. Never give in. Never become hostile... Hate is too big a burden to bear.”

--John Lewis

Alabama State Troopers beat John Lewis, March 07, 1965



Alabama State Troopers salute John Lewis, July 26, 2020



It's been a long, a long time coming
But I know a change's gonna come,
oh, yes, it will ~ Sam Cooke



